

The self and the other through an intercultural lens:

A case study of the use of the e-portfolio in
lower secondary English as a Foreign
Language classrooms in Norway

by

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Abstract

This doctoral research project aims to explore the opportunities for intercultural language learning (ILL) among Norwegian lower secondary school pupils, using an intercultural portfolio as a tool for integration of ILL about the self and others. As growing linguistic and cultural diversity has become a global reality, this study focuses on the importance of navigating these diversities in the foreign language (FL) classroom, focusing particularly on the Norwegian context, where the dynamics of society directly impact diversity in classrooms. Intercultural competence (IC) has been emphasised in language education curricula around the world and has been promoted by the Norwegian Ministry of Education in the newest English curriculum (LK20). However, many FL teachers tend to focus on promoting effective intercultural communication with people across borders, often neglecting opportunities for reflecting on cultural frames of reference afforded by the diversity within their classrooms. This study argues for the importance of implementing tools to support language learners in developing the capacity to reflect on their own self and others' selves thus emphasising the complexity and plurality of the self and others (Houghton, 2011; Rivers & Houghton, 2013). Framed within sociocultural theory and constructivism, this project implemented an E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC), aimed to help lower secondary school pupils (aged 14–15) enhance self-awareness and perspective taking as integral dimensions of IC. The exploratory case study, involving 56 pupils and three English teachers, draws on data collected during an eight-week period through pupil texts, focus group interviews with pupils, and individual interviews with teachers.

Three qualitative studies are included in this article-based thesis. Article I investigates the opportunities for and manifestations of self-awareness in pupil texts and focus group interviews. The findings suggest that supporting pupils in raising their self-awareness through carefully designed tasks can lead to an increased ability to reflect on the complex self, which in turn can be tied with the awareness of others as complex beings. The findings indicate that English teachers can choose to select among numerous points of departure in their classrooms (family composition, hobbies, personality, etc.) to develop their pupils' self-awareness not focusing solely on their national cultures. The study

therefore presents a contribution to the sparse research on self-awareness, by focusing on lower secondary school pupils in Norway.

Article II focuses on how the pupils considered the perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews. The study indicates that engaging with storytelling, multiple perspectives on past events, and metaphorical representations related to different perspectives on the self and the other can increase pupils' awareness of diverse perspectives. On the other hand, the findings suggest that comparing and contrasting can lead to oversimplifications and stereotypes. The study thus highlights the complexity of classroom perceptions of perspective taking, and the need for teachers to critically reflect on intercultural tasks they select or design.

Article III draws on the qualitative analysis of interviews with three teachers to examine their perceptions of the use of the EPIC. The study offers insights into the affordances, viewed as both opportunities and constraints, of the e-portfolio as a tool for ILL from the teachers' perspectives. The teachers highlight that the e-portfolio offers flexibility, allowing for more variation beyond the curriculum. The findings also indicate that, in order to overcome the limitations of e-portfolio use, a teacher can make adaptations to the entries aimed at self-awareness and perspective taking in terms of quantity and spread them out for a longer period of time so that pupils can complete them more effectively. Moreover, finding a balance between intercultural and language components within the e-portfolio by integrating intercultural objectives with language objectives can help teachers to reduce their ambivalence towards integrating ILL as part of teaching.

The main contribution of this dissertation is an increased understanding of how ILL processes can be studied by focusing on self-awareness and perspective taking among lower secondary school pupils and what opportunities and challenges arise when an e-portfolio is used as a tool for ILL. Firstly, the findings show that the pupils may experience discomfort or ambivalence when reflecting on the self and others. To mitigate this, teachers can create an engaging and safe learning environment based on familiar topics grounded in personal experiences and peer interaction, gradually incorporating intercultural issues into lessons. Secondly, the results indicate that it is important that the teachers encourage their pupils to consider diverse perspectives on intercultural

topics from a range of cultural, social, and historical vantage points. The teachers therefore play an important role in their pupils' ILL. Consequently, the teacher as a facilitator in these practices must be trained to design materials and tools that aim to foster development of pupils' self-awareness and perspective taking as integral dimensions of IC. This thesis thus contributes to practice and research by exploring self-awareness within ILL in the classroom (Article I), by providing guidance for teachers in their choice of activities for perspective taking and ILL (Article II), and by mapping affordances of the EPIC through the lens of the teachers (Article III).

Sammendrag

Doktorgradsavhandlingen har som mål å utforske mulighetene for interkulturell språklæring blant norske ungdomsskoleelever ved å bruke en interkulturell mappe (portfolio) som et verktøy for integrering av interkulturell læring om seg selv og andre. Siden økende språklig og kulturelt mangfold har blitt en global realitet, fremhever denne studien viktigheten av å håndtere mangfold i klasserommet, med særlig fokus på den norske konteksten, der samfunnets dynamikk direkte påvirker mangfold i klasserommet. Interkulturell kompetanse, understreket i læreplaner for språkopplæring rundt om i verden, og har blitt fremmet av det norske Kunnskapsdepartementet i den nyeste læreplanen for engelskfaget. Mange engelsklærere legger imidlertid vekt på effektiv interkulturell kommunikasjon med mennesker på tvers av landegrensene og overser viktigheten av å reflektere over sin egen og andres kulturelle bakgrunn som mangfoldet i klasserommene gir. Denne studien peker derfor på nødvendigheten av å ta i bruk verktøy som kan støtte språkelever i å utvikle evnen til å reflektere over seg selv og andre. Dette perspektivet understreker kompleksiteten og pluraliteten som ligger både i selvet og hos andre (Houghton, 2011; Rivers & Houghton, 2013). Prosjektet er forankret i sosiokulturell teori og konstruktivisme, og tar i bruk elektronisk mappe for å dokumentere interkulturell kompetanse (E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence, EPIC). Dette skal hjelpe ungdomsskoleelever (i alderen 14–15) til å øke selvbevissthet (self-awareness) og perspektivtaking (perspective taking) som integrerte dimensjoner av interkulturell kompetanse. Den utforskende kasusstudien, som involverte 56 elever og tre engelsklærere, benytter data innsamlet gjennom en åtte ukers periode, og består av elevtekster, fokusgruppeintervjuer med elever og individuelle intervjuer med lærere.

Denne artikkelbaserte avhandlingen inneholder tre kvalitative studier. Artikkel I utforsker mulighetene for og manifestasjonene av selvbevissthet i elevenes tekster og fokusgruppeintervjuer. Resultatene antyder at å øke elevenes selvbevissthet gjennom nøyte utformede oppgaver kan gi dem økt evne til å reflektere over det komplekse selvet, som igjen kan knyttes til bevisstheten om andre som komplekse vesener. Funnene antyder dermed at engelsklærere kan velge ulike utgangspunkter (familiesammensetning, hobbyer, personlighet osv.) for å øke sine elevers selvbevissthet og ikke behøver å fokusere

utelukkende på deres nasjonale kulturer. Studien presenterer derfor et bidrag til den sparsomme forskningen på selvbevissthet blant ungdommer i Norge.

Artikkel II bygger på fokusgruppeintervjuer og setter søkelys på hvordan elevene fikk øye på andres perspektiver når de reflekterte over sine egne EPIC mappe-innlegg i fokusgruppeintervjuer. Studien viser at man kan øke elevenes bevissthet om mangfoldet av perspektiver ved å la dem engasjere seg i historiefortelling, møte flere perspektiver på tidligere hendelser og bli kjent med metaforiske representasjoner av seg selv og andre. I tillegg tyder funnene på at sammenligning og kontrastering kan føre til overforenklinger og stereotyper. Studien belyser dermed kompleksiteten ved ulike oppfatninger av perspektivtaking i et klasserom og behovet for at lærere reflekterer over de interkulturelle oppgavene de utvikler og de som de tar i bruk.

Artikkel III tar utgangspunkt i den kvalitative analysen av intervjuer med tre lærere for å undersøke deres oppfatninger rundt bruken av EPIC. Studien gir innsikt i mulighetene og begrensningene e-mappene har som et verktøy for interkulturell språklæring fra lærernes perspektiv. Funnene viser at lærerne anser EPIC som et nyttig og fleksibelt undervisningsverktøy, som tillater variasjon utover læreplanen. Funnene indikerer også at for å overvinne begrensninger ved bruken av e-mapper, kan en lærer redusere antall mappeoppføringer rettet mot selvinnsikt og perspektivtaking og spre dem ut over lengre tid slik at elevene kan fullføre dem mer effektivt. Dessuten kan det å finne en balanse mellom interkulturelle og språklige komponenter i e-porteføljen ved å integrere interkulturelle mål med språkmål hjelpe lærere til å redusere sin ambivalens når det gjelder å integrere interkulturell språklæring som en del av undervisningen.

Hovedbidraget til denne avhandlingen er at den tilbyr økt forståelse av hvordan interkulturelle språklæringsprosesser kan utforskes. Det gjør den ved å fokusere på selvbevissthet og perspektivtaking blant elevene i en norsk ungdomsskole og hvilke muligheter og utfordringer som oppstår når e-mapper tas i bruk som verktøy for interkulturell språklæring. For det første viser funnene at elevene kan oppleve ubehag eller ambivalens når de reflekterer rundt noen aspekter av selvbevissthet. For å redusere ubehaget, må lærere skape et trygt læringsmiljø basert på kjente temaer med tilknytning til personlige erfaringer, innføre samhandling med jevnaldrende og gradvis introdusere interkulturelle

problemstillinger i klasserommet. For det andre er det viktig at lærerne oppmuntrer elevene sine til å vurdere ulike perspektiver på problemstillingene fra forskjellige kulturelle, sosiale og historiske utgangspunkt. Lærerne spiller derfor en avgjørende rolle for elevenes interkulturelle læring og utvikling. Til sist, lærerne som tilrettelegger i disse praksisene må være bevisst på hvordan de kan utvikle ressurser og verktøy som gir språkelever muligheter til å fremme selvbevissthet og perspektivtaking. Denne avhandlingen bidrar dermed til utvikling av praksis og til ny, forskningsbasert kunnskap om hvordan selvbevissthet kan knyttes til interkulturell språklæring i klasserommet (Artikkel I). Den gir veiledning til lærere i deres valg av aktiviteter for perspektivtaking og interkulturell språklæring (Artikkel II) og den bidrar til å kartlegge læreres opplevelse av muligheter og utfordring rundt bruken av EPIC (Artikkel III).

List of publications

Article I

Khanukaeva, A. (2020). In pursuit of intercultural competence: Exploring self-awareness of EFL pupils in a lower-secondary school in Norway. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 3(3), 118–140.

Article II

Hanukaev, A. (2022). Considering perspectives of others: A case study of intercultural learning among English language learners in Norway. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(1), 33–48.

Article III

Hanukaev, A. (2023). The affordances of an intercultural e-portfolio: A case study on perspectives of English teachers in Norway. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, 5(1), 30–58.

List of abbreviations

EFL – English as a foreign language

EPIC – E-Portfolio of Intercultural Competence

ESL – English as a second language

FGI – Focus Group Interview

FL – Foreign Language

IC – Intercultural Competence

ILL – Intercultural Language Learning

PT – Perspective Taking

SCT – Sociocultural Theory

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Language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality.

L. S. Vygotsky

Between what I think, what I want to say, what I think I say, what I say, what you want to hear, what you think you hear, what you hear, what you want to understand, what you think you understand, and what you understand, there are ten possibilities that we will not understand each other. But let's try anyway...

A quote by Bernard Werber, who attributes it to Edmond Wells

1 Introduction

The central rationale for this doctoral research project is rooted in the demands of today's world characterised by diversity and "global interconnectedness" (Grant & Portera, 2011). Due to a rapid development in technology, as well as changing patterns of immigration and communication, a growing number of people experience the need to enhance their ability to interact with others on an everyday basis. As a result of the current transformation towards more diverse and interconnected societies, ideas about intercultural communication and intercultural competence (IC) have largely made their way into education. Norway is not an exception and the dynamics of society have had a direct impact on cultural and linguistic diversity in Norwegian classrooms.¹ In response to the growing demand for teachers to navigate in a highly diverse language learning environment, the intercultural dimension of English as a subject in the national curriculum in Norway has been emphasised. However, in many foreign language (FL) classrooms, the focus on how to communicate with people across borders effectively and appropriately very often predominates over the focus on how to find common ground with others regardless of national background and develop the capacity to reflect on both one's own self and others' selves, thus emphasising the complexity and plurality of the self and others (Houghton, 2011; Rivers & Houghton, 2013). The process of learning to understand one's own and other cultural perspectives challenges learners' sense of self, their cultural identity, and their worldview (Bateman, 2002). In turn, learners may "experience a lasting change in self-concept, attitudes, and behaviour, which ideally results in greater openness towards individuals of other cultures and an increased desire to interact with them" (Bateman, 2002, p. 320).

¹ The Norwegian population comprises about 20.7 per cent immigrants and Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents; of those, around 8 per cent are of non-European background (Statistics Norway, 2024)
<https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/innvandrere/statistikk/innvandrere-og-norskfodte-med-innvandrerforeldre>.

The present study aims to provide insights about integrating intercultural language learning (ILL) about the self and the other and the opportunities that arise when using an e-portfolio as a tool for ILL in EFL classrooms in Norway.

The overarching question of this study is the following:

What opportunities does the intercultural e-portfolio offer for intercultural language learning about the self and the other through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers?

1.1 Background and relevance of the study

In this section, I present the background and relevance of the study. I begin by describing the contextual background in which this study was conducted, i.e., EFL classrooms in Norway. This is followed by a description of the status of English in Norway and the English proficiency of Norwegian pupils and an overview of the English curriculum in Norway. The section concludes with the research motives related to my personal and educational background and the relevance of the study.

1.1.1 Contextual background

In Norway, the need for ILL has become greater than ever within business and education. Norway has become highly dependent on foreign language skills (mainly English) for contact and interaction with other people. Norway has undergone similar processes to those of other European countries, which have encountered growing immigration, economic development, and globalisation. The English taught in schools plays an important role in the Norwegian society. Norway is largely characterised by a diversity of cultures, languages, and backgrounds inside and outside the classroom. In addition, English language proficiency is high² due to large exposure to the English language on a daily basis through social media, video games, etc. English in Norway has been gradually moving from functioning as a foreign language towards functioning

² EF's English Proficiency Index (<https://www.ef.no/epi/regions/europe/norway/>) ranked Norway #5 (out of 113 countries) in 2023. The very high proficiency corresponds to CEFR level C1.

as a second language³ (Rindal, 2019). On the other hand, Norwegian classrooms are to a large extent multicultural and therefore include pupils with varying levels of English proficiency, and for many, English is their third or even fourth language (Speitz & Myklevold, 2022).

English is a compulsory school subject for all years of schooling in Norway, taught at school from Year 1 to Year 10 since 1997. Lower secondary schools in Norway provide education from Year 8 (aged 13–14) to Year 10 (aged 15–16). Norwegian pupils study English for around two hours per week in lower secondary school. The final course in English is taken at upper secondary school, either over one or two years (Vg1/Vg2). With regard to the expected levels according to the CEFR, pupils at Year 10 are approaching A2/B1 (Hasselgreen, 2005).

Official Norwegian policies for the development of the school system emphasise the importance of dialogue between cultures as an objective and resource for studying the English language. As stated in the previous English subject curriculum (LK06), which was the main frame of reference for English teachers when this PhD study was initiated and data collection was conducted, the ability to communicate can promote “greater interaction, understanding and respect between persons with different cultural backgrounds” (Udir, 2006, p. 1). The objectives of the present doctoral study are also consistent with the newest national curriculum implemented in August 2020 (LK20).⁴ In the new English subject curriculum (ENG01-04), intercultural objectives are expressed more explicitly, through stating that, for example, by learning English, pupils will be able to develop an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking, and communication patterns (Udir, 2020b). This can

³ The status of English in Norway is debated in the literature, at times referred to as “hybrid” or “in transition” (Rindal, 2019). One of the reasons in favour of this claim is the fact that there is a separate curriculum for English in Norway (Speitz, 2012). One of the main arguments against using ESL for English in Norway is that English is not an official language in the country. In this study, I use the label EFL to situate this research in the field of EFL, rather than ESL (e.g., Hoff, 2018).

⁴ Fagfornyelsen (the curriculum reform), launched in 2017 and finished in 2019, aimed to revise the curricular guidelines and make them more relevant to future competences. The new national curriculum (the LK20) took full effect in August 2020 and is the main frame of reference for Norwegian schools.

open pupils to new perspectives on the world and themselves, promote curiosity and engagement, and help to prevent prejudice (Udir, 2020b, p. 2). As for the competence aims for Year 7, which marks the end of primary education, pupils are expected to be able to “investigate ways of living and traditions in different societies in the English-speaking world and in Norway and reflect on identity and cultural belonging” (Udir, 2020b, p. 8). At the end of Year 10, they are expected to explore and reflect on, for example, the topic of indigenous peoples in the English-speaking world and in Norway; hence, “explore and describe ways of living, ways of thinking, communication patterns and diversity in the English-speaking world” (Udir, 2020b, p. 9). Furthermore, there is greater emphasis on *diversity* than previously, with pupils being expected to acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity, as they are given “insight into how we live together with different perspectives, attitudes and views of life” (Udir, 2020a, p. 6). As the core curriculum⁵ states, pupils should build a foundation for understanding themselves, others, and the world, as well as for preserving and developing their identities in a diverse environment (Udir, 2020a, p. 5).

It is important to note that the Council of Europe (2018a) and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018b) have influenced curriculum development in Europe, including in Norway (Heggernes, 2022). IC is stressed as an important educational goal in the RFCDC, which is essentially a compilation of different models and frameworks of democratic competence and IC developed into a set of materials that can be used to equip learners with the competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue (Barrett & Byram, 2020). The competence model proposed by the RFCDC contains twenty specific elements that fall into four categories: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding, highlighting democratic competences, of which IC is viewed as an essential component (Barrett & Byram, 2020, p. 78). Overall, citizenship and democracy education are given particular attention in both the RFCDC and the LK20. Interdisciplinary topics, two of which are included in the English subject

⁵ The core curriculum elaborates on the core values, the overarching purposes and principles of education in Norway. Identity and cultural diversity are identified as core values of education and training in Norway.

curriculum in Norway – “Health and life skills” and “Democracy and citizenship” – are identified as key aspects and organising elements of English language learning and teaching. They address IC from two different perspectives (individual and societal aspects) (Speitz & Myklevold, 2022, p. 305).

As for the curriculum guidelines for English language teaching in Norway, intercultural aspects are not treated consistently in the subject’s competence aims, and multilingual competence often goes “in tandem” with intercultural competence (Speitz & Myklevold, 2022). Even though the LK20 has moved away from the traditional focus on topics primarily relevant for “English-speaking countries” towards “the English-speaking world” (Speitz & Myklevold, 2022, p. 303), the focus on national culture seems to be still present in the curriculum. In a similar vein, Dypedahl (2020) argues that learners do not automatically become interculturally competent by learning cultural facts about the English-speaking world (p. 60); it is therefore necessary to combine the acquisition of cultural topics with reflection, shifting of perspectives, and a deeper understanding of the self and others.

When it comes to practical issues related to teaching content and materials in Norwegian classrooms, the LK20 (similar to the LK06/13) provides a methodological freedom regarding what kinds of teaching resources could support ILL. The decisions about how to deal with these issues are consequently “left to textbook authors and individual teachers” (Hoff, 2018, p. 79). Widespread use of textbooks in Norway is a tendency acknowledged by scholars (e.g., Gilje et al., 2016; Hoff, 2018). The literature shows that textbooks used in FL teaching often display a homogenous and static image of the target (and often native) culture(s) (e.g., Canale, 2016; Murray, 2021; Vajta, 2011) and learning tasks to a large extent emphasise the “knowledge” aspect and do not require the use of reflection or interpretation (in other words, a large proportion of learning tasks address issues related to factual knowledge of culture) (e.g., Murray, 2021). Nevertheless, there has been an increase in the number and variety of textbooks in the Norwegian market offering an intercultural perspective in the language classroom and including references to, for example, multiple identities, citizenship education and a broader perspective on English use around the world (Murray, 2021). In spite of this growth in the number of resources, the main concern is the ways in which school pupils can

explore the perspectives that are at play in intercultural encounters and engage in meaningful intercultural activities (Hoff, 2018).

To summarise, the aforementioned contextual premises make the mainstream Norwegian EFL classroom a very relevant arena for advanced and innovative approaches aimed at ILL. In increasingly diverse classrooms in Norway, there is a growing demand for language teachers to increase their efforts to emphasise intercultural competence in their classrooms. Moreover, the Norwegian curriculum calls for work with ILL in the classroom. However, the issues of ILL and IC are still very new to many Norwegian EFL teachers and pupils (Chvala, 2018, 2020; Hoff, 2018; Rosnes & Rosslund, 2018) and, to a large extent, textbooks contain texts which tend towards stereotypical representations of countries and people, which hinder real intercultural understanding (Hoff, 2018; Murray, 2021).

1.1.2 Research motives and the relevance of the study

The rationale for my choice of research study can be grounded in two groups of motives. The first group of motives relates to (a) my personal background and interests and (b) societal relevance. The second group of motives relates to the empirical relevance of the study.

Firstly, my personal background and my educational and professional background have guided the layout of this research. Moving from one cultural setting (Russia) to another (Norway) at the age of 23 resulted in the fact that I often engage with people who speak a variety of languages, trying not only to translate words but also to interpret their perspectives in relation to my frame of reference and vice versa. Consequently, I have often had to re-shape my attitudes and behaviours. My personal and professional interest in humanities and languages resulted in completing a BA in English Language and Literature (in Russia) and an MA in Literacy Studies (in Norway). My educational and professional background has been connected primarily to secondary education and FL learning and teaching, and this allowed me to qualify for the PhD

scholarship⁶ which resulted in this thesis. One of the main reasons for my choice of the research topic lies in the fact that I have always observed a discrepancy between what forms the basis of language education and what teachers and pupils meet in their everyday lives, given increasing linguistic and cultural diversity at schools. Therefore, I see that maximising the integration of ILL into the classroom is a potential way to bridge this gap, for myself as a teacher educator as well as for future language teachers and language learners. With this study, I hope to be able to contribute to both research and practice in this field of knowledge.

Furthermore, the societal relevance of this empirical investigation has been an important driving force for this study. The world we live in today is characterised by global problems such as armed conflicts between nations that have a complex, tangled history, forced migration, and many other challenges arising from a lack of dialogue and mutual understanding. Given the current global debates regarding the importance of strengthening the integration of values focused on respect for the dignity and rights of others through the integration of language and culture in language education, this study aims to discuss one of many opportunities for including these important issues in the classroom.

The second group of motives concerns the relevance of this study to the field of English language teaching in general, and the Norwegian research field in particular. The rationale related to the empirical setting can be divided into several sub-motives. Firstly, despite the wealth of research in the field, gaps in the literature still exist (Shadiev & Sintawati, 2020; Walton et al., 2013; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). A recent review of 31 intervention studies published between 2000 and 2018 showed that the majority of studies based on pedagogical interventions involved university students (only four studies included primary and secondary school samples) (Zhang & Zhou, 2019). Therefore, it is

⁶ The scholarship was specifically advertised as one in which the prospective PhD candidate was expected to conduct research related to the research field linked to cultural competences in Norwegian schools (“innenfor forskningsfeltet kulturelle kompetanser i skole og samfunn”).

important to conduct pedagogical interventions with children and adolescents⁷ as they are sensitive to cultural differences and might therefore begin manifesting stereotypes and prejudices from an early age (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2006). The results from a large-scale systematic review (n=70) aimed at identifying effective approaches to foster intercultural learning at schools, conducted by Walton et al. (2013), confirmed that children are capable of thinking about cultural diversity in complex ways and that it is better to teach them about these issues earlier than later so that they have a conceptual framework with which to process what they see and hear (p. 186).

Secondly, a range of tools has been used so teachers can incorporate ILL into their classrooms (Dema & Moeller, 2012; Shadiev & Sintawati, 2020). However, studies exploring the use of different tools with lower secondary school pupils are rare. A limited number of studies have explored the potential of paper-based and electronic portfolios in promoting ILL in secondary school language classrooms. While existing research demonstrates the potential of using e-portfolios to enhance IC among undergraduate students (Abrams et al., 2006; Allen, 2004; Lee, 1997; Su, 2011) or language teacher students (Dervin & Hahl, 2015), there is less evidence of what potential this tool may have for facilitating IC for secondary school learners. This study highlights the importance of conducting school-based interventions and adds in-service teachers' perspectives of the affordances of the e-portfolio implemented with this under-researched group of learners.

Thirdly, this study aims to enhance Norwegian EFL teachers' interest in and awareness of incorporating and engaging their pupils in ILL. Due to a lack of teacher preparation (Rosnes & Rossland, 2018) and time constraint issues (e.g., Hoff, 2018), teachers, for the most part, are ambivalent towards introducing ILL into their classrooms. One of the main challenges that Norwegian teachers face is that the curricula documents do not provide methods or materials to be used in the classrooms. Therefore, intercultural teaching in Norway is still dependent on teachers' own ideas and initiatives (Hoff, 2018; Lund, 2019). Another reason is that teachers are not fully aware of ILL, which leads to its

⁷ In the present study, adolescents are viewed as learners aged between 10 and 18 (Murray & Christison, 2011).

neglect in the EFL classroom. A study by Rosnes and Rossland (2018), based on interviews with eight primary school teachers, shows that most of the teachers stated that they lack the theoretical knowledge that could help them to reflect on their experiences. Hence, there is a need to increase efforts to meet today's curricular requirements.

Moreover, scholars argue that instructional materials available to teachers lack support for connecting with multilingual others and engaging with the "complex self", i.e., highlighting the complexity and multiplicity of identifications (e.g., Van Maele & Messelink, 2019). In a study on English teachers' views and ideologies related to English in society and English in school in the Norwegian context, Chvala (2020) argues that there is a gap in relating English language teaching to modern diversity and multiple worldviews among the teachers. The findings, based on interviews with twelve teachers from six lower secondary schools, showed that the focus on teaching solely about English-speaking countries and contexts still exists in the Norwegian EFL context (Chvala, 2020, p. 6). Therefore, there is a need to assist English teachers in Norway in designing and incorporating new ways to support their pupils in navigating classroom diversity, which the present study aims to address through designing and implementing activities and tools that target raising the awareness of "within-self diversity" (Houghton, 2011). Promoting reflection through the EPIC in addition to opportunities to respond to textbook activities is an important facet of this study.

Overall, this study contributes to a growing body of research conducted with adolescent language learners. Given the focus within the English curriculum in Norway, namely, the lack of tools and reported uncertainties related to the lack of teachers' knowledge of the construct of IC (see Rosnes & Rossland, 2018), as well as the need to investigate the perspectives of learners and teachers in the Norwegian setting (Rindal & Brevik, 2019), the study extends the pool of empirical research by examining Norwegian EFL classrooms through the lens of the opportunities afforded by the e-portfolio. Against this backdrop and in relation to the Norwegian and global context, the challenge is for language teachers to design and develop tools that can integrate ILL into the EFL classroom by foregrounding one's own and others' cultural viewpoints. Both ILL and portfolio/e-portfolio as a tool for ILL have already made their way into FL classrooms (e.g., Allen, 2004; Feryok & Oranje, 2015; Griva & Kofou,

2019; Su, 2011). However, there is still room for improvement in Norwegian classrooms with regard to using e-portfolios to facilitate ILL about the self and the other through the lens of pupils and teachers.

1.2 The present study

In light of the aforementioned contextual background and the motives of the present study, I turn to the present study, which aims to explore the opportunities for ILL about the self and the other by means of the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers. The research question is further broken down into several sub-questions, which are addressed in the three articles. Table 1 below provides an overview of the study's main research question and the research questions addressed in each article.

The objective of this doctoral project was achieved through the analysis of the data collected in five lower secondary EFL classrooms in Norway during the spring semester of 2018. The study was an exploratory case study based on an e-portfolio-based intervention which implemented the EPIC as a tool for ILL (see Section 1.4). The EPIC functioned as an instructional tool to promote pupils' self-awareness and perspective taking as part of their ILL, as well as a data collection tool. The EPIC was designed by the researcher and adapted in collaboration with three English teachers to be included as part of English language instruction.

This study employs a qualitative research approach. The study draws on a range of data collection methods, including pupil texts, focus group interviews with pupils following the intervention, and individual interviews with teachers. In total, 56 pupils aged 14–15 (20 males and 36 females) and three English teachers participated in the study.

Table 1. The study’s objective, main research question and the information about the three articles

Study objective	To explore opportunities for intercultural language learning about the self and the other by means of the e-portfolio (EPIC) through the lens of the pupils and teachers		
Overarching research question	What opportunities does the intercultural e-portfolio offer for intercultural language learning about the self and the other through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers?		
Research question	In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC)?	How do the pupils consider perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews?	What are the affordances of the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) as perceived by the teachers?
Data	Article I Pupil texts Focus group interviews with pupils	Article II Focus group interviews with pupils	Article III Interviews with teachers
Year of publication	2020	2022	2023

An illustration of the design of the study is presented in Figure 1 below:

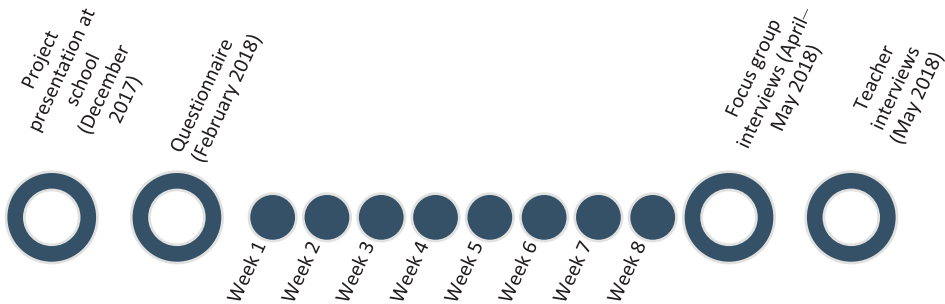


Figure 1. The study timeline

1.3 **Central concepts**

In the following, I present key concepts of the study: intercultural competence (IC), intercultural language learning (ILL), and intercultural awareness. In this study, for the sake of clarity, I aim to delineate the conceptual framework regarding IC and ILL. At the heart the theoretical framework of the study, IC is recognised as an important goal of foreign language education as well as of education in general. This study defines IC as

an integral whole of cognitive, affective and behavioural factors that influence the understanding of and interaction with diversity in a broad sense, and which can be developed through education and/or experience (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143).

The conceptualisation of IC in this study has been largely informed by the view of IC taken by Byram (1997; 2021), Borghetti (2011; 2017) and Fantini (2009), among others, who view IC as a complex construct encompassing a range of interrelated aspects: mainly, affective, cognitive and behavioural (see Section 2.2). However, to address the range of the multifaceted topic of IC and provide an investigation of all the aspects comprising IC is beyond the scope of this thesis. I have therefore chosen to focus specifically on the following dimensions of IC as a primary focus: *self-awareness* and *perspective taking*, and two related dimensions, *awareness of others* and *perspective consciousness*. Self-awareness is viewed in the study as an individual's perspective of oneself regarding beliefs, performance, behaviours, and evaluation (Andenoro et al., 2012; Kupka et al., 2007). Perspective taking is viewed in the study as the projection of oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference which might lead to the acknowledgement that other ways of understanding the world do exist and are worth considering or at least recognising (Kearney, 2015; Thein et al., 2007). Section 2.2.1 provides a further discussion of these concepts. Self-awareness and perspective taking are given particular attention in Article I and Article II respectively.

In this study, I define ILL as the process that involves learners developing an understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 46). Learners engaged in ILL develop a reflective stance towards language and culture, both through

reflecting on their first, second, and additional languages and cultures, and through understandings of the variable ways in which language and culture exist in the world. Culture and language are thus of significant relevance for conceptualising both IC and ILL (see Section 2.1 for a more detailed discussion of the concept of culture). To sum up, IC is viewed as the ultimate overarching objective underlying ILL; it can be developed both in an educational setting and outside formal education, and can involve the learner's first language, second language and other additional languages (Byram, 2021).

Another concept that needs to be explained is intercultural awareness, which is viewed as the ability to take on the perspective(s) of the other(s) and of their background (national, regional, ethnic, or social), and thus be able to relativise one's own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others. Overall, enhanced awareness is "an advanced way of knowing or perceiving" (Shaules, 2019a, p. 3). Hence, intercultural awareness differs from cultural knowledge as it includes "skills of exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness" (Broady, 2004, p. 69), and it is always about the self in relation to someone or something else (Fantini, 2000, p. 29). Intercultural awareness is thus viewed as a building block in developing IC. Metaphorically speaking, intercultural awareness implies both a "window" that represents the need for openness about people and a "mirror" that stresses the importance of self-awareness in the process of discovering oneself and others (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003; Lázár, 2022).

1.4 Rationale for the use of an e-portfolio and the EPIC

This section provides the main rationale of the use of an e-portfolio as a tool for ILL and describes the overall framework of the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC).

Since the focus on the pupils' perspectives within ILL has been one of the most important premises of this study, I wanted to find a tool for addressing pupils' perspectives as part of their ILL. The main concern has thus been related to how to explore the pupils' learning in the classroom and the aspects of IC on which to focus. I therefore opted to implement a tool or resource for promoting pupils' ILL in the classroom. The rationale of using e-portfolios is thus directly linked

to the objectives of exploring the opportunities for ILL about the self and the other, as this tool has the potential to record pupils' learning and growth (Allen, 2004; Schulz, 2007). Portfolios (or e-portfolios) are particularly suited for investigating learning experiences and providing “voices and choices” of learners (H. Barrett, 2007).

The choice of using an e-portfolio as a tool is also framed within sociocultural theory and constructivism (see Section 4.2 for a more detailed discussion of the research philosophy). According to these paradigms, new knowledge can be constructed and co-constructed and learning takes place embedded in the contexts to which it is most relevant in everyday life and with which the learners are personally involved (see Allen, 2004; Knuth & Cunningham, 1993; Taber, 2011). Following Alvarez and Moxley (2004), the portfolio is simultaneously a process, a product, and a tool, which makes it particularly suited for engaging with ongoing and transformative ILL (p. 92). In a similar vein, the possibility of self-awareness will only exist once pupils are given the opportunity to recognise where they begin the journey (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Portfolios are thus suited for documenting any kind of experiences and knowledge grounded in their previous experiences, as well as for reflection on intercultural learning experiences and outcomes. Moreover, the multimodal and digital nature of an e-portfolio helps learners to construct and co-construct their learning experiences, as this tool offers learners opportunities to communicate with others and with texts through various media (e.g., audio, video, text, graphics) (Álvarez Valencia & Michelson, 2023; Kress, 2000; Schulz, 2007) and appreciate multiple perspectives (Knuth & Cunningham, 1993).

In line with the main objective of the present study, the structure of the EPIC consists of the four main tenets, namely, self-awareness, awareness of others, perspective taking and perspective consciousness. Each e-portfolio entry requires the pupils to inquire about and reflect on a particular aspect related to one (or several) of these tenets. The four main tenets have been visualised by means of four metaphors: Mirror, Window, Reversed Mirror, and Coloured Glasses, respectively. In terms of the conceptual metaphor theory, to elaborate on an abstract conceptual domain seen as a target, one can connect it to a concrete conceptual domain viewed as a source (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). The four metaphors as embedded in the EPIC framework are seen (a) to indicate the correspondence between two different phenomena (e.g., self-awareness is a

mirror) and (b) to provide a holistic picture of the phenomenon, which provides an overall direction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018, p. 311). The model of the EPIC (see Figure 2 below) suggests that these four tenets are interrelated and support one another in the facilitation of IC.

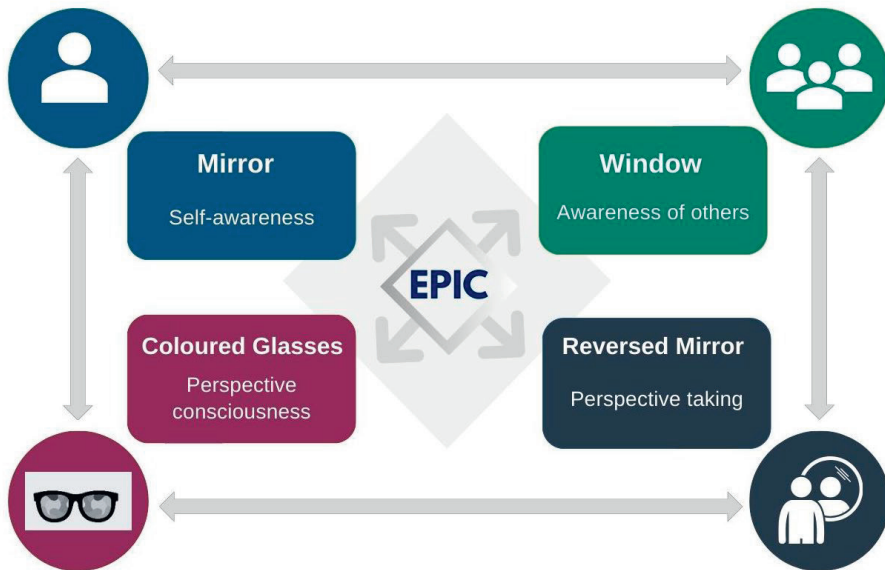


Figure 2. The EPIC framework

The Mirror and Window metaphors were inspired by a teaching resource aimed to incorporate IC for educators, developed by Huber-Kriegler et al. (2003). These metaphors were chosen to help pupils and teachers vividly imagine how they look in the mirror of their own culture(s) and how they look out of a window at other cultures with which they want to interact (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003; Lázár, 2022). The Coloured Glasses analogy was adapted from Berardo and Deardorff (2012, p. 153) and the Coloured Glasses manual designed by European Educational Exchanges (2016)⁸. This metaphor highlights that cultural practices and behaviours are perceived through a

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https://training.yfu.org/uploads/editorial_desk/document_album/document/file/392/Coloured_Glasses_Manual_2016.pdf

subjective personal experience and that the awareness of diversity of perspectives (perspective consciousness) is an important facet underlying IC.

The Reversed Mirror, adapted from Dolan (2014), is an image which shows that what one sees in the mirror is highly contingent on how it is viewed; it is incomplete and reflects only small (and often inverted) portions of the world. It thus represents Perspective taking. Therefore, both the Coloured Glasses and the Reversed mirror imply that there is no absolute truth when encountering other cultures. Hence, the fluid nature of knowledge is an important recognition within ILL. Furthermore, all the four metaphorical devices also *reflect* their surroundings – as the “intercultural” does not exist without complex interrelations between the self and the other, and it is often understood as “a reflexive awareness of Self and Other” (Holliday, 2018, p. 6).

As for the intervention, during the spring semester of 2018 (February–May), lower secondary school pupils of English followed the classroom instruction and completed the e-portfolio consisting of 16 entries (i.e., activities) (see Appendix 1 for a detailed description of the EPIC entries). Through multiple modes of communication (e.g., text, visuals, audio-visual elements, etc.), work in pairs, groupwork, and individual work both inside and outside the classroom, the participants engaged with activities that embodied the main tenets of the EPIC and principles of ILL. The EPIC in this study was developed by the researcher and implemented and planned in collaboration with three teachers on a week-to-week basis. To ensure consistency, each EPIC entry mainly consists of three elements: (a) Introduction, (b) Content entry (pupils’ artefacts which were produced based on the instructions stated in the Introduction), and (c) Reflection prompts (pupils’ reflections on their ILL). Some entries were in the form of a mid-term written assignment and homework. Summing up, the EPIC, designed at the intersection of self-awareness, awareness of others, perspective consciousness and perspective taking as integral dimensions of IC, aimed to provide the framework for the teachers to integrate ILL and served as a tool for collecting the pupils’ data.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Following the present introductory chapter (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the

study. It reviews and clarifies the key concepts used in this study, such as culture, IC, ILL, and self. It provides the definition of the concept of culture, links it to language education and discusses how the changing understanding of culture has informed language pedagogy over time. Current understandings of the concept of IC and its dimensions are presented in Section 2.2, while Section 2.3 discusses the concept of ILL. Chapter 2 further provides an overview of the affordances of e-portfolio for ILL (Section 2.4) and adolescents as the target group of participants and their ILL in different contexts (Section 2.5). Chapter 3 describes a review of the literature involving all the foci of the study. Firstly, it discusses recent research on adolescent ILL through portfolios/e-portfolios. Next, it focuses on the research on self-awareness and perspective taking. Section 3.4 provides a review of the literature on the teachers' perceptions of the affordances of the e-portfolio. Finally, Section 3.5 discusses the research gaps derived from the reviewed literature. Chapter 4 is a methodological chapter which describes and justifies the chosen research design, presents the coherence of the project and the main procedures of the EPIC intervention. Furthermore, this chapter provides an overview of all the data collection stages for the study and data analysis procedures. Research ethics, quality criteria and researcher position are described in the three final sections of the chapter. Chapter 5 gives a summary of the results of the three articles. Chapter 6 provides an integrated discussion of the findings in accordance with the main research question. It also discusses the study's contributions as well as implications for the English classroom, followed by limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

2 Theoretical framework

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for the study. It starts by exploring the role culture plays in language education and provides a definition of culture as operationalised in the present thesis. Section 2.2 opens with a discussion of the theoretical construct of IC as it is conceptualised in the literature and in the present thesis. Then, it describes the concepts of self-awareness and perspective taking as the two integral dimensions of IC. Section 2.3 defines the concept of ILL and how the e-portfolio-based framework can provide a pedagogical approach to promote ILL in the language classroom. The chapter concludes by providing a discussion of the affordances of e-portfolios for ILL and the issues related to key characteristics of adolescent FL learning, as well as the main characteristics of their development.

2.1 Culture in FL learning and teaching

This thesis is situated at the intersection of IC and FL education. Consequently, several key theoretical concepts must be discussed. The notion of “culture” and ways in which the nexus of culture and language underlies FL pedagogy are among the concepts that are deemed relevant to the present study. Culture is a complex concept, inseparable from every aspect of human life, which has been conceptualised in many ways. The way that culture is understood ultimately influences how IC is operationalised. The present study adopts the definition of culture by Spencer-Oatey and Kadar (2021, p. 45), who view culture as

a complex set of meaning systems that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, schemas, norms, and symbols, that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a social group and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviours.

Cultural knowledge and culture in general are thus viewed in this study as increasingly fluid, because the membership of cultural groups is internally heterogeneous. As people are constantly changing their affiliations and changing perceptions and meanings of those affiliations, cultures are changing,

too, and people may therefore identify with several cultures. It is, however, important to point out that we share multiple stories and belong simultaneously to multiple cultures, which are constantly changing (Elsen & St. John, 2007; van Esch & St John, 2003). Thus, one of the most important premises of this study is that culture is no longer solely linked to a national culture, rather, culture comes from a variety of sources: the village, the state, the ethnic or indigenous group, etc. (Nyíri & Breidenbach, 2009, p. 322). Furthermore, while a variety of metaphors for culture have been suggested,⁹ in this study, culture is viewed as a *lens*. In this view, an individual's culture is largely characterised by their own lens, which filters and interprets information about the world and affects both behaviour and communication. Therefore, in the conceptual framework of this study, perceptual processes (*seeing*) outweigh characteristics of a person (*being*) or behaviour (*doing*). In this study, the conceptualisation of culture as *seeing* has been anchored in the EPIC's metaphors of Mirror, Reversed Mirror, Window, and Coloured Glasses (see Section 1.4 for more details). As can be seen from the definition of culture by Spencer-Oatey and Kadar (2021) provided above, some degree of "sharedness" of interpretations of meaning as a feature of culture might be present, as people might have similar viewpoints (or perspectives) on events or behaviours, etc.

As far as the connection between language and culture is concerned, this thesis takes an integrated view of language and culture and supports the idea that language and culture are two interrelated parts of a large whole (Shaules, 2019b, p. 10), a notion that is sometimes referred to as "linguaculture" or "languaculture" (Agar, 1994). The perspective of culture as a dynamic, fluid, and shared process located in the discursive spaces between individuals links it to language, as culture is inherently linked to an act of meaning-making. Thus, any study of language is by necessity a study of culture (K. J. Hall, 2012). In other words, individuals learn language and culture through their reciprocal relationship, and language learning itself is a form of ILL because it involves embodying foreign ways of thinking, acting, and being deeply integrated into the architecture of the mind and self (Shaules, 2019b).

⁹ Among others, E. T. Hall's metaphor of culture as an iceberg (E. T. Hall, 1976), the metaphor of "deep culture" (Shaules, 2007) or the analogy between cultures and epidemics (Žegarac, 2008) could be mentioned here.

Three main paradigms of conceptualising culture have been prominent in current discussions in FL education, namely, *essentialist and generalised*; *essentialist and diversified*; and *anti-essential dynamic* conceptions of culture (Elsen & St. John, 2007). The essentialist and generalised view approaches culture as a static and bound phenomenon. This essentialist view of culture as “national culture” derives from perceiving essential differences associated with one cultural group (one nation) versus another cultural group (the other nation). The essentialist and diversified conception of culture entails that we are members of multiple groups and communities, and we take on and negotiate multiple cultural identities; hence national traits are but one of the many aspects of a person’s culture (Kramsch, 1993). As far as the anti-essential dynamic conception of culture is concerned, culture cannot be viewed essentially, as it is constantly under construction. Cultures are dynamic and constantly change over time due to political, economic, and historical events and developments resulting from interactions with and influences from other cultures. Cultures also change over time because of their members’ internal contestation of their meanings, norms, values, and practices (see Elsen & St. John, 2007).

The debate grounded in the dichotomy between essentialist and anti-essentialist approaches to culture and hence conceptualising IC is still ongoing. However, it seems more beneficial to not reject essentialism but utilise and make use of it in language education (see Van Maele & Messelink, 2019; Zhou & Pilcher, 2018). There is a growing body of studies that argue for a combination of these approaches, allowing for their co-existence within one study. In a study by Zhou and Pilcher (2018), students who used essentialist notions of culture as a resource reflected on cultural complexity as tending to be facilitated by a “reflective dialectic between non-essentialism and essentialism” (p. 141). It is further argued that essentialism and non-essentialism may exist through each other, as they are conceptualisations people will inevitably and often ineluctably be drawn towards and “can be purposeful reflectors providing a complex and ever-present alter ego for learners” (Zhou & Pilcher, 2018, p. 141). In her meta-analysis of several episodes from other empirical studies, Gil (2016) drew on a comparison of two orientations regarding the construction of culture (essentialising and intercultural) in the FL classroom. While in the essentialising cultural episodes, the students’ opinions were superficial and remained uncontested and non-problematised, the opposite happened in the

intercultural episodes, where both teachers and learners engaged in deeper cultural explorations (Gil, 2016). Gil (2016) thus argued that the mediating role of the teachers in such intercultural moments was evident, and they seemed to be the catalysers of potential moments of “decentring”, allowing learners to see things from someone else’s perspective and question their own fixed and established values and perspectives.

Along the same lines, it is important to acknowledge that the theoretical framework of this doctoral research is situated on the continuum between *essentialist and diversified* and *anti-essential dynamic* conceptions of culture. These two conceptions do not seem to stand in opposition to each other, rather, both of them can complement and deepen our understanding of “a complex picture of the cultural influences” on a person (Chao & Moon, 2005). In my view, these perspectives can inform FL pedagogies in a different and mutually supportive way. On the one hand, for example, at school level, recognising diversity as an asset and striving to promote the interaction between individuals and not national groups can serve as a building block to promote integration. On the other hand, understanding culture as a process-oriented phenomenon or a “flux” (e.g., Hannerz, 1992) emphasises that culture is not a static entity. Therefore, individuals must learn how to deal with such ongoing complexities and new ways of negotiation of meanings starting from early years of school. By contrast, if culture is viewed solely as a highly individualised and unpredictable process, as in the anti-essential dynamic conception of culture, it would be almost impossible to introduce it to a language classroom and to help learners to orient themselves with(in) these totally uncontrolled flows of cultural meanings. The whole process of developing IC in educational settings as viewed from this theoretical standpoint would thus be highly problematic.

Summing up, even though some scholars increasingly raise an argument that the word “culture” is no longer useful in education, as it evokes too much confusion (Dervin, 2016), the pedagogical value of culture as part of language learning is still widely recognised among many educators and teachers. Moreover, there is “an odd pedagogical dilemma” present among language teachers (Shaules, 2019b, p. 10). On the one hand, there is a clear link between language and culture, and without the study of culture, language teaching is incomplete, as mentioned above; language learning is indeed an intercultural experience (Shaules, 2019b, p. 10). On the other hand, language and culture

learning are often treated as separate processes in classrooms. The scholarly study of language (linguistics) is largely separated from the study of culture. This happens to a large extent due to the contradictions that surround thinking about teaching and learning. FL pedagogy is often viewed in terms of gaining knowledge, i.e., something practical and concrete, whereas cultural learning goals are often conceptualised in more abstract and “idealised” terms such as awareness, criticality, etc. (Shaules, 2019b, p. 10). Hence, this inevitably turns language teaching into a challenge: one needs to choose to focus on gaining concrete practical knowledge and skills or on developing cultural learning in more abstract terms (Furstenberg, 2010; Shaules, 2019b). Although this dilemma is not new, it was not until the 1980s that the need for teaching culture as anything other than contextual background in language classes was recognised. The following section therefore contains a brief discussion of the role of culture in the FL classroom over time.

2.1.1 *An overview of the role of culture in FL education*

Over the years, different approaches to the position of culture in FL teaching have been developed and have influenced the way cultural content is integrated into the classroom. As shown in the discussion below, the role of culture in foreign language education has changed significantly over the past century.

Due to changing views on the aims of language teaching and learning, the role of culture in the language classroom in the twentieth century has moved from teaching *Big C culture*, i.e., literature, works of arts, etc., to the acquisition of “factual and encyclopaedic knowledge” about foreign cultures (Hoff, 2018, p. 68). Kramersch (2013) highlighted that curricula for foreign language majors still place a heavy emphasis on the study of literature, which is a reminder that language teaching was originally subordinate/complementary to the study of philology and literature, not anthropology or sociology (Kramersch, 2013, p. 65). Another shift happened after World War II, when the growth of social sciences led to an emphasis on *little c culture*, or native speakers’ ways of behaving, eating, talking, and dwelling (Kramersch, 2013, p. 66). It is important to note here that, within the *little c* approach to culture, the premise “one language equals one culture” had been largely maintained. Moreover, language was seen solely as a tool through which the target culture can be acquired.

The role of culture was given another perspective when Hymes (1972) proposed an understanding of language as context-embedded social action. It is social knowledge, he argued, that shapes and gives meaning to linguistic form. Hymes (1972) defined the concept of communicative competence as the ability to participate in society and use the target language in everyday situations. He argued for a mutually constitutive nature of language and culture, as language and culture are two interlinked entities, giving primacy to language use rather than linguistic code and form (Hymes, 1972). Language teachers began to focus on how to use the target language in everyday situations. They taught rules of communicative and pragmatic use of language that aimed to highlight cultural differences. However, the cultural aspect was reduced to providing the background context for language learning (Hoff, 2018). Culture was viewed as a fixed and static entity consisting of products, facts that could be taught and learned. In the 1980s, a model of communicative competence was incorporated within a sociocultural component. Almost simultaneously in the North American and European contexts, Canale and Swain (1980) and Van Ek (1986), respectively, proposed two similar models which put the focus of attention on the relationships between language and culture in the language classroom.¹⁰ Their work strengthened the role of cultural and sociocultural context as an integral part of language teaching and learning, and culture was now to be understood as a “feature of language itself” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 8).

Against this backdrop, in the 1990s, efforts were made to increase dialogue and cooperation among members of different cultures, first and foremost, due to global integration and the growth of English as an international language. One of the most significant changes in language learning and teaching over the past three decades has been the recognition that making culture the core of the language class (Furstenberg, 2010) seemed necessary for intercultural communication across boundaries. The word “intercultural” can be traced back to Hall’s (E.T. Hall, 1959) seminal work on intercultural relationships, and it literally means “between cultures”. However, “intercultural” as an approach in

¹⁰ Canale and Swain’s model (1980) included components labelled as grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Van Ek (1986) further developed their ideas and placed emphasis on the proposition that FL teaching must also involve the personal and social development of the learner as an individual. His model included linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural, and social competence.

FL teaching and learning emerged in late 1980s as a development of the concept of “communicative competence”. Researchers asserted that the subjective component in cultural reflection in a negotiated space, labelled by Kramsch (1993) as a “third place”, may have a great influence on the promotion of intercultural understanding. In order to negotiate meanings and consider different perspectives with the aim of gaining “an outside view of themselves and their own cultures” (Hoff, 2018, p. 70), it had been considered important for language learners to understand their own cultural viewpoints and challenge their sense of self and own worldview. Furthermore, the notion of “intercultural speaker” (Byram, 1997) was introduced, referring to individuals who have the ability manage relations and communicate efficiently with those who belong to their own cultural backgrounds¹¹ and those of their interlocutors. Thus, the term “intercultural competence” has made its way into the FL learning classroom through the works of Byram (1997; 2021) and his colleagues (Byram & Zarate, 1997; Byram et al., 2002; Byram & Wagner, 2018), in addition to Fantini (2000), Deardorff (2006; 2009), Liddicoat et al. (2003), among others. Hence, the goal of developing communicative competence has been extended by that of intercultural competence (Lázár, 2022). Section 2.2 provides an overview of the main theoretical underpinnings of this concept of IC.

2.2 Intercultural competence

In this section, I discuss the term IC, as it is one of the key theoretical concepts in this thesis. This study draws on work by Byram (1997, 2021), Deardorff (2006), Borghetti (2011), etc. and is thus largely situated within a Western discourse. Based on democratic principles, human rights, and the goal of life-

¹¹ “Cultural backgrounds” refers to the combination of the following aspects, among others, “religion, ancestry, skin colour, language, discourse, class, education, profession, skills, community, family, activities, region, friends, food, dress, political attitudes, many of which can cross national boundaries” (Holliday, 2010, p. 55).

long learning (Council of Europe, 2016), the concepts of IC or ICC¹² (Byram, 1997) resulted from the refocusing of the goal of language education with culture at the core as opposed to a narrower focus on communicative competence. Byram and Zarate (1997) attempted to refine what was then called “sociocultural competence” (Canale & Swain, 1980) by supplementing communicative competence with an intercultural dimension. The word “intercultural” highlights a contact between people from different cultural backgrounds. “Inter” in intercultural presupposes a double movement, where meeting the other involves “both moving outside and inside”. In other words, the practice of being able to meet and interact with cultural others becomes “the exercise of problematising one’s own culture(s) as well” (Giorgis, 2018, p. 51).

Building upon the idea of the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of being interculturally competent, Byram (1997) proposed a widely recognised model of IC with five *savoirs* (or features) an intercultural speaker should possess. They are the following: attitudes (*savoir être*), knowledge (*savoir*), skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), and critical cultural awareness, also known as political education (*savoir s’engager*) (Byram, 1997). This instructional model has had a huge influence among scholars, as it aimed to provide a practical frame of reference for language teachers and educators. In 2021, Byram revisited his seminal work and clarified many aspects that were problematic and therefore criticised by other scholars (e.g., Hoff, 2013), for instance, the issue of the focus on national cultures, the need to problematise the concepts of culture and identity, and the operational level of IC and its assessment.

In this study, IC is viewed as “an integral whole of cognitive, affective and behavioural factors that influence the understanding of and interaction with

¹² It seems necessary to define intercultural competence (IC) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC). According to Byram (1997), IC refers to people’s ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, while ICC takes into account language teaching and focuses on the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language (pp. 70–71). In this study, I opt for the term IC for the sake of consistency within my own research, as my understanding of IC aligns with Borghetti (2011), who defines the concept of IC in broad terms.

diversity in a broad sense, and which can be developed through education and/or experience” (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143). This study adopts this definition, as this view of IC supports the idea that FL education is only one of many possible routes aiming to promote IC. It also emphasises IC as a construct of factors that support individuals in the process of recognising and navigating the cultural diversities in the communities to which they belong (viewed in broad terms), which does not necessarily involve communicating with speakers of other languages. This definition to a large extent lies within the Western tradition, as mentioned above, and it highlights a developing capacity for managing diversity in education and awareness of diversity across fields and dimensions (i.e., growing intersectionality of dimensions of diversity, namely, gender, ethnic groups and national minorities, migration, special education needs, socio-economic status, and geographic location).

Since the introduction of IC, a plethora of IC models and frameworks, or concepts with a similar focus, have been proposed over the last decades (Sinicrope et al., 2007). There is a growing number of works that review different taxonomies of IC models (e.g., Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), develop consensus among intercultural scholars on a definition of IC as well as its components (e.g., Deardorff, 2006), examine competing terms and try to combine them (e.g., Dervin, 2020), or analyse different methodological tools based on the existing IC models (e.g., Perry & Southwell, 2011; Tiurikova, 2021). These works indicate that there is a lack of agreement about what IC is and, more importantly, how it may be applied to varied classroom realities. Despite the lack of consensus, there are common themes that emerge from the literature on IC (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). As such, the process of developing IC in the language classroom, as viewed in this study, entails the following aspects, derived from many different conceptualisations of IC, as summarised in Figure 3 below:

Self-awareness and identity transformation	Student as inquirer	Process orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars stress the importance of self-awareness and internal transformation in the pursuit of IC (see Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram et al., 2002; Deardorff, 2006; Kramsch, 1993). Various models attend to different types of self-awareness, but they all point out the importance of getting students to consider their own perspectives before the process of discovery begins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When IC is learner-centred, engaging, interactive, and participatory, student is viewed as a researcher or discoverer of knowledge, whereas teachers are facilitators as they guide the learning process in order to actively involve learners as they explore, discover, analyse information through all kinds of texts and media (Byram et al., 2002; Kearney 2009; 2012). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IC is a longitudinal and developmental process, which means that the learning process is progressive over time. It is not linear, and the journey is never-ending as the learner continues to learn, change, evolve over time (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2000; 2009; Scarino, 2010).

Figure 3. Common themes regarding IC and its development emerging from the literature (adapted from Moeller and Nugent (2014)).

All these aspects described above have different value and significance in different conceptual models of IC. What is important to emphasise is that IC is a complex process of interactions between many factors. Consequently, there would still be variations in the extent to which one has developed IC, as “there is no exact blueprint for building intercultural competence” (Cushner & Mahon, 2009, p. 304). As can be seen from the definition of IC provided above, diversity in a broad sense can be experienced and understood from various points of departure (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143). As Dervin (2016) argued, one does not meet another culture “but people who (are made to) represent it” (p. 9). A language classroom is a site where diversities interact – through encounters with people, texts, visuals, and motion pictures, and interacting with peers through constructing and deconstructing stories about the present, past, and future. This study therefore aims to provide an integrated view on the intersections between the self and the other, in particular, self-awareness and perspective taking as integral dimensions of IC. Moving beyond national

identity as the primary unit of analysis (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) might be a promising starting point for promoting ILL in the language classroom. As Holliday (2018) argues, “the focus should be on self among others rather than the nature of difference between national or other large cultures” (p. 4).

2.2.1 *Self-awareness and perspective taking*

This section further situates the study in its conceptual framework by providing the definitions of self-awareness, perspective taking, and related notions of the self and the other. The conceptualisation of culture and the definition of IC as applied in this study are strongly linked to the notion of *the self* as being multiple and shifting, as well as self-awareness as integral to understanding others. If learners are encouraged to explore the other’s behaviour and beliefs and compare them to their own, this could lead to becoming more aware of the self (self-awareness); raising self-awareness can lead to improved understanding of others because when we enhance our awareness of the complex ways we have been shaped, we also see other people as more complex individuals (Fielding, 2021).

As for the distinction between *the self* and *identity*, it seems necessary to clarify the definitions of these terms as applied in this thesis. The self is used as a term which denotes “cognitive, affective and physical aspects, being regarded as a collection of thoughts about what the individual can and cannot do – both with their mind and with their body, what is important and what is not, as well as what they like or dislike” (Taylor, 2013, p. 10). The self is thus not something that we have or how we act, but it is construed by us. Identity is viewed as “a set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person” (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 3). In other words, apart from the meaning of who “you think you are”, identity adds a meaning of “who you act as being” in interpersonal and intergroup interactions (Taylor, 2013). Summing up, these concepts can be described as referring primarily to individual experience (self) or referring to one’s presence in society (identity) (Shaules, 2019b, p. 158). Identity is a complex concept and correlates with ILL in many ways (e.g., Borghetti, 2019; Hoff, 2020). However, it is considered beyond the scope of this study, which focuses primarily on “inner learning processes” (Shaules, 2019b). In other words, the study views self-awareness as one’s

perspective of oneself regarding beliefs, performance, behaviours, and evaluation and was utilised in this thesis to emphasise the *awareness* aspect.¹³ Self-awareness, according to Kupka et al. (2007), has a regulating effect on other components of IC, and it is fundamental to activating other aspects of IC because it helps an individual push forward and articulate an understanding of others through constant mirroring of and reflecting on what they see in the self. In the EPIC, there were two separate tenets targeting self-awareness and awareness of others (see Section 4.3.3). As such, gaining self-awareness is viewed as a deeply internalised process of personal growth (Shaules, 2019b) and it is largely experienced in terms of being a complementary process to becoming more aware of other people. In other words, it can be enhanced through interaction and becoming more familiar with others.

Furthermore, the concept of *the other* requires attention, as it is closely related to the notion of the self. In this study, both the self and the other imply plurality and, although often used in the singular, oppose stigmatising processes of “othering people” (we versus you). Therefore, the notion of the other, as viewed in this thesis, encompasses any type of diversity among the people one encounters and not only in terms of “nationality”, “culture”, “ethnicity”, etc. Self-awareness and awareness of the other are thus viewed as integral dimensions of IC and by situating each learner’s own self at the centre of their ILL, other dimensions of IC become much more personalised and have the potential to lead to ongoing ILL that also involves changes in their ability to take the perspectives of others. Perspective taking is viewed in this study as the ability to project oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference, which might lead to the acknowledgement that other ways of understanding the world do exist and are worth considering or at least recognising (Kearney, 2015; Thein et al., 2007). Perspective is what frames and defines our vision of reality and

¹³ It should be mentioned that some EPIC entries operationalised the notion of identity (e.g., *ID T-shirt*, *Identity Tag Game*). Furthermore, some pupils’ comments in the focus group interviews were related to both the self and identity. For instance, the pupils reflected on the importance of avoiding labelling others or their complexities by choosing only one label (in *Seven Identities Game*). As argued, identity is more closely related to labels that we use to define and categorise people, including ourselves (Shaules, 2019b, p. 158). Identity is also multiple and changing and it correlates with ILL in many ways (see Borghetti, 2019; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

the meaning we give to it (Giorgis, 2018). Perspective, frame of reference, and point of view are thus often used interchangeably, as they describe the processes of how we see the world, others, and ourselves. Being aware of multiple perspectives is an important premise of perspective taking. *Perspective consciousness* is the awareness of the diversity of perspectives (Blell & Doff, 2014; Hanvey, 1982; Tseng, 2002). Perspective consciousness refers to the recognition that one has a view of the world, which is not universally shared, that this view has been and continues to be shaped, and that others have views of the world that are profoundly different from one's own (Tseng, 2002, p. 12). Thus, perspective consciousness is also closely linked to the notion of the multiplicity of the self.

Perspective taking is found in many of the frameworks for IC in a slightly different light. For example, Council of Europe (2018b) proposed the dimensions of Openness to cultural otherness (within Attitudes) and Empathy (within Skills)¹⁴ as being largely related to the concept of perspective taking. Byram (1997; 2021) argued that, in order to suspend disbelief in one's meanings, values, and behaviours, there is a need to promote an ability to decentre, which is related to the attitudinal factors in his model. Scholars have admitted that PT is a complex task and many attempts have been made to conceptualise ways of taking the perspectives of others in the literature (Casanave, 2010; Kearney, 2012, 2015; Muradova, 2021). One categorisation is based on four types of commitment (i.e., focus). Glăveanu and de Saint-Laurent (2018), who analysed online discussions in terms of the perspectives of refugees, proposed commitment to similarity, commitment to difference, commitment to persons, and commitment to situations. The present study adopts two main types of focus on PT, namely, commitment to difference and commitment to similarity. Commitment to difference designates taking perspectives from the "outside", building on existing representations of others without the possibility of position exchange because of a clear separation between the self and others (Glăveanu et al., 2018, p. 446). Commitment to

¹⁴ Council of Europe (2018b) distinguishes between *cognitive perspective taking* – the ability to apprehend and understand the perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs of other people and *affective perspective taking* – the ability to apprehend and understand the emotions, feelings, and needs of other people (pp. 48–49).

similarity refers to perspectives constructed from the “inside”, attempting to identify with others and their situation in the world (Glăveanu et al., 2018).

Summing up, the concepts of self-awareness and perspective taking are embedded in the theoretical understanding of IC. These concepts were applied in the data analysis for the articles and the integrated discussion of the findings of the present thesis. The next section contains a brief discussion of the concept of ILL as used in this study and sets it apart from IC.

2.3 Intercultural language learning

The concept of intercultural language learning (ILL) originated in the 1990s, mainly in the work of Byram and Zarate (1997). ILL implies an approach to teaching language that focuses on language with reference to culture. This study employs the definition of Liddicoat et al. (2003):

Intercultural language learning involves developing with learners an understanding of their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to an additional language and culture. It is a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, and where variable points of view are recognised, mediated and accepted. (p. 46)

ILL involves “the fusing of language, culture and learning into a single educative approach” (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 43). However, the language-culture nexus does not presuppose that language teaching and learning will automatically lead to ILL (Byram & Wagner, 2018). The same is true for IC, as argued by Deardroff (2009), “[i]ntercultural competence doesn’t just naturally occur in most people; rather, intercultural competence must be intentionally addressed through education” (p. 13).

The EFL classroom is a site where many realities meet, interact, and make meanings, as there are many experiences, backgrounds, and stories which interact. The English classroom is therefore considered to be “a powerful arena for intercultural explorations” (Hoff, 2018, p. 67). Thus, IC can be promoted through “the learning of how language and culture connect in one’s first and target language” (Crozet et al., 1999, p. 11). Overall, this study views ILL as a gateway (one of many) to IC. ILL can be promoted through intercultural

encounters within the same cultural group or through encounters with texts or when a learner becomes more aware of their own perspectives and the cultural affiliations to which they belong. This study proposes working towards IC through ILL, foregrounding enhancing self-awareness and perspective taking, as well as the awareness of others and perspective consciousness as integral components of IC, all of which have mutual influence on each other. The EPIC model (as described in Section 1.4) is an approach that suggests that the pupils' self-awareness and perspective taking are stimulated if IC is operationalised as a set of lenses or mirrors through which one can explore the self and others (see Section 2.1 for a more detailed discussion of culture as seeing). To conclude, the process of building IC through ILL is highly unique for each individual and becoming intercultural is “a personal journey” (Kim, 2001). Therefore, scholars argue for more personalised and authentic accounts of the process of IC development, for example, by integrating e-portfolios in the classroom. The following section examines the affordances of the e-portfolio for ILL.

2.4 *The affordances of e-portfolios for intercultural language learning*

This section provides a discussion of the construct of affordance, before briefly describing the rationale of the use of e-portfolios as a tool for ILL. Finally, there is a presentation of which intercultural affordances, according to the current literature, have been identified in the language classroom. By doing this, it contributes to a more thorough understanding of how the concept of affordance is applied to the conceptual framework and data analysis of this study, in particular, Article III.

This study views *affordance* as the perceived action potential emerging from interaction with the tool (van Lier, 2004, p. 92). It therefore relates to the learner's perception of and active engagement with learning opportunities (Larsen-Freeman, 2018). In the literature, the concept of affordance has often been viewed as relating to external conditions (What in the environment contributes to a particular outcome?) or the characteristics of a tool (e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2018), but opportunities for ILL combined with the relationships between actors and tools were not often foregrounded. Affordances include both opportunities and challenges, as they can both

constrain and facilitate learning (Wertsch, 1998). The type of action carried out by an active person in relation to a specific environment does not depend solely on what the environment or a particular object “offers” to the person but also on how the person perceives the environment, what the person’s intentions are, etc., and these phenomena are individually specific (van Lier, 2000). The link to actions is also important, as an affordance allows for further action “but does not cause or trigger it” (van Lier 2000, p. 227). The concept of an affordance helps us to understand why some teachers interpret either the methodology or their teaching practices in their own way. They focus on elements that make sense to them and do not pay attention to those that seem to be incompatible with their methods of teaching (Perclová, 2006, p. 64).

When it comes to ILL tools, ILL can be fostered through self-analytical and retrospective analysis and inclusion of learner-generated artefacts to collect evidence of learners’ IC development, for example, using portfolios (e.g., Allen, 2004; Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Schulz, 2007). Electronic portfolios (e-portfolios), digital portfolios, or web-based portfolios, allow for a holistic approach, which is fruitful for reflecting on the ongoing development of IC. An e-portfolio is defined in this study as a digitised collection or any project of a student’s work overtime, based on specific objectives or individual student interest, which documents and manages student learning in ways that foster deep and continuous learning. E-portfolios have the potential to combine a variety of possible sources through technological advances, such as interviews, storytelling, making shorts movies, or using social media and the Internet when analysing and documenting intercultural experiences. According to Hartwick (2018), an e-portfolio is an effective tool due to its affordances such as “opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and reflection” (p. 2); “visual representation of learning” (p. 23), “learner autonomy and the emphasis on process, not only product” (p. 24). Allen (2004) and Schulz (2007) were among the first who argued that the intercultural dimension of the language portfolio is significant, as this tool can maximise teachers’ efforts for enhancing intercultural learning and teaching. An intercultural portfolio could be used as a folder for presenting evidence of mastering intercultural skills and understandings. Schulz (2007) points out that portfolios offer learners opportunities to interact and collaborate with others, incorporate personal learning goals, and engage in reflection when it comes to the integration of IC

into the FL curriculum, in addition to guiding learners during their development of IC.

There is a range of portfolio-based frameworks that have been developed by the CEFR: European Language Portfolio (ELP) (Council of Europe, 2006)¹⁵, the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) (Byram et al., 2009), and A Portfolio of Competences for Democratic Culture (PCDC) (Barrett et al, 2021; Byram et al., 2021). They have been specifically developed to support the development and assessment of learners' plurilingual, intercultural, and democratic competences (Borghetti & Barrett, 2023, p. 120). The ELP has been developed as a tool to promote linguistic and cultural diversity through education. The ELP contains (a) the Passport, which summarises the owner's linguistic and intercultural competences; (b) the Biography, which is used to set language learning targets and record language learning and intercultural experiences; and (c) the Dossier, which contains examples of the learner's work. Finland is among the European countries that have worked on the implementation of the ELP in the classroom at a national level. It has also been suggested that the inclusion of portfolio work in general and the ELP in particular aims to deepen mutual understanding, respecting the diversity of cultures and ways of life, as well as student autonomy (Kohonen, 2001). Furthermore, Kohonen (2004) highlighted the importance of students' interaction and their experiences, attitudes, and feelings about their intercultural learning through the ELP. Rantz and Horan (2005) argued that, with guidance such as that provided in the ELP, many cultural experiences possible within the context of the primary classroom, should become opportunities for intercultural awareness, including self-awareness and openness to the other (p. 216).

The PCDC is based on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and its 20 competences for democratic culture.¹⁶ Two versions of the PCDC have been developed: a standard version for learners from 10–11 years of age upwards (Byram et al., 2021) and a younger learners' version for children aged up to approximately 10–11 years (Barrett et al., 2021). The portfolio can be compiled as a hard copy or digitally as an e-portfolio.

¹⁵ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio>

¹⁶ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/rfcdc-volumes>

Although teachers can adapt different sections of the portfolio, two features of the PCDC always need to be retained: learners should always provide documentation on their uses of competences, and they should always provide critical reflection on their uses of these competences (Borghetti & Barrett, 2023). Although, as Borghetti and Barrett (2023) argue, the use of portfolios is admittedly a time-consuming process for teachers as compared to other methods (e.g., obtaining written answers to open-ended questions); this practical concern can be reduced as teachers become more familiar with the principles and use of portfolios, for example, through teachers' guides for both the ELP and the PCDC (p. 121).

The AIE (Byram et al., 2009), also developed in cooperation with the Council of Europe and freely available online,¹⁷ is a resource designed to encourage people to think about and learn from intercultural encounters they have had either face to face or through visual media such as television, magazines, films, the Internet, etc. There are therefore two separate tools (the AIE and the AIE through Visual Media). The studies have reported benefits when using the AIE in different contexts and age groups (e.g., Méndez García, 2017; Ruest, 2020).

The Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Reinvented project has developed a technology-mediated online platform, called Language Integration through E-portfolio (LITE). LITE was largely inspired by the ELP but goes further as an online environment for language and intercultural learning. The users of LITE begin by documenting their linguistic histories and encounters in *My Plurilingual Journey*. They interact with their classmates by seeing their experiences, exchanging messages, and collaborating in groups. Then, learners self-assess their competences across multiple languages in the *Level Checks*, engage in collaborative action-oriented *Scenarios* that move beyond textbook language learning to encapsulate real-life language use, share artefacts with the learning community through *Posts*, and finally reflect on their learning holistically in the *Reflections* (Goodier et al., 2022, p. 98). Thus, the learners reflect on their histories, identities, and experiences in multiple languages

¹⁷ The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters is available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/autobiography-intercultural-encounters>

(expand their plurilingual repertoire) and ultimately develop plurilingual and pluricultural awareness (Goodier et al., 2022).

Considering the affordances of the e-portfolio, it can play a significant role in stimulating and inspiring students through reflection and self-reflection (e.g., Jones & Shelton, 2011). The portfolio offers a range of possibilities for students to diversify their cultural and language needs (Griva & Kofou, 2019, p. 90). Gonçalves & Andrade (2007) highlight three main reasons for the use of the portfolio-based framework in the classroom: the contextualisation of the learning process (a wider linking of the language learning to the situation where it is developed); the diversification of the learning strategies and daily classroom activities; and, due to the longitudinal nature of the portfolio, it can register the difficulties and the progress of learners (p. 199). Table 2 shows key affordances identified in the literature.

As for the constraints, viewed as integral aspects of the affordances in this study, research suggests that there are some factors that influence the success that should be addressed to provide opportunities for ILL. Taken together, the literature highlights the following challenges: teacher and learner time constraints, technical issues, and a lack of a clear and specific purpose for the portfolio framework (e.g., Abrams et al., 2006; Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Goodier et al., 2022; Griva & Kofou, 2019; Perclová, 2006). Schenker et al. (2017) argue that e-portfolios require careful planning and coordinated support from multiple actors. Moreover, the lack of systematic incorporation into the classroom may lead to partial completion of e- portfolios if learners are asked to update the content at home. Students often tend to consider this tool as an extra activity (Goodier et al., 2022). The e-portfolio is not a tool that can be “added” to classes by teachers without reflection on their current teaching practices (Schenker et al., 2017). Sudhershnan (2014), in a study involving 30 international students at an Irish university, where the focus was on developing autonomy in ILL through the LOLIPOP¹⁸ ELP, highlighted a number of challenges when working with this tool.

¹⁸ LOLIPOP stands for Language Online Portfolio Project, a freely available, an electronic version of the European Language Portfolio, designed for adult FL learners.

Table 2. Summary of the affordances of portfolio/e-portfolio

<i>Study</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Affordances</i>	<i>The main tool</i>
Cummins and Davesne (2009)	n/a	a) authentic assessment and transparency; (b) assessment of intercultural competence; (c) flexibility in terms of the possibility for reorganisation over time and interaction with a range of media artefacts and online sites	The ELP
Goodier et al. (2022)	International project, Canadian educational context	(a) making the learning process visible and providing space for evidence of learning; (b) supporting self-assessment and reflection; c) enhancing collaboration	Language Integration through E-portfolio (LITE) ¹⁹
Griva and Kofou (2019)	n/a	(a) emphasising the role of multilingualism and multiculturalism; (b) motivating students to ask themselves about what they would like to learn in a language or culture; (c) helping students develop intercultural awareness; (d) motivating students to use strategies to effectively communicate in multilingual and multicultural contexts	The ELP adapted for young and adolescent learners
Schmerbeck (2016)	German FL classroom at a US university	(a) gaining meta knowledge about culture; (b) fostering autonomy; (c) expanding learning experience beyond the classroom; (d) personal investment	Online portfolios based on the pedagogy of multiliteracies (consisting of five projects)

¹⁹ <https://lite.lincdireproject.org/>

The participants reported on a sense of discomfort and lack of experience with self-assessments as key difficulties. These were connected to a number of reasons, including lack of experience, problems with being honest and objective, lack of confidence in one's own evaluation, and the "abstractness" of intercultural issues involved (Sudhershana, 2014, p. 159). Furthermore, working with portfolios requires a high degree of literacy and analytical skill on the part of the learner (Byram, 1997).

Summing up, internationally, within the last years, portfolios/e-portfolios have been widely used in higher education (e.g., Abrams et al., 2006; Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007; Schmerbeck, 2016; Su, 2011) as a learning tool for ILL. The "cultural portfolio projects" have also made their way into FL classrooms, as they provide students with a practical and meaningful way to gain both language skills and knowledge (Lee, 1997; Su, 2011) or to explore cultural stereotypes (e.g., Abrams, 2002). As students get a chance to reflect on their intercultural language learning experiences and outcomes, reflection and self-assessment are established to be constituents of the portfolio, both digital and paper-based (e.g., Schmerbeck, 2016; Schulz, 2007; Sudhershana, 2014). The present PhD study focuses on adolescents' use of this tool and contributes empirically through exploring the affordances of the e-portfolio in relation to this under-researched group of learners.

2.5 Adolescent intercultural language learning

This section provides a brief overview of the main developmental characteristics of adolescent learners and outlines the main aspects of their ILL by outlining the main challenges language teachers face when introducing ILL to this age group and discussing how adolescents tend to construct the self and relate to others in different contexts and settings.

First and foremost, in this study, the term adolescent is used to refer to children aged from about 10 to 18 (Murray & Christison, 2011).²⁰ Overall, adolescents are often a neglected group of language learners (Murray & Christison, 2011), as they are different from children because they have a more diverse set of competencies, yet they are not adults and do not have “the breadth and depth of experience nor the cognitive maturity of adults” (p. 88). In general, this group is characterised by a large variation in terms of their physical and cognitive development, academic background, and social development. It is a period of transition in many areas of their lives (e.g., psychological and social movement away from childhood behaviour and roles in society) (Brizio et al., 2015; Coleman, 2011). Both physical and cognitive maturation encourage adolescents towards greater autonomy and independence (Coleman, 2011). However, even in mid-adolescence (13–15 years), forming opinions and problem-solving abilities are still reliant on real-life experiences (Hasselgreen & Caudwell, 2016). In addition, adolescents tend to shape and reshape groups according to multiple affiliations to which they belong, e.g., different youth (sub)cultures or hobbies.

Another important developmental change relevant for this age group is that they become more focused on the self and expand their ideas on what they believe in and value (Murray & Christison, 2011). Drawing on findings from cognitive science, N. Morgan (2013) asserts that, starting at the age of roughly 14–15,

²⁰ Although Article III uses the term “young learners” when referring to the age of the participants. This thesis uses the term “adolescents” to specify that the studies focusing on pupils under the age of 10 are beyond the scope of the current discussion. However, the term “young learners” is widely used to describe children learning English from the age of three all the way up to 15 years of age (Nunan, 2010). Therefore, both terms can be applied to the age group of the participants in the present study.

adolescents become more self-aware and start to take an interest in those around them. Furthermore, there is a field of research that explores adolescents' intercultural competences, multicultural identity formation, perspective on the other, and attitudes towards in-groups and out-groups (M. Barrett, 2007; Jensen, 2003; Raabe & Beelmann, 2011; Schwarzenthal et al., 2020). There is considerable research that shows that this age group can show a tendency to make "us" versus "them" comparisons. This aligns with social identity research that indicates stereotyping is stronger in early-adolescents than late-adolescents (Howard et al., 2019; Tanti et al., 2011). There is evidence that adolescents often engage in reading popular texts in a manner that does not involve critical reflection and interpretation of social phenomena on a deep level (see L. A. Hall, 2011; Luk & Hui, 2017) Along the same lines, Lam and Katona (2018) explored how 166 Hungarian adolescents (13–18 years) identified themselves in relation to national and supranational identities and attitudes towards the in-groups and out-groups. The study highlighted that local media contexts play a role in terms of how adolescents shape their attitudes towards others (in the case of the study, favourable and unfavourable out-groups). In Norway, von der Lippe (2011) found that the way 13–15-year-olds talk about religion and diversity might be to a large extent influenced by the dominant discourses they encounter in Norwegian society, e.g., through the media (p. 138). Thus, such results indicate that focusing more on pupils' own experiences and engaging them with explicit discussions about how the others are represented in media should not be neglected in the classroom. If negative stereotypes are not challenged at school, "dominating images of 'the other' may easily be reproduced" (von der Lippe, 2011, p. 139).

Another important factor influencing FL learning among adolescents is relational contexts. The four main relationships shaping adolescents' identity development are parents, friends, teachers, and classmates (Taylor, 2013). Taylor (2013) also claimed that young adolescents (12–15 years) begin to experience inner conflicts as they strive to accommodate and cope with pressures from the four main relational contexts shaping their sense of self (p. 13). A study by Taylor (2013) aimed at facilitating a better understanding of the role of the self in adolescent FL learning in the Romanian secondary-school context. The participants, aged 14–19 (mean age 16.47), were from five different schools. Through using a self-reported structured questionnaire (with

1045 students) and follow-up semi-structured individual interviews (with 32 students), the study findings indicate that, firstly, different relational contexts influence adolescents in different ways. Secondly, students' communicative development and overall academic achievement are dependent on the extent to which learners have the freedom to be themselves and to bring their own world into the classroom (Taylor, 2013, p. 120).

There are a few studies that reveal the main challenges FL teachers face in various contexts when they try to incorporate ILL into classrooms of adolescents. Interestingly, New Zealand has provided several studies that show in what way adolescent ILL happens and what teachers think are the main challenges in this age group. New Zealand, like Norway, is multicultural, and the goal of IC is made explicit in the national curricula in both countries. A study by Biebricher et al. (2019) focused on investigation into teachers' own practices with 11–12-year-olds. The study was part of a two-year project aimed at exploring the challenges of teachers of Mandarin Chinese in New Zealand when beginning to develop their students' intercultural capabilities through language learning. The results showed that the teachers felt they did not have the right tools to support their students' understanding regarding the multiple layers within cultures and facilitate discussions about stereotypes. The age of the participants and their level of cognitive development were mentioned as factors that might have affected the challenges for the teachers. A study by Howard et al. (2019), based on the same intervention, also showed that there was a variability in the participants' development of intercultural capability, with some students still exhibiting stereotypical notions and negative reactions to cultural differences. Overall, it was highlighted that ILL should be spread across all learning areas and across the curriculum, in order to prepare learners from early stages to engage with questions about their own cultures and perspectives and those of others (see Biebricher et al., 2019; Hoff, 2018; Howard et al., 2019).

Within the Norwegian context, there is a pool of research investigating the construction of self (in particular, the ethnic domain) among immigrant youths in Norway (see Krulatz et al., 2018, Rysst, 2016; Solbue et al., 2017; Steen-Olsen, 2013) as opposed to a rather limited pool of research on mainstream FL classrooms. Solbue et al. (2017) conducted a study in the first year of mainstream upper secondary school with students (aged 16) with different

cultural backgrounds (defined in the study as “immigrant youth”). The study used observations and interviews with pupils to focus on the intercultural environment in the class. The research found that pupils showed mutual respect and did not categorise themselves based on their ethnicity. The findings highlight the importance of dialogue and interaction between the students about diversity in the classroom, for example, through using the students’ own experiences and knowledge (Solbue et al., 2011).

As for other studies investigating ILL among adolescents, Rysst (2016), in a study on immigrant youths (14–15) from Oslo, claimed that referring to secondary school pupils in Norway as a homogeneous group can be problematic, as the Norwegian educational setting is largely characterised by various forms of diversity. The notion of “hybrid identity”²¹ (Rysst, 2016) is regarded to be very common for pupils who speak more than one language at home and consider themselves as having “one foot in two cultures” (Rysst, 2016). Secondly, the study highlighted the importance of appearance and language for identity construction among adolescents in the classrooms with immigrant pupils²² (Rysst, 2016). Through long-term participant observations and a series of focus group interviews with nine pupils, the researcher provided a longitudinal perspective on the challenges teenagers face in their ethnic identity constructions in Norway. Therefore, language teachers in Norway need to be prepared to meet diversity within each class and, preferably, use this diversity as a resource for ILL. In a more recent study, Tiurikova et al. (2021), by means of the Ungspråk questionnaire, developed by Haukås et al. (2021), found a link between open-mindedness and multilingualism among 593 lower secondary school pupils (mean age 13.5) learning foreign languages (Spanish, German or French) at school. More specifically, the study revealed that open-mindedness is positively linked to learning an additional language, multilingual identity and having friends who use other languages at home. The study findings indicate that providing students with activities and tools at the intersection of multilingualism, identity, and IC was likely to be more significant for open-mindedness than just living or studying abroad. The

²¹ Neither Norwegian, nor foreigner; characterised by cultural blending of the two (Rysst, 2016).

²² Born outside Norway or born in Norway to non-Norwegian parents.

findings also showed that placing an emphasis on diversity at school and inviting pupils from diverse backgrounds to interact with each other could be fruitful in enhancing their open-mindedness (Tiurikova et al., 2021). To sum up, against this backdrop, investigating culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and preparing teachers for culturally diverse classrooms in Norway is a significant and promising area of research.

2.6 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the theoretical framework of the study, which is aimed at exploring opportunities for ILL about the self and the other by means of the e-portfolio (EPIC) through the lens of pupils and teachers.

The chapter discussed the theoretical concept of culture and its role in FL language and teaching. It also discussed different conceptualisations of the role of culture in FL over time, which was followed by a description of the conceptual framework of IC and ILL, as well as the two underlying concepts of self-awareness and perspective taking. Section 2.3 argued for the use of the e-portfolios as a possible way to maximise the opportunities for ILL in the classroom. This was followed by a discussion of the key affordances of the e-portfolio as described in the literature. Finally, the key characteristics of adolescents' development and their ILL inside and outside the classroom were outlined.

In the following chapter, I situate the thesis in relation to the relevant research literature on the main empirical tenets of the study: adolescent ILL through the e-portfolio, self-awareness, perspective taking, and teachers' perspectives of the affordances of the intercultural e-portfolio.

3 Literature review

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant previous research. Section 3.1 presents an overarching review of studies that explore adolescent learners' ILL through the portfolio/e-portfolio. The following sections present research investigating ILL in the FL classroom with specific reference to self-awareness (Section 3.2) and perspective taking (Section 3.3). Section 3.3.1 provides a summary of research on self-awareness and perspective taking. Section 3.4 provides an overview of studies that examine the affordances of the intercultural e-portfolio as a tool for ILL as perceived by language teachers. The final section provides a summary of the existing research and the gaps that the present thesis aims to address.

3.1 Research on adolescent intercultural language learning through the portfolio/e-portfolio

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the research on the use of digital or e-portfolios (also referred to as electronic portfolios) as a tool for intercultural learning within various educational settings and levels. In what follows, I discuss studies that provide empirical evidence for the study's overall research question, namely: *What opportunities does the intercultural e-portfolio offer for intercultural language learning about the self and the other through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers?* Given the focus of the study, it is considered important to situate the thesis within the relevant research literature on adolescent ILL using portfolio/e-portfolio as a tool. Drawing on both the international setting and the Norwegian context, this review maps out the previous research on the topic. Furthermore, it aims to highlight research gaps that this thesis aims to fill.

Due to the relatively narrow focus of the topic of the thesis, any research published from around 1990 and prior to November 2022 was included in the first stage of the review. The following keywords were applied:

- 1) *portfolio OR e-portfolio OR eportfolio OR electronic portfolio OR digital portfolio OR online portfolio OR web-based portfolio;*

- 2) *intercultural* OR *intercultural competence* OR *intercultural awareness* OR *intercultural education* OR *intercultural learning* OR *intercultural language learning* OR *interculturality* OR *intercultural development* OR *intercultural competency* OR *intercultural teaching* OR *intercultural language teaching*;
- 3) *learner(s)* OR *pupil(s)* OR *student(s)*.

Systematic database searches were combined with manual searches of relevant journals and the snowball method (checking the reference lists of relevant articles or edited volumes). In the present study, the review process included searches in four databases, namely, Academic Search Ultimate, ERIC, Web of Science (WoS), and SCOPUS. Google Scholar was also used to identify relevant studies. The following review can thus be described as a state-of-the-art review, as it aims to narratively present the current situation of an evolving field through thematically, chronologically, and conceptually organised rich description, and includes elements from systematic reviews such as inclusion/exclusion criteria (Krumsvik & Røkenes, 2016). Table 3 provides an overview of inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study.

Table 3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Included	Excluded
Context	FL, SL	Bilingual education, first language education
Publication type	Articles, book chapters, PhD theses	Conference abstracts, MA theses, duplicates
Type of article	Empirical research studies	Theoretical articles
Language of publication	English	Not in English
Education level	Primary, secondary	Pre-school and tertiary, adult education

Publications not written in English and including other participant groups (i.e., younger than 10 or older than 18) were excluded from the search. I opted not to use search terms such as *adolescent(s)*, *teenager(s)* or *youth(s)* at this stage of my search but instead focused on the educational settings and therefore used the terms *learner(s)*, *pupil(s)*, *student(s)*. Furthermore, as studies in different FL contexts may also be relevant, the review included other languages

(different foreign languages), apart from EFL. Both EFL and ESL settings were included. The document type was restricted to peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and PhD dissertations.

A total of six papers met the inclusion criteria. Table 4 below presents the empirical research retrieved in the review and the supplemented manual searches based on the criteria mentioned above. The following review illustrates the most relevant search results for the present thesis and attempts to map out research gaps in the field.

Methodologically, research designs range from action research (e.g., Muse, 2020; Ruest, 2020) to interventions (Duraisingh et al., 2021; Chen & Yang, 2014; Forsman, 2006). All the studies draw on qualitative data. As such, most of the studies included a combination of several data sources, such as surveys, observations, interviews, and pupil artefacts, with Ruest (2020) being an exception in only including data from one data source (qualitative analysis of pupils' responses in the AIE). Four out of six studies used interviews (individual and group) with pupils. Only the study by Forsman (2006) included teacher interviews as well. Four studies were conducted in lower secondary schools and two in primary schools (Chen & Yang, 2014; Muse, 2020). Two studies (Chen & Yang, 2014; Duraisingh et al., 2021) employed out-of-school settings, although they did not provide enough details about the settings or organisation of the data collection process. Samples included ranged from 15 to 78. Three studies were conducted in more than one national context (Chen & Yang, 2014; Duraisingh et al., 2021; Lázár, 2015). Three studies were conducted in European classrooms, one study was conducted in Asia, one study was conducted in North America and one study was conducted in mixed settings.

Table 4. Previous research on adolescent ILL through the portfolio/e-portfolio

Study	Participants (age and number) ²³	FL context	Research design (methods)	Main tool(s)
Chen and Yang (2014)	Year 7 N=15	Chinese and English bilingual classrooms in Taiwan	One-year action research (questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses)	Three intercultural collaborative projects based on “technology-enhanced intercultural language instruction” (TEIL): online forums, weblogs, Skype, and email
Duraisingh et al. (2021)	12–18 N=26	Six classes of EFL learners from Australia, Mexico, Singapore, the USA	A semester-long, design-based intervention study (pre- and post-survey, interviews with pupils)	Digital tool – Out of Eden Learn (Connect & Care; See culture everywhere; (Re)consider & (Re)compare; Become more self-aware)
Forsman (2006)	13–15 N=17	EFL upper secondary classroom in Finland	Three-year action research (interviews with the students and teachers, questionnaire)	A series of tasks and activities to promote IC
Lázár (2015)	16 N=78	Four EFL classrooms in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Turkey	A five-month multinational study (questionnaire, student contributions in Moodle, observations, group interviews with students)	Web collaboration via Moodle

²³ In cases where the age of participants is not mentioned, school years are provided following the descriptions given in the studies.

Muse (2020)	Year 7 N=72; analysis of two students in the paper	EFL classrooms in Turkey	17-week action research (questionnaire, analysis of written responses in portfolios)	A self-narrative portfolio project
Ruest (2020)	13-15 N=20	French as a foreign language classroom in Canada	A semester-long exchange study (qualitative analysis of pupils' responses)	The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters

Theoretically, the studies mainly employed IC as the conceptual framework. Byram's model (1997) was foregrounded in the studies by Chen and Yang (2014), Duraisingh et al. (2021), Forsman (2006), Lázár (2015) and Ruest (2020). However, all the studies operationalised different definitions of IC and provided different approaches in terms of how to define and practice IC. For example, Lázár (2015) viewed IC as the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Muse (2020) used "cultural" and "intercultural" interchangeably, and the students' linguistic repertoire was a primary focus in her study. Duraisingh et al. (2021) utilised an understanding that "the concept of intercultural exchange implies learning about one's own culture at the same time as learning about someone else's" (p. 260). The researchers tended to avoid the term "competence". Forsman (2006) foregrounded interaction with and respect for difference in general, not only concerning representatives of certain English-speaking communities (p. 19), thus emphasising the awareness of difference and diversity and the ability to decentre as the main components of IC. Overall, different research foci were identified. For example, Muse (2020) stated that the main objective of the study was to explore and provide accounts for how Turkish and international pupils express themselves and develop their language skills through the self-narrative portfolio, which also acted as an assessment. Ruest (2020) aimed to explore the AIE potential in terms of Byram's model of IC (viewed in terms of the five *savoirs*) and to showcase adolescents' use of the AIE after the exchange. Since the studies by Duraisingh et al. (2021), Lázár (2015) and Ruest (2020) utilised intercultural exchange or some elements of intercultural exchange (Chen & Yang, 2014), they focused on exploring opportunities, challenges and "grey areas" related to the tools used, in order to support teachers when applying this approach for enhancing IC.

As for the tools used, the main challenge when identifying the studies was that they did not always use the label "portfolio" or "e-portfolio" as the main tool they implemented for promoting ILL. The reason for this might be the fact that the terms "e-portfolio" or "portfolio" are quite vague, and researchers might therefore use different terms while implying the same meaning or, vice versa, they use the same or similar term while implying different meanings. Some studies used a portfolio framework as a point of departure when designing their

instruction (e.g., Forsman, 2006); other studies used so-called “mini-portfolios” (Lázár, 2015) or other tailor-made digital tools and platforms. Overall, all the tools or platforms were custom-built, apart from Ruest’s study which used the AIE as the main instructional tool. Forsman (2006) argues that much of the methodology used in the study was inspired by experiential learning and portfolio work, i.e., regarding increased emphasis on the students’ reflections around and evaluation of their own learning. In the study by Lázár (2015), participants worked together online (via Moodle) through compiling materials in the form of wikis, mini-portfolios, forums, etc. The study by Chen and Yang (2014) used “technology-enhanced intercultural language instruction” (TEILI) to describe a cross-cultural FL instruction model mediated by technology tools. Duraisingh et al. (2021) implemented an intercultural digital tool called Out of Eden Learn.²⁴ All the work by the students in the study by Muse (2020) was assembled into a binder for each student, which the study refers to as the Portfolio. She emphasised the use of the portfolio as a framework for personal narrative and the main approach for data collection was to gather the participants’ writings and photography responses to tasks based on 17 identity-related prompts, very similar to what was implemented in the present study. In the following, I briefly discuss the key findings and research gaps that emerged or were identified from these studies in relation to the research question of the present thesis.

The studies by Chen and Yang (2014), Duraisingh et al. (2021), Lázár (2015), and Ruest (2020) were based on online collaboration across different contexts. In all these studies, the tools were evaluated positively by the participants and were shown to provide positive attitudes and outcomes among the participants with regard to ILL. The studies illustrated the importance of interaction among peers, the inclusion of multiple perspectives for making connections between own culture and the target culture, and emphasis on many selves as opposed to national identity alone. The participants in the studies also reported that participation in the programme helped them to develop greater self-awareness

²⁴ The project is based on four principles: (a) Connect and Care: to engage with different cultures and feel a sense of connection to people; (b) See culture everywhere: to expand their view of the concept of culture; (c) (Re)consider and (Re)compare: to consider or reconsider their existing understanding of culture(s); and (d) Become more self-aware: to situate their own lives, identities, and values relative to those of other young people.

of the ways in which they and others are shaped at least in part “by cultural forces” (Duraisingh et al., 2021). However, some of the studies suggested some improvements for future application of tools. For example, Ruest (2020), by focusing on the experiences of Canadian adolescents, argues that even though the AIE is not restricted to a national identity, the emphasis on national divisions is evident. The participants tended to discuss cultural differences superficially and rarely expanded their thinking or adopted the other’s perspective. Furthermore, the participants engaged more passively than actively with the “other” culture. In order to prevent this shortcoming, teachers should prepare their students to provide them with explanations of the language and purposes of the tool. In conclusion, Ruest (2020) argued that some questions in the AIE should be redesigned to avoid overgeneralisation, with a view to supporting the users in acknowledging multiple identities within a group (p. 18). One of the ways to do so is to allow learners first to reflect on their own attitudes and cultures before reflecting on others’, hence make the *Who I am* section compulsory.²⁵

The study by Chen and Yang (2014) indicated that, through TEILI,²⁶ the students developed their IC skills in four dimensions: knowledge of their own and their interlocutors’ cultures, open attitudes towards intercultural exchanges, skills for interacting with interlocutors, and a critical cultural awareness necessary for evaluating cultures. Although the majority of the participants experienced positive attitudes towards the project as a whole and developed cultural awareness of both their home culture and the cultures of their interlocutors, many pupils pointed to the fact that they still had difficulties in terms of interaction. One of the main barriers for pupils was a lack of language skills (accent, vocabulary, grammar). This finding indicates that language awareness is necessary during the process of intercultural interaction (e.g., Leow 2000).

Duraisingh et al. (2021) aimed to encourage young people to look at their own lives and cultural environments with fresh eyes and to exchange insights and

²⁵ In the new version of the AIE (revised in 2022), *Who I am* is still optional.

²⁶ TEILI was based on three intercultural collaborative projects, namely, Folk tales/storytelling: Past and present; Videoconference (Storytelling and cross-cultural discussion); and E-pal project.

experiences with peers (Duraisingh et al., 2021, p. 261). The format allowed them “to easily peruse a variety of stories and perspectives, can also help them to develop an understanding, in an emergent way, of the complexity and fluidity of culture as a phenomenon and to situate their own lives in comparison to those of peers” (Duraisingh et al., 2021, p. 274). The participants’ comments indicated that the outcomes were accompanied by some challenges (the three O’s): Overconfidence, Overgeneralisation, and Othering.²⁷ The researchers conclude that these challenges can make intercultural learning seem risky, requiring skilful navigation by teachers; these challenges should be made explicit to students from the outset.

Overall, the studies from different contexts, using collaboration and digital exchange combined with some elements from portfolio work (and mediated by the use of technologies), indicate that further research is needed in order to explore the opportunities for ILL using multimodal and technology-based tools in the classroom, even in the situations when collaborative online exchanges are not applied. Empirical research thus shows the benefits of authentic communication with children from other countries in terms of their intercultural development, but more attention must be given to the settings and practices where participants can reveal more personal stories, when they do not have the opportunity to communicate with pupils across borders.

The study by Forsman (2006) explores the opportunities afforded by focused and systematic work, inspired by portfolio methods, to bring enhanced cultural and linguistic awareness into the EFL classroom. As expressed by Forsman (2006), by using such tools as portfolios, “language teachers can help students become more aware of learning goals, processes and outcomes” (p. 94). Forsman (2006) showed that the promotion of IC could be achieved by, for instance, inspiring invoking engagement with difference and diversity and the ability to decentre (or use an “alien perspective”). Developing IC involves decentring, whereby we tentatively suspend our typical interpretive cultural frames of reference through which to potentially interpret the meanings being

²⁷ Overconfidence – when students overstated their knowledge of a culture or assumed their perspectives as the default; Overgeneralisation – when students made vague statements and overgeneralised about their own culture or country; Othering – when students “romanticised” or positioned groups of people as fundamentally different.

exchanged in any encounter and shift cultural perspectives (Cushner, 2014; Scarino & Liddicoat, 2016). Section 3.1.2 discusses examples of decentring activities used in the present study.

The last study (Muse, 2020) in this section focuses on mainstream classes and analyses eight pupils' portfolios. However, the study focuses mainly on two of the participants, one Turkish and one international. The study implemented a series of tasks, similar to the ones used in the present study. As a form of initial questionnaire, 72 students were given "a pair of glasses" made of paper.²⁸ As a follow-up, students were asked to write a minimum of 10 self-identifying adjectives. Once these handouts were collected, the researcher identified common themes among the participants (e.g., national identity, gender) to formulate initial thematic categories. Finally, the students were asked to write an essay to answer the question, "Who am I?" The participants in the study showed hints of self-awareness, although it was found that an international student (being a part of the minority culture) revealed less pressure from her peers and consequently presented "more evidence of identity development and self-revelation as well" (p. 204). Muse (2020) argued that, through the portfolio approach, the participants managed to explore their narrative histories, display the plurality of self, and show their linguistic repertoires, although the students also acknowledged that it was not always possible to "bullet point" who they were as a person. Importantly, they were able to "gain the tools needed for awareness and critical thought about the worlds both around them and within them" (p. 204). The researcher asserted that, from a teacher's perspective, it might be quite demanding. However, it was worth spending some time on feedback, offering students choices through prompts, focusing on metaphorical concepts and deep-reading self-narratives to observe their linguistic and identity growth (Muse, 2020, p. 204).

To summarise, despite the popularity of the use of portfolio/e-portfolio in higher education, using these tools for ILL has been of less interest to researchers in the context of primary and secondary schools. Empirical research

²⁸ The researcher explained that these glasses were a metaphor for the "lens through which you see the world". Students listed the people and organisations that had influenced their background in the left lens, and they described their life roles (e.g., brother, student) in the right lens.

identified in this section tends to focus on intercultural encounters with others from unfamiliar contexts or online exchange programmes, whereas literature has increasingly called for more empirical research on ILL in (real) classroom interaction, combined with updated teaching practices in the (real) use of intercultural tools (see Gil & Luis, 2016; Kearney, 2012; Lawrence, 2014). This study responds to this call by exploring the use of e-portfolios from multiple perspectives, i.e., pupils and teachers, and, importantly, mostly using the resources available in the in-school classroom context, for example, through interacting with peers and classmates. The studies above also reveal that more research is needed to address the role of portfolio-based design in adolescent ILL and to determine the affordances of the e-portfolio from the pupils' perspectives, in terms of learning outcomes and meaning-making, which are integral to self-awareness and perspective taking. The following sections contain an overview of studies on self-awareness (Section 3.2) and perspective taking (Section 3.3).

3.2 Research on self-awareness

This section reviews the existing research on self-awareness in the FL classroom. To the best of my knowledge, no study has examined both the role of self-awareness and perspective taking within ILL among young or adolescent pupils. Since empirical research on promoting these two integral constructs through e-portfolios in primary and secondary school settings was not found, the studies reviewed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 focus on self-awareness and perspective taking without any specific connection with e-portfolios as a tool for ILL.

Most of the studies were identified using Google Scholar, ERIC, and the snowball method, i.e., through checking the reference lists of relevant articles. Studies conducted at the university level and within adult education were excluded, as were theoretical articles, doctoral theses, MA theses, and unpublished research. Table 3, illustrating inclusion and exclusion criteria (Section 3.1), has been applied to this search as well. For the identification of relevant studies, the following search terms, combined with the Boolean operators AND and OR, were used in selected search engines:

- 1) *self* OR *self-awareness* OR *identity* OR *selves*;
- 2) *intercultural* OR *intercultural competence* OR *intercultural awareness* OR *intercultural education* OR *intercultural learning* OR *intercultural language learning* OR *interculturality* OR *intercultural development* OR *intercultural competency* OR *intercultural teaching* OR *intercultural language teaching*;
- 4) *learner(s)* OR *pupil(s)* OR *student(s)* OR *adolescent(s)* OR *teenager(s)* OR *youth(s)*.

During the screening phase, I excluded the studies involving participants younger than 10 and older than 18. Screening also involved scanning the title, abstract, and keywords, as well as a check of the literature to confirm that it was empirical research with mention of intercultural learning and the underlying component of self-awareness, which resulted in a more detailed reading of the paper.

A total of seven papers were included in the selection of studies relevant to this thesis (see Table 5). As for the research methodology, designs ranged from case study (Masterson, 2018; Cutrim Schmid, 2021), action research (Jaatinen, 2015; Prasad, 2015), and experiment (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014) to a participatory approach (Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019) and a curriculum development project (Krulatz et al., 2018). All the studies, apart from one (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014), were qualitative. Three studies were case studies (Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Jaatinen, 2015; Masterson, 2018). One study incorporated a control group and takes a predominately quantitative approach to the analysis to examine the effectiveness of a tool (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014). Another study was described as action research (Jaatinen, 2015). Piipponen and Karlsson (2019) described their study as a “participatory approach to design-based research”, while the study by Krulatz et al. (2018) did not situate their research within a particular methodology, however the design was referred to as “a school-based curriculum development project” involving a range of methods.

Table 5. Previous research on self-awareness

Study	Participants (age and number)	FL context	Research design (methods)	Main tool(s)
Cutrim Schmid (2021)	8–15 N=117 N=10 (teachers)	Four primary EFL classrooms and one secondary EFL classroom in Germany	Collaborative multiple case study (field notes, video recording, in-depth interviews with teachers, teachers' reflective journals, questionnaires, focus group interviews with learners)	Plurilingual task-based approach
Dziedziewicz et al. (2014)	8–12 N=122	Primary classrooms in Poland	Experiment (pre- and post-intervention design)	The Creativity Compass (the programme was based on a series of activities grounded in the main theme – travelling to different countries)
Jaatinen (2015)	Primary school pupils N=105 N=2 (teachers)	Two EFL primary classrooms in Finland	A case study with elements of action research (teacher-written reports, reflective discussions with researchers from the university)	Teachers developed tools and tasks (e.g., a portfolio task, sharing stories)
Krulatz et al. (2018)	6–15 N=n/a (four teacher teams)	Two EFL classrooms in rural schools in Norway	Curriculum development project (collecting lesson-planning materials and samples of student work, and a follow-up teacher survey)	Identity texts

Masterson (2018)	14–16 N=30	Two FL classrooms in Germany and Ireland	An eight-month case study (collection and comparison of narrative co-constructed life stories)	Online collaboration using eTwinning and the ABCs ²⁹ model
Piipponen and Karlsson (2019)	9–11 N=98	Primary language classrooms in Scotland, Finland, and three classes from an international school in Europe	Participatory approach to design-based research (analysis of stories, audio-recording transcripts of class discussions, emails from teachers, researcher's diary)	The Storycrafting method ³⁰
Prasad (2015)	n/a (Year 4/5/6) N=106	Four English and French classrooms in Canada and France	A 10-week ethnographic action research study (five exploratory case studies)	Identity texts as part of creating plurilingual multimodal books

²⁹ The ABCs model has been introduced by Schmidt (1998) and entails pairing students across languages and cultures to write an Autobiography, construct their partner's Biography, and compare and contrast their life stories in Cross-cultural analysis.

³⁰ The Storycrafting instruction was given in the following form: "Tell me a story, any story you want. I will write it down exactly as you say it. When it is finished, I will read it back to you and you can make changes or corrections" (Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019).

All studies were conducted in formal school contexts using mainstream FL classes. As for the age of the participants, only the study by Masterson (2018) targeted lower secondary school pupils, whereas the other studies investigated diverse populations of learners. Two studies do not specify the age of research participants (Jaatinen, 2015; Prasad, 2015). Two studies included intercultural exchange (collaborative learning projects) projects (Masterson, 2018; Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019), and three studies were conducted in more than one national context (Masterson, 2018; Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019, Prasad, 2015). Four of seven studies focus largely on pupils' experiences. Cutrim Schmid (2021), Jaatinen (2015), and Krulatz et al. (2018) have multiple foci: both learners and teachers' experiences.

Theoretically, the studies' research focus was on the exploration of the self and encouraging self-awareness among participants. However, the studies varied in the extent to which researchers explored self-awareness as a tenet of IC. The studies' conceptual frameworks were grounded in different theoretical underpinnings and models with regard to IC. Hence, different theoretical concepts were identified, for instance, focus on critical cultural and linguistic awareness (Krulatz et al., 2015); cultural and plurilingual repertoires (Cutrim Schmid, 2021); inclusive plurilingual pedagogy (Prasad, 2015); the pedagogy of intercultural encountering (Jaatinen, 2015; Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019); and the development of intercultural sensitivity, creative abilities, and cultural self-awareness (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014).

When it comes to the main tools used to promote self-awareness, the studies implemented a range of tools to activate self-awareness in pupils: identity texts (Krulatz et al., 2018; Prasad, 2015); plurilingual task-based language teaching (Cutrim Schmid, 2021); the ABCs methodology (Masterson, 2018); a portfolio framework (Jaatinen, 2015); custom-built tools, namely, the Creativity Compass (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014); and the Storycrafting method (Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019).

The studies included in the present review are varied in terms of the approaches utilised for enhancing self-awareness as the core of their investigation. However, some common patterns can be identified. One of the common themes was that three studies foregrounded the importance of intersecting plurilingual awareness and intercultural self-awareness in the classroom. Two of these

studies explored the potential of identity texts as a pedagogical practice to foster respect and cultural and linguistic diversity among secondary school pupils (Krulatz et al., 2018; Prasad, 2016), and one study (Cutrim Schmid, 2021) focused on the experiences of pupils with plurilingual tasks. As an example, the study by Prasad (2015) aimed to explore and compare the experiences of Canadian and French language learners with the creation of identity texts. The study demonstrated that, through identity texts (also involving self-portraits, photos, and collages), the participants had opportunities to see their peers and themselves in new ways; they began to envision how they could each draw on the full range of their repertoires to help them produce work that was reflective of their whole selves (Prasad, 2015, p. 505). The metaphor of a prism that “refracts light into an infinite rainbow of possibilities” (Prasad, 2015, p. 511) was useful, as it offered a three-dimensional imaginary for creative multimodal production in the classroom. Through the prism, students recognise the interconnectedness of languages and cultures (Prasad, 2015). In the Norwegian context, Krulatz et al. (2018) investigated how using identity texts³¹ with young participants helped language teachers to promote awareness of the diversity of cultures, as well as critical cultural and linguistic awareness. Grounded in multiliteracies pedagogy, the study shows that tolerance for cultural and linguistic diversity and a dialogue among students of various identifications in the language classroom and beyond were attained through activities that promote redefining of self.

Focusing specifically on the impact of plurilingual tasks revolving around embracing the learners’ plurilingual repertoires and engaging with ILL, combined with their identity construction, Cutrim Schmidt (2021) implemented teaching units that employed task-based language teaching and plurilingual pedagogy. Pupil interview data indicated that the participating German FL learners appreciated difference as something to be valued. Moreover, such tasks created enhanced opportunities for them to share aspects of their multiple selves that were previously ignored in the school context. Furthermore, it was found that the awareness of one’s own diversity and the diversity in the classroom

³¹ Identity texts are defined in the study by Krulatz et al (2018) as “positive statements that students can make about themselves” (Cummins et al., 2005, p. 41) by means of visual, spoken, written, musical, dramatic, or multimodal expressions.

also increased when the teachers implemented a “little twist” or small modification to the task.³² In turn, the pupils discovered that their everyday lives were shaped by diversity and “cultural mixing” when they simply examined their own and their peers’ everyday preferences (Cutrim Schmid, 2021, pp. 15–16).

Apart from using identity texts and plurilingual tasks and foregrounding plurilingual repertoires, a few studies looked at direct contact with members of the target culture in real-time situations and the opportunities such experiences can offer for promoting IC (Masterson, 2018). With reference to intercultural experiential learning and narrative theory, Masterson (2018) investigated how the ABCs (Autobiography, Biography, and Cross-cultural analyses)³³ model afforded possibilities to develop awareness of the self in two different contexts (Germany and Ireland). The study indicated that the co-construction of life stories supported adolescents in developing IC. The results showed that the participants relied on their personal and family circumstances to identify and describe themselves to their partner. However, the participants drew very few inferences about the role of culture on shaping their thinking or lives. As in other ABCs studies, participants faced some discomfort, and not all of them progressed beyond the descriptive level (Masterson, 2018).

A study by Piipponen and Karlson (2019), also drawing on experiences with intercultural online exchanges, reported on storytelling as a springboard for discussions about the self. In the study, the participants (aged 9–11) exchanged stories using the Storycrafting method with another class from three different national contexts. In this study, the participants were not defined predominately

³² For example, the teachers turned a typical classroom task into a tool for self-reflection by asking their pupils to reflect on their favourite breakfast.

³³ *Autobiography* reflects the way an individual describes the self (key people, experiences, events, memories from their own life such as family, home, friends, hobbies, successes, and failures, etc.). Then, participants interview a partner to discover his or her life story (*Biography*). Finally, participants compare this biography with their own autobiography to learn about cultural similarities and differences by constructing a Venn diagram that facilitates an in-depth self-analysis of cultural differences (*Cross-cultural analyses*) (Schmidt & Finkbeiner, 2006, p. 5).

by their nationalities, but rather by their belonging to different cultural groups (a school, a swimming team, a language group, etc.). Piipponen and Karlson (2019) advocated the use of narrative and dialogue as a promising way to help pupils to cultivate the process of personal growth in terms of increasing their awareness of themselves and others. The role teachers took during Storycrafting sessions had an impact on how the intercultural encounters unfolded. The results of the study highlighted that the role of the teacher impacted the way the children framed their stories. Overall, a growing body of research on the topic of self-awareness as part of IC points out that storytelling³⁴ in general can be a springboard for facilitation of the awareness of the self, as we need stories to give meaning to events and to widen our perception of self and others (e.g., Andenoro et al., 2012; Sell, 2017).

When it comes to the last two studies in the present review, they both indicate that engaging with self-awareness affords opportunities for ILL (Dziedziewicz et al., 2014; Jaatinen, 2015), albeit they emphasise different conceptual frameworks and focus on different age groups and different tools to target self-awareness. Through the combination of intercultural learning and creativity-enhancing tasks, Dziedziewicz et al. (2014) found that participants' age was positively associated with cultural self-awareness, and a custom-built tool (the Creativity Compass) was equally effective for both younger and older participants. The tasks engaged the pupils with divergent thinking, creative imagination, use of metaphors, transformations, and a number of other thinking skills relevant to creativity. It should be acknowledged that the study illustrates the importance of knowledge *about* culture in the process of IC. Moreover, the study conceptualises the notion of cultural self-awareness as the awareness of own culture and *national* identity, as each scenario in the tool deals with a country as a reference point (e.g., national symbols, national sports, customs, etc.). The study by Dziedziewicz et al. (2014) thus fails to address the critique in the literature that it is necessary to introduce situations that are culturally rich and to make explicit various dimensions of diversities (socio-economical, generational, gender-related, etc.) (Borghetti, 2019). The present study aims to

³⁴ Storytelling is defined as a social and cultural activity of sharing non-fictional and fictional narratives as a means of entertainment, education, moral formation, or cultural preservation (Deardorff, 2020).

overcome this pitfall by emphasising the awareness of the self from multiple cultural perspectives, not foregrounding a national one.

Focusing on both teachers and pupils' perspectives on the use of the portfolio-based tool to support the pupil's awareness of the self, Jaatinen (2015) conducted a longitudinal research project in Finland that drew on the pedagogy of intercultural encounters and a dynamic understanding of diversity.³⁵ Two English teachers implemented tasks in which the pupils encountered each other and reflected on things individually and in groups by means of portfolios. It should be mentioned that the participants had a chance to see how much difference there was in the classroom and realise how classmates sitting next to each other were also – in a way – representatives of another culture (Jaatinen, 2015, p. 736). The findings show that the subjective nature of the stories and the awareness of the self were experienced as motivating and meaningful by the participants.³⁶

To sum up, although the studies reviewed above suggest that the awareness of the self can foster other forms of awareness and, in turn, facilitate IC in general, there is still a limited understanding of how adolescents choose to express themselves and what role the tools selected and designed by teachers can play in raising self-awareness among this age group. Furthermore, little is known about how adolescents in Norway engage with self-awareness and ILL, as no Norwegian study with the topic of self-awareness at its core was found.

3.3 Research on perspective taking

Article II in the present thesis explores nuances of considering the perspectives of others through the focus group interviews based on the EPIC entries. In the literature, perspective taking (PT) is also labelled as perspective shifting, multiperspectivity, the ability to take perspectives or “trying on” new perspectives (Thein et al., 2007). The studies were identified using Google

³⁵ Diversity is viewed not merely as a linguistic or educational construct, but also social and multicultural, and otherness in general (Jaatinen, 2015).

³⁶ A more detailed description of the portfolio tasks and the affordances identified by the teachers is provided in Section 3.4, as it was relevant to the study's research focus to map out empirical research on the teachers' affordances of the portfolio.

Scholar, ERIC, and the snowball method, i.e., through checking the reference lists of relevant articles. For the identification of relevant studies, the following search terms, combined with the Boolean operators AND and OR, were used in selected search engines:

- 1) *perspective taking* OR *perspective-taking* OR *multiperspectivity* OR *perspective(s)* OR *perspective changing* OR *perspective-changing*;
- 2) *intercultural* OR *intercultural competence* OR *intercultural awareness* OR *intercultural education* OR *intercultural learning* OR *intercultural language learning* OR *interculturality* OR *intercultural development* OR *intercultural competency* OR *intercultural teaching* OR *intercultural language teaching*;
- 3) *learner(s)* OR *pupil(s)* OR *student(s)*.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria, as described in Table 3 (Section 3.1), were applied to this search as well. After screening, twelve studies met the inclusion criteria. Table 6 presents the empirical research on perspective taking retrieved in the review.

The studies included were qualitative case studies (n=9), design-based research (n=1), action research (n=1), and intervention (n=1). Ten studies were classroom-based research, and two (Burri et al., 2020; Yeom, 2019) were conducted as part of book club meetings with secondary school pupils outside of school hours. Two studies included pupils from a primary school context, other studies were from lower secondary (n=4) and upper secondary (n=6) school settings. The number of participants ranged from six (Burri et al., 2022) to 83 (Brown, 2022). As for the geographical distribution, Europe was the most represented continent (n=7), with four studies conducted in Norway, one in Finland (Forsman, 2016), one in the UK (Despoteris & Ananda, 2017), and one in Portugal (Mourão, 2013). Three publications reported on studies in Asia and Oceania (Burri et al., 2022; Howard et al., 2019; Yeom, 2019) and two studies were conducted in North America (Thein et al., 2007; Thein & Sloan, 2012). In terms of research foci, the studies focused mainly on learning outcomes and pupils' experiences, apart from two studies that incorporated teachers' perspectives (Thein & Sloan, 2012; Howard et al., 2019).

Table 6. Previous research on perspective taking

Study	Participants (age and number)	FL context	Research design (methods)	Main tools/materials
Brown (2022)	16 N=83	Upper secondary EFL classrooms in Norway	A 16-week qualitative case study (pre- and post- intervention, focus group interviews with pupils)	Critical Visual Literacy tasks aimed at developing multiple perspectives
Burri et al. (2022)	10–11 N=6	Primary EFL learners in Japan	A case study (observations and semi-structured interviews with pupils)	Picture book <i>Mirror</i> by Jennie Baker (2010)
Despoteris and Ananda (2017)	13 n/a	Spanish FL classrooms in the UK	A case study (observations, document analysis of reflections in daily journals)	A series of tasks based on a teaching unit “My Daily Routine”
Forsman (2016)	13–15 N=17	Upper secondary EFL classroom in Finland	A three-year action research (interviews with the students and teachers, questionnaire)	A series of tasks and activities to promote IC
Furnes and Birketveit (2020)	Year 5 N=21	Primary EFL classrooms in Norway	Intervention study (pre-test and post-test tasks, intervention, group interviews)	Picture book <i>The Soccer Fence</i> by Phil Bildner (2014)
Hegernes (2019)	13–14 N=23	Lower secondary EFL classrooms in Norway	A case study (observations, field notes, focus group interviews)	Picture book <i>The Wall</i> by Peter Sís (2007)

Hoff (2013)	n/a N=28	Upper secondary EFL classroom in Norway	A case study (observations, document analysis and informal discussions)	The use of a fictional text (an episode from <i>the Wire</i> , the American TV drama series)
Howard et al. (2019)	11–13 N=5 (teachers) N=59 (pupils)	Four additional language classrooms in New Zealand	A two-year exploratory qualitative case study (a demographic questionnaire, interviews with the teachers, non- participatory lesson observations, teachers' reflections and focus group interviews with pupils)	Intercultural inquiry on the topics: food and drink; school systems; school sports, families, fashion; use of time
Mourão (2013)	16–18 N=24	EFL secondary school pupils in Portugal	A small-scale project (audio recordings of classroom interactions, written responses and reflections, short written dialogues)	Picture book <i>The Lost Thing</i> by Shaun Tan (2010)
Thein et al. (2007)	Year 11–12 N=14	ESL high school pupils in the US	A case study (analysis of class discussions through reading multicultural texts)	Instruction on multicultural texts aimed at encouraging perspective taking
Thein and Sloan (2012)	N=1 (teacher) Year 10–12 n/a	ESL high school classrooms in the US	A design-based study based on teacher collaboration (analysis of teacher discussions during lesson study cycles of design sessions)	Instruction on multicultural texts aimed at encouraging perspective taking
Yeom (2019)	N=5 (teachers) Year 8–9 N=12	EFL, book club discussions in a secondary school in South Korea	A case study (audio recordings of book club discussions, written responses and reflections)	Picture book <i>Tea with Milk</i> by Allen Say (2009)

As for the theoretical framework, some of the studies did not always refer to the development of IC, per se, but targeted similar though different conceptual frameworks, for example, intercultural capability (Howard et al., 2019), cultural awareness (Burri et al., 2022), or global awareness (Yeom, 2019). The studies explicitly drawing on either IC or ILL (or both) were the following: Brown (2022), Despoteris and Ananda (2017), Heggernes (2019), Hoff (2013), Forsman (2006), and Furnes and Birketveit (2020). As for how the studies conceptualised the term PT, the studies relied on varied understandings of PT and foregrounded different aspects. Two studies aimed to problematise PT as an instructional practice when used to assist pupils in understanding their own worlds and the worlds of others in multicultural texts (Thein et al., 2007; Thein and Sloan, 2012), while not foregrounding any aspect of ILL. Two studies (Forsman, 2006; Furnes & Birketveit, 2020) focused on the skill of decentring, viewed in the study by Furnes and Birketveit (2020) as “the ability to take another person’s perspective”. Brown (2022) pointed out that it is important to make a distinction in relation to perspective taking, namely, between claims of “knowing” the other (i.e., some-one who is perceived to be different from oneself) and a willingness to engage with and consider others’ perspectives. The study by Brown (2022) centres around developing multiple perspectives through dialogues facilitated by reading of images; this approach is largely informed by critical visual practices. Other studies drew on varied conceptual frameworks related to PT, for instance, empathy and perspective taking viewed as dimensions of global awareness (Yeom, 2019); “intercultural positioning” or “third place” (Howard et al., 2019); enhancing perspective taking skills as part of intercultural dialogue (Heggernes, 2019).

There is a growing interest in exploring the perspectives of others within the field of intercultural FL education in the Norwegian educational context (e.g., Brown, 2022; Heggernes, 2019; Hoff, 2013). In the context of primary or secondary school, the studies were conducted with the use of a dialogical approach to fictional texts (e.g., Hoff, 2013) or picture books (Furnes & Birketveit, 2020; Heggernes, 2019) or images, by means of a critical visual literacy approach (Brown, 2022). Five studies used picture books as a pathway to PT. Studies by Burri et al. (2022), Heggernes (2019), Mourão (2013), and Yeom (2019) explored visual components of picture books and the role of visual literacy in adolescents’ discussions of picture books. Highlighting

picture books' affordances for ILL, the studies show that visual analysis of images allowed the students to reflect on both their own and others' cultural perspectives. The study by Burri et al. (2022) aimed to gather pupil interpretations about "an almost wordless picture book", *Mirror* by Baker (2010), through a series of activities and semi-structured interviews. The study's focus was on what meaning-making processes occurred when 10–11-year-olds compared their own life experiences and those of the characters of the book (an Australian and a Moroccan family). The findings suggested that simply giving the book to children was not sufficient to foster cultural awareness, sensitivity, or empathy. Discussing the stories of the two different cultural contexts allowed for meaning making to occur, but it was only through time engaging with the text and opportunities to interact with others that deep understandings could grow (Burri et al., 2022). The study demonstrated an example of how teaching through the children's initial (mis)understandings also required teachers themselves to have some degree of understanding of different cultures, but it also offered opportunities for teachers and pupils to operate as co-learners exploring common concepts together.

By combining critical visual literacy and ILL frameworks, Brown (2022) explored developing multiple perspectives through dialogues about images. The study shows that, even without any prior instruction about how to read images, Norwegian adolescents were able to engage reflectively and critically with images and showed multiple perspectives and decentring as a building block of perspective taking. Drawing on parts of the study by Brown (2022), a follow-up teaching-oriented paper by Brown and Habegger-Conti (2022) discusses the utilisation of images, and photographs in particular, as a tool for ILL. The authors suggest a range of activities to facilitate ILL and challenge imaginaries through photographs for the language classroom, as they argue that "the reading of cultural differences in photographs can be considered an intercultural encounter in its own right" (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2022, p. 46).

Decentring as an important component of developing PT was found in two studies (Forsman, 2006; Furnes & Birketveit, 2020). In the Norwegian context, Furnes and Birketveit (2020) conducted a study of how, in the light of intercultural theory, a picture book can be seen to serve as a teaching tool to develop the ability to decentre in an EFL classroom. This intervention study

was conducted around a pre-test/post-test design, which entailed explorations of different perspectives of the two main characters of the picture book, *The Soccer Fence*. Measuring pre- and post-test scores, Furnes and Birketveit (2020) showed a significant increase in the skills of decentring among 9-or-10-year-olds. For example, one of the participants immersed himself so thoroughly into the character's situation that he actually imagined himself in his shoes and tried to "transfer the situation into his own reality to understand his actions" (Furnes & Birketveit, 2020, p. 133). The study indicates that the pupils were able to develop decentring skills, and that they possessed the ability to take perspectives of others even being below the Piagetian age limit (which is 11–14 years of age). A study by Forsman (2006) also views decentring as an important step in the process of relativising the self, one's own perspective, and the ability to see reality from different perspectives than ones' own. The study suggests that a promising way towards IC involves the integral ability to decentre through a cognitive activity of reasoning. According to Forsman (2006), the teacher can guide students in reflecting on their own taken-for-granted ways and values, and help them de-familiarise their ways of thinking by pointing out how they take things for granted by looking at, for example, sports or fashion, or by discussing more or less imaginative ways of greeting people.

Fictional texts as a vehicle to considering other perspectives and exposing pupils to a diversity of perspectives on social concerns were used in the studies by Thein et al. (2007), Thein and Sloan (2012), and Hoff (2013). A study by Hoff (2013) aimed at exploring how the EFL teacher can ensure that fiction serves as a beneficial and effective medium for learners in their process of trying to understand the other and the self. Hoff (2013) found that, by taking the students out of their comfort zone and introducing them to new ways of working with a fictional text, they may be encouraged to reconsider aspects of their own behaviour and ways of relating to the world around them. Two other studies utilising fiction (namely, multicultural literature) by Thein et al. (2007) and Thein and Sloan (2012), with EFL students in the US, indicate that, in order to take on alternative perspectives, it is necessary not only to teach text genres but also engage students with perspective taking instructional strategies such as writing a letter to the class in the voice of one of the characters or constructing different versions of the same events based on differences in beliefs,

experience, and age. Therefore, in order for PT to move beyond the surface-level appropriation of rhetorical strategies, teachers must approach it as part of a larger project in changing status quo practices for literature instruction (Thein & Sloan, 2012, p. 321). As can be seen from all three studies, the teacher role is crucial when working actively with texts and selecting or designing tasks and activities (Hoff, 2013; Thein et al., 2007; Thein & Sloan, 2012). Overall, according to Álvarez Valencia and Michelson (2023), the activity of PT, mediated through fictitious characters, invites interpretation and reflection on the experience of learning, as “learners-as-characters must reflect carefully about what kinds of ideological positions cohere with their adopted identities and how they might feel if their character evolves into a persona whose ideological positions they themselves may not agree with” (pp. 15–16).

Focusing specifically on the types of tasks or activities that help to enable learners to shift their own perspectives and consider the perspectives of others, Despoteris and Ananda (2017) conducted a study on how language learners in a Spanish classroom in the UK experienced perspective taking as a shift from a focus on their own perspectives to a point of view that also included different perspectives. The participants reflected on their own assumptions and beliefs about cultural routines in Peru and the UK through watching video clips; they compared and contrasted their routines with those of young people from Peru or answered some critical questions which they included in their daily journals. As follow-up assignments, pupils were asked to write an imaginary letter to a Peruvian exchange student who was coming for a visit and interview a Peruvian teacher. However, this study concerned only a detailed description of the activities and does not include any thorough data analysis from the pupils’ perspectives.

Drawing on the intersecting data from both teachers and pupils, the study by Howard et al. (2019) shows that reflecting on other people’s cultural practices in focus group discussions enabled some participants to consider and reframe their own cultural practices from different perspectives. The participants commented on their awareness of how their way of seeing things had changed and expressed their increased comfort with difference. However, there were some shortcomings. Firstly, some participants showed a tendency to make “us” versus “them” comparisons in which they assessed “other” cultural differences as “peculiar” or “wrong”, rather than simply as cultural variations. Secondly,

the teachers reported that some participants were not used to being asked the types of questions that were integral to the intercultural reflections in which they engaged (Howard et al., 2019, p. 11). One of the reasons for that could be that abstract thinking had not been yet fully developed in the participants and this resulted in differing levels of ILL, as also emerged in the focus group interviews. To sum up, the study confirms that there are worthwhile intercultural learning gains. However, there was also evidence of more variability in the participants' ability to consider and understand others (Howard et al., 2019, p. 564).

3.3.1 Summary of research on self-awareness and perspective taking

Overall, empirical research on self-awareness and perspective taking is varied and, at the same time, growing. Most empirical research on self-awareness within FL education has been carried out in the context of tertiary education (e.g., García-Pastor, 2018; Houghton, 2011, 2013; Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016). These studies were discussed in the literature review section of Article I. The studies from the review above show that language learners benefit from various forms of school-based interventions aimed at raising self-awareness among pupils. Research in different national contexts exemplified above shows how pupils become aware of the self, their language, and their cultural backgrounds through the co-construction of personal stories across several FL classrooms (Masterson, 2018; Piipponen & Karlsson, 2019), implementing identity texts (Krulatz et al., 2018; Prasad, 2015) and developing custom-built tools and tasks for enhancing ILL (e.g., Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Dziejewicz et al., 2014). Some of the studies reviewed above explore the interactions between the languages pupils speak (multilingual selves) and their multicultural selves (e.g., Krulatz et al., 2018; Cutrim Schmid, 2021). However, there is a limited number of studies on how pupils can embrace their peers and awareness of others in class in those explorations and, more importantly, link their learning outcomes to ILL as an overarching objective. The literature review provided above clearly identifies a research gap, as little has been implemented in practice in terms of how self-awareness can be explored and linked to fostering pupils' ILL in secondary school classrooms. This study contributes to this growing research by exploring self-awareness as part of IC,

with special attention to lower secondary school pupils, by exploring how shifting away from “the nation as the primary unit of analysis” (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) to an alternative concept of multiple Selves allows pupils to experience the variety of facets of diversity (e.g., national, linguistic, social) even within the most homogeneous class group (Borghetti, 2019). Moreover, the present study adds to this work by investigating an under-researched group of learners, namely, adolescents in Norway and their ILL, focusing on self-awareness as an integral part of IC.

As for the research on PT, the literature review presented above points to several gaps in the research about adolescent language learners and what types of tasks and activities activate perspective taking in pupils. So far, studies have tended to focus on picture books (Burri et al., 2022; Furnes & Birketveit, 2020; Mourão, 2013; Yeom, 2019), fictional texts (e.g., Hoff, 2013; Thein et al., 2007), and dialogues about images (Brown, 2022). Recent research indicates that there is a need to incorporate these approaches within a larger frame of reference, for example, an e-portfolio framework aimed at ILL. There is still a gap where the context of secondary schools is concerned, and questions remain as to how to integrate ILL aimed at perspective taking for lower secondary school pupils. To conclude, in light of the above studies, research on perspective taking and self-awareness is somewhat missing in the Norwegian context. Therefore, the present study aims to contribute to filling this gap in the Norwegian ILL research and promote a deeper understanding of the potential of the EPIC as an intercultural tool in the Norwegian context.

3.4 Research on teachers’ perspectives of the affordances of the intercultural portfolio/e-portfolio

In this section, I present the current state of empirical research involving teachers’ perceptions of the affordances of the intercultural portfolio/e-portfolio in relation to adolescent language learners. Teachers’ perceptions of the affordances of e-portfolios can deepen our understanding of the needs and priorities teachers have within a specific context and inform future teaching practices in language classrooms (Lawrence, 2020).

When it comes to research on the perceptions of the affordances of e-portfolios, the research conducted so far mostly focuses on the perceptions of the

affordances of a portfolio from the students' perspectives and in the context of higher education, with undergraduate students (see Dervin & Hahl, 2015; F. Kennedy et al., 2012; Kremzer, 2021; Su, 2011). Electronic portfolios have been advocated to serve as "a portrait of teacher growth" in many graduate and undergraduate programmes (Pitts & Ruggirello, 2012, p. 49). However, studies on how teachers view the opportunities and challenges presented by portfolio/e-portfolio in terms of ILL are scarce, particularly in secondary school education; in fact, the database and manual searches for Article III and this thesis have identified only three studies, as shown in Table 7.

The studies were qualitative (Jaatinen, 2015) or mixed (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Oranje, 2016; 2021). Two studies were conducted in Europe (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Jaatinen, 2015), whereas Oranje (2016; 2021) reported on research in New Zealand. All the studies made a clear reference to using portfolios as a tool. However, they were not consistent in the definition of the term and the extent to which the portfolio approach was integrated in the study. For example, *a portfolio-oriented language and teaching approach* was integrated in the study by Gonçalves & Andrade (2007); a portfolio is defined as an organised collection of school-work produced by the learner throughout a period of time (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007). *Cultural portfolio projects* (Oranje, 2016; 2021) were a student-centred classroom activity related to an aspect of the target culture. In the study by Jaatinen (2015), *language portfolios* were used to design and carry out tasks and create situations in which the children encountered each other and reflected on things individually and in collaboration. The studies drew on different terms related to ILL. Oranje (2016; 2021) used intercultural communicative language teaching as an approach, with intercultural communicative competence as its goal. The study by Gonçalves and Andrade (2007) foregrounded plurilingual and intercultural competence, and Jaatinen (2015) drew on the pedagogy of intercultural encounters. All these studies share results that outline the affordances of the portfolio as a tool and the positive impact of the intervention on ILL. In what follows, I describe the studies' results in more detail.

Table 7. Previous research on teachers' perspectives of the affordances of the intercultural e-portfolio

Study	Participants (age and number)	FL context	Research design (methods)	Main tool(s)
Gonçalves and Andrade (2007)	17–18 N=5 (teachers)	German as a FL in Portugal	A research project within teacher education (a questionnaire with teachers, analysis of written reflections)	A portfolio-oriented language and teaching approach
Jaatinen (2015)	Primary school pupils N=105 N=2 (teachers)	Two EFL primary classrooms in Finland	A case study with elements of action research (teacher-written reports, reflective discussions with researchers from the university)	Teachers developed tools and tasks (e.g., a portfolio task, sharing stories)
Oranje (2016, 2021) ³⁷	15–18 N=23 N=3 (teachers)	Three FL classrooms (German and French) in New Zealand	Two-phase project (Phase 1: a questionnaire administered to teachers; Phase 2: in-class intervention involving collecting Cultural Portfolio Projects from the pupils, observations, field notes, reflection sheets, group interviews, teacher interviews)	Cultural Portfolio Projects

³⁷ A journal article by Oranje (2021) was associated with a doctoral thesis (Oranje, 2016).

A study with in-service Portuguese teachers implemented portfolios as a pedagogical tool to support plurilingual and intercultural education (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007). The five participating teachers emphasised that use of the portfolio played an important role, as it allowed the teacher to recognise the intercultural profiles of their learners. The teachers expressed their intention of continuing with the project and implementing portfolios in their future practice, but they recognised a twofold challenge: involving the agents (neither parents, nor pupils are familiar with portfolio-oriented learning) and the work itself (the need for collaborative work on the part of teachers, due to a lack of materials). Overall, the study advocates for the integration of portfolio-oriented language learning into the classroom. Although the study focuses entirely on the teachers' reflections, without collecting data from their pupils, the results indicate that the use of portfolios may play an important role as a means of connecting languages and overcoming frontiers within the curriculum, as it allowed teachers to take into account a plurilingual and intercultural profile of each student.

In the study by Jaatinen (2015) (also included in the review in Section 3.1.1 above), two English teachers developed concrete tools and methods for identity development in language learning through portfolios and storytelling. One of the tasks in the project they developed was based on a portfolio framework (An assignment for the portfolio: Our Multicultural English Classroom).³⁸ Such activities, compiled in the form of a portfolio, aimed at developing participants' understanding of diversity and increasing their tolerance. The participants started to learn about different perspectives when they were given opportunities to reflect on their own identity. They reported positively about their experiences because they had a chance to think about their lives and share their life experiences with other children. This gave the teachers a signal that the subjective nature of the stories – and in that way developing one's identity – is experienced as motivating and meaningful (Jaatinen et al. 2011). Summing up, child-centred teaching methods as reported by the teachers, such as collaboration, portfolios, and storytelling, provided children with affordances

³⁸ On the classroom wall, where there was a leaf made by every learner in the classroom, and the assignment was to attach a leaf to this tree. Participants had the opportunity to tell and present their stories, as well as hear and see stories told by other learners.

to experience self-direction and ownership of their learning, as well as experiences of success and belief in their abilities.

Two of studies that were found were based on one intervention that explored secondary school language teachers' experiences related to portfolio use and its implementation within ILL. Oranje (2016, 2021) conducted an in-class intervention (Cultural Portfolio Projects) with three FL teachers in three classrooms (two German and one French) in New Zealand. The study involved two phases. Firstly, the researcher gathered teachers' perceptions related to intercultural language and teaching through questionnaires and, secondly, implemented an intervention called Cultural Portfolio Projects involving three classes of learners and their teachers. Gathering information on challenges and affordances faced by teachers in their practice is "crucial if change is required and assistance is to be provided" (Oranje, 2016, p. 61). A follow-up study by Oranje (2021) focuses on the teachers' experiences and addresses them through the lens of Reflection as the point of departure in the analysis. The study indicates that reflection on one's own cultural viewpoint was mentioned as the most beneficial aspect of the Cultural Portfolio Projects (Oranje, 2021). Overall, the teachers recognised complexity in their own and their students' cultures, in addition to gaining a better understanding of their students as individuals as a result of the intervention (Oranje, 2021, p. 154).

Summing up, although many studies have examined the use of e-portfolios in higher education, there is a lack of research examining this tool for ILL in primary and secondary school settings. In the Norwegian research setting, no studies were found related to the teachers' perceptions of and experiences with the intercultural e-portfolio. Taking the perspective of the teachers in this study allows for the exploration of the actual practices, as the use of a new tool affords new opportunities and highlights the challenges of their current practice. Furthermore, the variety of under-examined intercultural resources and the lack of guidance from national curricula have led to the need to investigate real classrooms and real teachers' perspectives on their use of an intercultural tool. This study aims to provide current insight into three Norwegian teachers' perceptions of the affordances of e-portfolios.

3.5 Summary of research gaps

The present thesis explores the opportunities offered by e-portfolio as a tool for ILL (including awareness of the self, awareness of others, and perspective taking) in the EFL classroom, viewed through the lens of pupils and teachers. The review of literature in this chapter indicates that the research field of ILL through e-portfolios is evolving and varied. Many of the reviewed studies focused on intercultural encounters outside of the classroom or online exchange intervention programmes (e.g., Chen & Yang, 2014; Duraisingh et al., 2021), whereas literature has increasingly called for more classroom-based research that values internal diversity within mainstream classrooms (Walton et al., 2013; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). The present study aims to provide more evidence of the ways in which adolescents can activate their ILL through a portfolio-based framework in the classroom.

When it comes to self-awareness, this empirical focus has received a limited attention within ILL research and language education in the primary and secondary school context. Research in different national settings reported on how language learners raised their awareness of the self, their language, and their cultural backgrounds by analysing their intercultural experiences inside and outside of the classroom, by inviting them to tell meaningful stories or by means of identity texts and online platforms (e.g., Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Jaatinen, 2015; Krulatz et al., 2018; Masterson, 2018). Fenner (2001) argued that reflections on a text allow the reader to turn interpretations upon themselves and will consequently provide “possibilities to widen their perspectives, their view of self” (p.19). These results were obtained when the researchers used fictional texts as a tool to raise self-awareness and ILL, whereas the present research project used the awareness of the self to further activate ILL. This study thus focuses on facilitating ILL by raising self-awareness and aims to contribute to further understanding of how substituting “the nation as the primary unit of analysis” (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) with an alternative concept of (multiple) self among adolescents allows them to experience the variety of facets of diversity.

As far as PT is concerned, this focus on FL in secondary school settings has remained an underexplored area of research. Firstly, although recent research has demonstrated that activating PT among FL learners is one of the fruitful

ways to promote decentring and, ultimately, IC (Forsman, 2006; Furnes & Birketveit, 2020), more research on the conceptualisation and analysis of PT is needed. The present study hence contributes to providing a more thorough understanding and analysis of the concept of PT within the theoretical framework of ILL in FL settings. Secondly, previous studies reported that picture books and engaging in dialogues around images and photographs, as well as comparisons within and across different cultural stories, can promote PT among learners (Brown, 2022; Burri et al., 2022; Furnes & Birketveit, 2020). However, there was limited evidence related to “which types of activities and tasks are most effective for children of different ages in helping them develop skills to ‘step into another’s shoes’ or understand the complexity of intercultural interaction” (Driscoll and Simpson, 2015, p. 175). The present study aims to fill this gap in the literature by examining the impact of types of tasks on the manifestations of pupils’ PT in the Norwegian context. Summing up, focusing on both self-awareness and PT is to a large extent overlooked in the literature; there is thus a clear research gap which needs to be filled. Overall, as shown by the existing studies by, for example, Prasad (2015), Cutrim Schmidt (2021), and Jaatinen (2015), a broader view on the intersections between the self and the other may enable learners to highlight other aspects of diversity such as age, personality, language, social roles, etc.

In terms of the third focus of the present study, the affordances of the e-portfolio as perceived by the teachers, only three studies were identified that reflect the focus of the present thesis. Moreover, in terms of the context of these investigations, only one study was found that had been carried out in the Nordic educational setting (Jaatinen, 2015). So far, far too little attention has been paid to adolescents’ ILL through portfolio/e-portfolios. Moreover, as indicated by Zhang and Zhou (2019), exploring outcomes of ILL through pedagogical interventions and simultaneously supporting teachers’ personal and professional capabilities (Walton et al., 2013) might shed light on how to develop an understanding of IC and how to pursue this goal through education. This thesis thus aims to contribute to the growing area of research on the opportunities afforded by the e-portfolio as a tool for ILL, targeting self-awareness, and perspective taking, while building on existing investigations (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Jaatinen, 2015; Oranje, 2016, 2021).

Summing up, this doctoral study aims to address the research gaps highlighted above and provide an exploratory lens through which these research foci (self-awareness and perspective taking) are illuminated, shedding light on an additional perspective on the affordances of the e-portfolio as viewed by teachers. The following section describes the methodological procedures conducted in order to address the study's research question and fill the research gaps identified in this review.

4 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological framework of the study. The first section discusses the rationale behind the use of case study as a research design. Section 4.2 provides an overview of the research philosophy and pedagogical approach. Section 4.3 describes the participants and setting for the study and provides the content of the EPIC intervention and classroom procedures. The data collection procedures are described in Section 4.4. The following section offers a description of data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of quality criteria, reflexivity of the researcher, and ethical considerations.

4.1 Case study design

This research project implemented case study design. The study is a qualitative exploratory case study based on an e-portfolio-based intervention implemented to promote ILL, more specifically, self-awareness and perspective taking. The instruction with pupils in Year 9 (aged 14–15) in a Norwegian lower secondary school represents the case under study. Case study can be defined as an in-depth exploration of a particular entity (a programme, policy, curriculum, intervention) or an individual, a family, or a nation from multiple perspectives in a “real life” context (Duff, 2019, p. 145). Due to the complexity of processes in FL classrooms in terms of the changing nature of the classrooms and expected learning outcomes, as well as the rapid growth of the use of technologies inside and outside the classroom, the case study design is suitable as it is “research in the context and service of discovery, not justification” (M. S. Morgan, 2015). Case studies are tailor-made for exploring new processes or behaviours or ones that are little understood (Meyer, 2001). A case study approach is useful when questions in a study are stated as “how” and “why”, investigating a phenomenon that is not well researched empirically. For all these reasons, case studies are frequently used in education and applied linguistics (Duff, 2019). Correspondingly, the case study approach in the current research has been chosen to “illuminate” the phenomenon (Gall et al., 2007): to investigate the ILL opportunities of the e-portfolio (EPIC) through the lens of pupils and teachers. As such, this exploratory study aims to develop

an in-depth understanding of the EPIC intervention in Year 9 in the Norwegian EFL classroom.

The instruction in five EFL classes constituted a case in this study and was examined *per se*, i.e., there was no control group. This decision could be explained by several considerations. Firstly, a comprehensive understanding of the target phenomenon was one of the main purposes of this study. The aim was to collect a range of in-depth data from the participants (pupils and teachers) in Year 9 at this school. Therefore, case study design provided opportunities to elaborate on complexities regarding the pupils' ILL by means of the EPIC taking place in the EFL classrooms through a range of methods of collecting data. Furthermore, the use of the whole set of data within one collective case of five classes allowed me to explore aggregated meanings to make assumptions relevant for the FL learner in a Norwegian lower secondary school classroom. Moreover, due to uneven participation of the pupils from each class (see Section 4.3.2), it would not have been feasible to assign some classes to the control group condition. Five classes were therefore considered collectively. Another issue concerns the decision not to explore each pupil on an individual case basis. I have not considered the participating groups of learners as homogeneous; I opted to gain insights about a collective multifaceted picture of their context and their backgrounds through a range of data collection instruments. Thus, this case can potentially serve as a teaching case for teacher education (Patton, 2015, p. 275). As Duff (2019) argues, case study has an important pedagogical function in educational contexts, namely, to create stories of learners or contexts that may help the public understand issues more poignantly than reports based on other kinds of research (p. 145).

Simons (2009) emphasises that a case study should not be seen as a method, rather, it is “a design frame” that may incorporate a number of methods. Hence, the qualitative case study design is a viable research design for exploring a large amount of data (Duff, 2008). As such, this doctoral study employed three main data collection methods and one supplementary (a questionnaire), namely, collection of pupils' texts produced during the intervention, focus group interviews with pupils, and interviews with teachers. A sequential approach to data collection has been applied, starting with the questionnaire, followed by the EPIC intervention, and then collecting the pupils' texts. The focus group interviews and teacher interviews were conducted as a final stage. It was

considered beneficial to gain some information about the pupils' background through the questionnaire before implementing the EPIC intervention and collecting the pupils' artefacts, and then follow up by conducting focus group interviews with pupils and interviews with teachers to explore their perceptions about and experiences with the EPIC (see Figure 4 for an overview of the data collection methods).

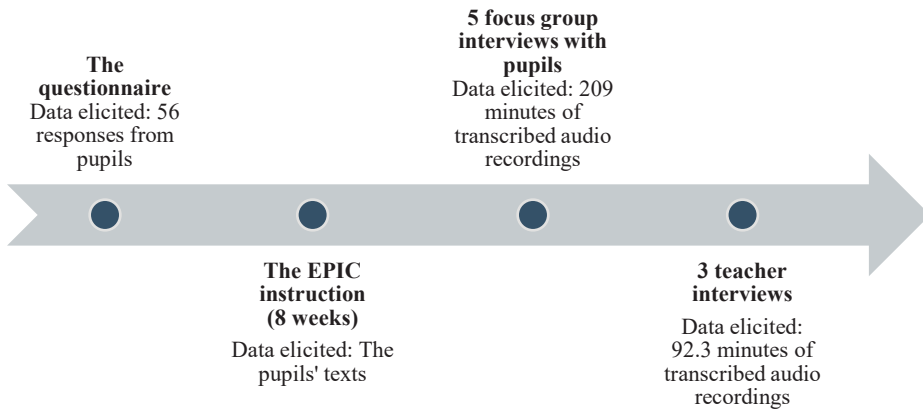


Figure 4. Overview of the case study with the methods used and the data they elicited

Overall, the underlying philosophical assumptions in the case study research align with those of qualitative research because they both seek a more holistic interpretation of the event or situation under study. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state: “Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p. 3). Both in qualitative paradigms and in case study research, researchers deal with a phenomenon in very vivid, detailed, and highly contextualised ways from different perspectives (Duff, 2019, p. 145). However, in this sense, qualitative case studies have some limitations and criticisms, which generally come from practical constraints, e.g., limited possibility to generalise, low external validity, and the lack of causal mechanisms. The consideration regarding quality criteria relevant to qualitative case studies is discussed in Section 4.6.

4.2 Research philosophy and coherence of the project

Philosophical underpinnings guiding research need to be identified in order to help explain the researcher's rationale behind the chosen methodological approach (Creswell, 2003; 2013). As for ontology (what is knowledge) and epistemology (how we know) (Creswell, 2003), the theoretical underpinnings of both constructivism and sociocultural theory (SCT), combined with an ecological perspective to language learning and interpretivism, have contributed to the research philosophy and the methodology of this study.

Ontologically, the study applies a constructivist paradigm within ILL. According to the theoretical premises of constructivism within educational theories, we construct knowledge based on our own perceptions and conceptions of our world and reality constructions are not seen as absolute and objective. Therefore, constructing knowledge is a continuous interactional process in which learners acquire knowledge in their own subjective ways and by means of tacit meaning-making processes (Taber, 2011). The role of teaching thus shifts from one that seeks to maximise the communication of fixed content and skills to one in which students are led to experience the knowledge construction process (for example, by constructing interpretations, appreciating multiple perspectives, developing and defending their own positions while recognising other views, and becoming aware of and able to manipulate the knowledge construction process itself) (Knuth & Cunningham, 1993, p. 164). Constructivism as applied to ILL is based on the premise that ILL is a continuous interactional process in which learners construct their knowledge in their own subjective ways. Hence, ILL in this study is viewed as an inherently personal and ongoing process, which implies that pupils actively construct their own meanings in the following ways:

- Pupils engaged in the process of ILL through meaning-making and reflecting on their experiences with the EPIC, focusing on self-awareness and perspective taking.
- Pupils engaged with the EPIC to raise awareness about the self, others, and the ways we consider the world through multiple perspectives. For example, they viewed one situation or action from a range of perspectives and viewpoints.

- Pupils reflected on the question *Who am I?* from the standpoint of multiplicity and continuity over time, as well as across cultural affiliations to which they belonged (roles in family, friends and hobbies, social roles, generation, etc.).
- Pupils engaged with multiple modes of representation (picture, text, sound, video, etc.) to accumulate richer learning experiences.

Furthermore, the premises described above also informed the choice of a tool aimed to promote ILL in this study. The constructivist paradigm implies a learner-centred approach, i.e., the role of the teacher as the main source of knowledge was replaced by that of a facilitator who guided the pupils through intercultural activities incorporated in form of the e-portfolio entries. E-portfolios, according to Delett et al. (2001, p. 559), provide a portrait of what students know and what they can do, offer a multidimensional perspective of student progress over time, and encourage self-reflection and participation. Dubreil (2009) argues that e-portfolios are particularly suited to intercultural learning and teaching for the following reasons: they are long-term, process-oriented projects; use multiple sources for information; are learner-centred; are inquiry-based; demonstrate growth of understanding.

The positioning of this study within SCT adds an important theoretical perspective by including a social dimension in the process of ILL, as opposed to taking a solely cognitive viewpoint (provided by constructivism). SCT considers all learning to be a process that occurs through interaction with a variety of sociocultural phenomena (Vygotsky, 1978). Van Lier (2004) expanded the Zone of Proximal Development and included, apart from learning through interaction with more capable peers or adults, interaction with equal peers, interaction with less capable peers, and inner resources (knowledge, memory, experience, etc.). The pupils in the present study participated in interactions with peers, whole-class discussions and in pairs, conducted interviews with a person with a different cultural background as part of their e-portfolio, and negotiated their meanings in focus group interviews. Furthermore, by drawing on Vygotsky's theoretical framework, Van Lier (2004) added an ecological perspective to language learning by necessitating interaction in a social system, and he also argued that language learning is a social process that involves input, learners, environment (including perceived artefacts and the environment itself), and mediating factors like time and affect

(van Lier, 2004). The ecological approach highlights the crucial role of affordances in the environment, as learning emerges when agents perceive these affordances (pick up on the affordances and pressures of the environment), and the environment in turn changes as a result of agents' behaviour (Steffensen & Kramsch, 2017). The present study (Article III) utilises the concept of affordance, first coined by Gibson (1979) and further developed by van Lier (2000, 2004), which captures the relationships between the environment, the individual, and what an individual is able to do with this environment. Affordance, as defined by van Lier (2004), is the action potential that "emerges as we interact with the physical and social world" (p. 92).

The premises of both constructivism and sociocultural theory lend themselves well to qualitative methods, as they emphasise the researchers' presence and interpretative work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Conducting a qualitative case study in the EFL classroom allowed data gathering in naturalistic settings from multiple perspectives. This study explored the object of the study from the lens of pupils and teachers to elucidate the phenomena under study from two perspectives. I was involved in all the processes including design, planning, and teaching, which allowed an in-depth understanding of the context of the study and the study participants' perspectives (Cohen et al., 2011). However, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue, in qualitative research, there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual; any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity (p. 29).

Thus, interpretivism also informed this study. Interpretivism entails individuals constructing meanings as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998; cited in Creswell, 2013). The qualitative case study aims to interpret the meanings others have about the world (Creswell, 2003). During data analysis, I generated meanings and analytical constructs from collected data, and interpreted patterns of meanings. However, I recognise that my personal background and my commitment to beliefs and values shaped the interpretations of the results. A more profound account of researcher position as well as reflexivity as the central feature of the data collection and data analysis of the study will be provided in Section 4.7. The coherence of the doctoral research project in terms of ontology, epistemology, and the methods used (methodology and analysis) is shown in Figure 5 below:

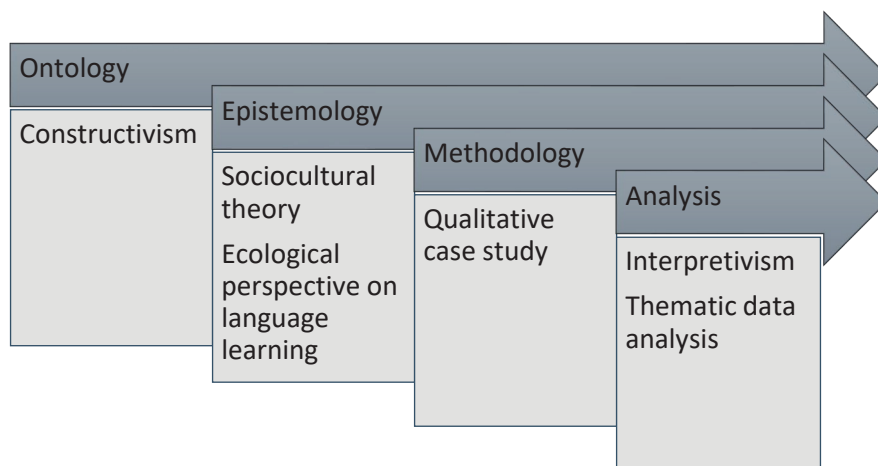


Figure 5. Overview of the coherence of the research project in terms of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and analysis

4.3 The study

4.3.1 The school

The school is situated in an urban area close to the city centre of a medium-sized town on the west coast of Norway, with around 250 pupils and 45 staff. As described by the teachers and according to the school webpage, it is a multicultural school, where the pupils have backgrounds from around 20 different countries. The school has been responsible for the municipality's introductory Norwegian language and culture courses for newly arrived pupils of secondary school age since 2012. The school did not deal with intercultural teaching explicitly, but teachers and pupils from the school took part in the DEMBRA³⁹ development programmes aimed at preventing prejudice and exclusion at schools.

³⁹ Demokratisk beredskap mot rasisme og antisemittisme (Democratic Preparedness Against Antisemitism and Racism) offers development programmes for schools and teacher training institutions to prevent prejudice and exclusion. <https://dembra.no/en>

4.3.2 Participants

In qualitative research settings, there is a great variability in terms of sampling strategies and, moreover, sampling is not merely about the individuals a researcher is sampling but the context in which they are situated, their relationships with others, and social practices prevalent in that context (Miyahara, 2019). This PhD study focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of experiences of the pupils and their teachers with the intercultural e-portfolio integrated into the FL classroom. Therefore, in this study, I have employed several strategies to ensure that the sampling plan and the sampling parameters are aligned with the purposes and the research question of the study (Punch, 2009, p. 165).

The main sampling strategy used was purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015). In purposeful sampling, the researcher strategically selects information-rich cases to study; cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated (Patton, 2015, p. 265). The pupils' school level, namely lower secondary school (Year 8 to 10 in Norway), was chosen purposefully, as there were few studies from this level of education. Moreover, a number of issues were also taken into account when the school level was considered. Firstly, ILL is clearly relevant to both the current English subject curriculum (LK20) and the previous curriculum (LK06) at the lower secondary level. Moreover, teaching at lower secondary level is typically subject-focused and aimed at preparing adolescents for entry into working life and higher educational contexts, where they are likely to face intercultural encounters. Secondly, the lack of research on adolescents in Norway also guided the choice of the participants' age. Thirdly, pupils at this level are intermediate language learners and should be capable of expressing themselves with some complexity in the English language. The pupils' expected level of English proficiency was around A2/B1 (Hasselgreen, 2005), which was necessary to be able to complete e-portfolio entries and participate in focus group interviews. Thus, lower secondary school pupils in Norway were purposefully selected as the most optimal group of participants for this study. The second year of lower secondary school was purposefully selected over first- and third-year classes (Year 9 in the Norwegian system) for two reasons. Firstly, Year 9 pupils are expected to be more proficient in the English language than Year 8 pupils. Furthermore, Year 10 pupils in Norway take compulsory exams and they (and their teachers)

might not have the opportunity to participate in an intervention study conducted over a long period.

The teachers in this study would have to play an important role, as they would have to be able to facilitate the implementation of the EPIC, organise the pupils into groups, and actively carry out the EPIC activities with the pupils during regular classes. It was hence important to find a teacher who was willing to and able to use new tools aimed at ILL. The sampling approach used to recruit the teachers in this study was convenience sampling and its form was snowball sampling (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2015). I selected a sample because it was accessible, and sampling involved participating teachers recruited through the researcher's networks. Prior to the start of the project, I used my network to contact EFL teachers in Year 9 at the schools in the area. I contacted several teachers at three different lower secondary schools who taught Year 9 at that point in time. One of the teachers from a school from a small town situated in an urban area expressed willingness to participate. He suggested recruiting two of his colleagues, both working at the same level at this school. It is quite common in Norway that teachers collaborate and plan teaching in work teams⁴⁰ (Helgøy & Homme, 2007). The three teachers agreed to implement the EPIC project together in all five intact classes at this school. After the head teacher and the three EFL teachers agreed to participate, pupils and their parents/guardians were informed about the purpose and the details of the research. The pupils who volunteered to take part in the research were included in the sample; all the pupils from five classes took part in the instruction, but only 56 pupils participated in data collection.

The strategies of purposeful and convenience sampling could create some potential threats to the credibility of the study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). There remains the possibility that the chosen school had unique characteristics, potentially reducing the generalisability of the results. However, as pointed out by Patton (2015), within qualitative research, purposeful sampling entails selecting information-rich cases for study in depth, when generalisation is unnecessary. The objective of this research was not to generalise about a

⁴⁰ The teams often have responsibilities for organising teaching, including making time schedules and choosing possible teaching methods (Helgøy & Homme, 2007).

population on the basis of a small-scale intervention case study. Instead, the research aimed to investigate certain phenomena within a specific sub-group (Year 9 at the secondary school level in Norway) and to obtain a deeper insight into experiences with the e-portfolio as a tool for promoting ILL in the EFL classroom. Thus, purposeful and convenience sampling approaches seemed to function as suitable options in this study.

4.3.2.1 Pupils

The participants in the study were 56 pupils (36 females and 20 males) between 14 and 15 years of age. In the background questionnaire, 49 participants indicated that they were born in Norway, and seven participants reported that Norwegian was not their first language (one of the pupils indicated both Norwegian and English as being her mother tongue). A total of 47 participants reported that they speak mostly Norwegian at home. Other languages spoken at home were English, Lithuanian, Polish, and Portuguese. The majority of the pupils reported that they had first begun to learn English in primary school (41 pupils). As for their English proficiency, the pupils' expected level was around A2/B1 (Council of Europe, 2018a; Hasselgreen, 2005; Hasselgreen & Caudwell, 2016), but individual variations were observed among the participants, which is why they were given an option to use either English or Norwegian in the focus group discussions. When asked about contact with people who have a background from other countries, 50 pupils responded that they experience contact with such people at school and 47 pupils indicated that they have contact with such people in their circle of friends. As such, the multicultural profile of the pupils corresponded with what was announced by the school administration, as the majority of the participants were familiar or had contact with people from other backgrounds.

4.3.2.2 Teachers

The three English teachers in this study had formal teaching qualifications. Their teaching experience varied from two up to 18 years. They all were

kontaktlærere (contact teachers)⁴¹ and taught other subjects, in addition to English. In Norway, subject teachers can tailor the content of their courses, and they tend to work collaboratively across the same level. Table 8 below illustrates the teachers' background information such as age, experience, and teaching qualifications (all names are pseudonyms) gathered through the survey (see Section 4.4.3). The teachers were Norwegian, and one of the teachers was half Swedish. They all reported that a discussion of the concept of IC had not been covered in their formal teacher education as such, although Heidi mentioned that she had an awareness of the concept from before. She recollected that it had been introduced during her higher education and social studies courses. She also mentioned that being part of the DEMBRA project, she had also discussed the concept of IC with her colleagues.

Table 8. Demographic profiles of the teachers

Teacher	Gender	Age	Years teaching English	Teaching qualification	Subjects in addition to English
Heidi	female	46	8	MA, Teacher Training Programme	Foreign language (Spanish); Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics; Social studies; Tourism
Lucas	male	28	2	BA	Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics; Home Economics; Mathematics
Peter	male	48	18	Teachers' college, Teacher Training Programme	Science; Music; Traffic

Note. MA – Master of Arts, BA – Bachelor of Arts

⁴¹ In Norway, contact teachers are primarily responsible for acting as the main contact between the school and the parents or guardians. They have regular conversations with parents and pupils about their development and the pupils' needs and well-being at school.

During the interviews with the teachers, I gathered some information with respect to their English teaching in terms of ILL. It was considered important to provide some detail of their reported teaching practices to interrelate them with their motivation to implement the e-portfolio in the first place.

The three teachers stressed the importance of integrating cultural and intercultural learning into classroom practices:

You have to learn the language, but apart from that I think culture is the most important thing when learning another language because language is [...] the door to the culture of a country [...] so they walk hand in hand. (Peter)

While the teachers' perceptions revealed some commonalities, their reported nuanced understanding regarding how ILL should be conceptualised revealed some differences and controversies about the essence of the interlinks between culture and language. Heidi and Lucas both viewed ILL as one of the ways to become more aware of others, i.e., learning how to relate to other people and being aware of one's own culture and the Self. For example, Lucas pointed out that the way cultures are usually represented in classes does not emphasise meetings and interactions: "We see like Norwegian culture, English culture...it is not about the meeting and what problems can occur... it is more like we separate them. We are going to keep them separate".

Heidi mentioned that her pupils tend not to "reflect much on who they are in the meeting with other people". She reported that there was not enough attention given to intercultural teaching in the curriculum:

For me as a teacher, it is something important but in our læreplan [curriculum]... it is not always a big focus on the cultural element but it is something that I try to mix into the subject anyway because I think for them to learn about another language, they should also learn a bit about culture, both their own and other cultures and compare... be able to compare and see themselves against other cultures".

Furthermore, the teachers' views on what they considered to be the main focus of their teaching were largely in line with what Chvala (2018) referred to as one of the frames of teachers' interpretations of the central aims of the English

subject, namely, acquiring knowledge of English-speaking countries. Lucas, for example, commented on the way he mostly focuses on American culture and society when he wants to introduce a cultural topic in his class:

I would say American society is the focus because that is where they get most of their news from famous people, media, social media. Like we talk about ... apartheid and South Africa and things that happened in Australia but that's the past time, it is in the past so they don't get the seriousness of the subject because it's in there, in the past, so I think that is why we rely so much on the American part because they can relate to it.

Peter's view on intercultural teaching and learning largely revealed traditional transmission of knowledge *about* culture, as he said: "You can't always talk about the weather. You have to talk about something else [...] you have to talk about something, whether it is football or... so it is all part of culture". These views, expressed by Peter, echoed to a large extent the findings by Rosnes and Rosland (2018) and Chvala (2018), who argued that knowledge about other cultures, their ways of living and ways of thinking are common approaches taken by English teachers in the Norwegian classrooms.

To summarise, is important to outline this background information, as the teachers' beliefs and practices may have influenced their willingness to participate and their implementation of the EPIC. However, it is worth mentioning that an in-depth investigation of issues related to teacher beliefs was left beyond the scope of the present research project. The focus of the interviews was mainly on their views on the EPIC and the affordances they experienced when they implemented this tool.

4.3.3 *The EPIC intervention*

The study implemented an e-portfolio-centred approach to ILL. The title of the intervention, *E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC)*, stemmed from the tool used during the instruction (the EPIC). The purpose behind the EPIC intervention was both to encourage ILL and, at the same time, to obtain data for the present PhD study. Therefore, the use of the EPIC in this study had a dual role, as it was both a tool for promoting pupils' ILL and a central part of the

data collection, serving as a data collection method in its own right. I was both the researcher and the designer of the EPIC. However, the teachers were actively involved in selecting tasks from the ones I had previously suggested so that they would fit well within the other teaching planned for that week. I met the teachers prior to the start of the study, to discuss their general approach to teaching and to gain information about the yearly plan. In order to ensure successful completion, the choice and implementation of tasks was made on a week-to-week basis, and the teachers were involved in the process of selecting and adapting the EPIC activities and entries. Overall, the implementation of the EPIC was flexible and planned in accordance with the teacher's suggestions.

In collaboration with the teachers, it was decided that the intervention would be most appropriately implemented while they were working on two topics largely based on the textbook *New Flight 2* by Bromseth and Wigdahl (2007a; 2007b), namely "People on the move" (immigration, from the 1800 until the modern day) and "Fight for your rights!" (history of the human rights movement), each topic covering a period of about four weeks. These topics thus were chosen to serve overarching project topics. Apart from being an intercultural experience, migration was an important and relevant topic for the participants and the Norwegian context. As for the topic of human rights, I found this topic particularly suitable for the EPIC tenets, namely, perspective taking and perspective consciousness, as it provided meaningful learning trajectories related to the awareness of the diversity of perspectives based on different periods and different historical events, and in general, opportunities to put an emphasis on a decentred perspective (Ware & Kramsch, 2005). I designed and selected tasks and activities that would fit within the topics and timeframe of instruction as outlined in the teachers' yearly plan. In line with the curriculum standards, the topics and tasks selected for the study reflect perspectives from "different parts of the world" (Udir., 2006, p. 10), through which multiplicity of voices and perspectives could be considered.

The entries were structured around the four main tenets of the study (self-awareness, awareness of others, perspective consciousness, and perspective taking), although they were independent and could therefore be used in their own right. The tasks included in the EPIC had some overlaps in terms of the main aim and time of instruction (see Table 9 for an overview of the EPIC tenets and the learning aims). Each EPIC entry contained: (a) Introduction (a set of

instructions for how to fill in an entry); (b) Content entry (tasks and activities in order to encourage the pupils' ILL and collect artefacts of their ILL); and (c) Reflection prompts (reflection questions to the pupils on their experiences with the task in the form of up to four questions) (see Figure 6 for an illustration of one of the EPIC entries (*History corner*)⁴²). The modes and activities included in the EPIC varied; they ranged from written texts, drawing, audio files, and PowerPoint slides. In addition to in-class activities, the pupils were given homework assignments. Some of the EPIC entries involved group work, while some were to be completed individually. The pupils also completed written tasks incorporated into their mid-term written assignment (*Fractured Fairy Tale, Multicultural societies, and Music Hall*). Each EPIC entry task was uploaded to Google Classroom on the day before an English lesson. On the following day, the pupils were provided with introductory instructions on how to complete the task by the researcher or the teachers. The teachers or the researcher worked as facilitators while the pupils were completing the entry in class. Three entries were completed by the pupils as homework (*My cultural and national identity, Interview room, and This is how we do it*).

The tasks were implemented as approximately two EPIC entries per week. A total of seventeen tasks were implemented as part of the intervention. However, sixteen tasks were included in the study, as one task was conducted as a whole class discussion only and no empirical material was collected. Table 10 provides an overview of the eight weeks of the EPIC intervention (for a full overview of the EPIC entries, see Appendix 1).

The first three weeks of the intervention mainly focused on the *Self-awareness* and *Awareness of others* and aimed to broaden pupils' perspective on themselves and raise their awareness of their different affiliations and identities. Moreover, they aimed to explore the question: How do we perceive and represent ourselves, as well as the others? The EPIC entries targeting these learning aims were the following: *About me, ID T-shirt, Onion of identities, My cultural and national identity, Identity Tag Game, and Seven Identities Game*.

⁴² Note: In Figure 6, *Introduction* is highlighted in yellow, *Content entry* in green, and *Reflection prompt* in blue.

Table 9. Overview of the EPIC tenets, metaphors, learning aims, and the EPIC entries

The EPIC tenet	Metaphor	Learning aims	The EPIC entries
Self-awareness	Mirror	To raise awareness about the self	About me, ID T-shirt Onion of identities My cultural and national identity, Identity Tag Game, Seven Identities Game Myself, my language and my culture (If I were..., I'd be...)
Awareness of others	Window	To raise awareness of one's own self in relation to those of others	My cultural and national identity, Identity Tag Game, Seven Identities Game Interview room, Myself, my language and my culture (If I were..., I'd be...), This is how we do it
Perspective consciousness	Coloured glasses	To become more aware and reflect upon the notion of "lenses" (diverse perspectives) and how people see the world through "their diverse lenses"	Sunglasses story, Comic strips on perspective taking Fractured Fairy Tales, Multicultural societies, Music Hall Interview room, Myself, my language and my culture (If I were..., I'd be...), This is how we do it History corner The Other Side
Perspective taking	Reversed mirror	To become more aware of alternative perspectives and to be able to consider and take other perspectives	Sunglasses story, Comic strips Fractured Fairy Tales, Multicultural societies, Music Hall Interview room, Myself, my language and my culture (If I were..., I'd be...), This is how we do it History corner The Other Side

History Corner

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, breaking segregation laws. Many believe Rosa Parks' act was the event that sparked the Civil Rights movement.

Read the whole story in your textbook *New Flight 2* (pp. 159 – 162).

Here are links to some images for you to look at:

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/search?q=rosa%20parks>

Among others you can find a REAL Rosa Parks bus from Henry Ford Museum:

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/rosa-parks-bus/VwFLaPXV9jOSFg>



Task 1.

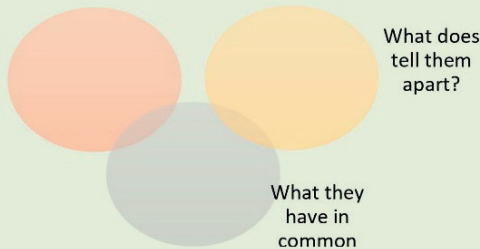
On the basis of the information given, would you be able to see the same event which happened on December 1, 1955, from the other side?

How would the story have been different if it had been written from another point of view, say, a bus driver, a passenger or a policeman who arrested her?

Read the following stories and try to identify who is speaking.

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5
Who is speaking?					
What character traits best match this person?					
What is their perspective on the events?					

Task 2. Choose two of the stories. Compare and contrast details of the people who took part in the story. What do they have in common? What does tell them apart?



Answer the questions. 1. What did you learn from this task? 2) Was it easy/difficult for you to explore different points of view of the same event? 3) Find another story, which you can look at from different perspectives (it might be a historical event, fairy tale, popular story, movie etc.). What points of view are there? Write some of them here:

From what perspectives are you looking at this story (event)?

Figure 6. Example of the EPIC entry (History Corner)

In *About me* and *ID T-shirt*, pupils were provided with questions that aim to raise awareness of multiple selves. *Onion of identities* was introduced in week 2 of the intervention. It was adapted from Brander et al. (2016) and aimed to raise awareness of the complexity of the Self. Pupils were asked to write their answers next to the numbers 1–5, with number 1 being the most important thing and 5 being the least important thing. *Identity Tag Game* and *Seven Identities Game* (week 3) built on the previous EPIC entries, and both focused on self-awareness and awareness of others in class. They allowed pupils to convey that, firstly, individuals have multiple identities or identifications, as they are part of many cultures and affiliated with several groups (e.g., related to their age, gender, hobby, interest, etc.). Secondly, these entries help the pupils to realise how we perceive and label others and how others perceive and label us. As a follow-up, the pupils were given 10–15 minutes to complete their EPICs (reflection prompts) individually. *My cultural and national identity* (week 3) aimed to raise awareness of stereotypes and reflect on how “others” see “us”. The EPIC entry and discussions in class evolved around the issues of how others see us, creation of stereotypes by the media and answering the questions such as: Are “you” like this? Do we recognise ourselves in these stereotypes? Pupils were asked to make a video or PowerPoint presentation as homework.

The EPIC entries that focused on awareness of others were *Interview room* and *This is how we do it*. In these entries, introduced in week 6, the pupils were given a choice to either read a picture book *This is how we do it* by Lamothe (2017) and complete follow-up questions in the EPIC or to conduct an interview with a person they knew (a friend or a family member) who had a different cultural background (*Interview room*). They both allowed pupils to explore other people backgrounds and experiences, and modify their views of other cultural contexts, while shifting the focus away from English-speaking countries.

In week 6, *If I were..., I'd be...* focused on all the four tenets of the EPIC. The task was adapted from Rigamonti and Scott-Monkhouse (2010). Based on the metaphors, pupils completed stem sentences about themselves and others. This entry allowed participants to envisage their own personality and the personalities of their classmates through metaphors and by investigating what role stereotypes play in such descriptions of themselves, their classmates, and other people.

Table 10. Overview of the EPIC entries

Week	Name and Source	Description	Objective
1	1. About me (Brander et al., 2016)	To describe themselves and their families in terms of places they have been, countries they have visited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness
	2. The ID T-shirt (SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre: ID Booklet Ideas for Inclusion and Diversity, 2008, p. 16–18)	To design a T-shirt that visually shows the Self; to list three things that the pupils like and three things that they do not like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness
2	3. Onion of identities (Brander et al., 2016, p. 30); (SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre: ID Booklet Ideas for Inclusion and Diversity, 2008, p. 20–21)	To answer the question: “Who am I?” and construct a model of their Self as an onion by placing elements that make them who they are, with up to five layers of the onion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness
3	4. My cultural and national identity (Brander et al., 2016, p. 31)	To reflect on the way other people make associations and stereotypes about one’s country and link them to their own self and their personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Perspective consciousness
	5. Identity Tag Game (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 151)	To reflect on what are the most important things that make up who they are; to walk around the room and read the papers of the others, holding their paper in front of them so others can read it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of others
	6. Seven Identities Game Inspired by the researcher’s supervisor and a member of the institution who practiced it with their students	To make a list of the top seven core “elements” of their identity and then to narrow it down to one last element they consider the most important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of others
4	7. Sunglasses story (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 153)	To reflect on a metaphorical story that helps them realise that one sees the world through one’s own unique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective consciousness • Perspective taking

		lens. The story tells about two groups of people who are born with a differently coloured pair of glasses (yellow and blue). When the groups meet, they put on each other's sunglasses, and realise that both see through green lenses.	
	8. Comic strips on perspective taking Online Cultural Training Resource for Study Abroad. https://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/	To create comic strips and learn to recognise how seemingly ordinary activities can have different meanings depending on whether one is an actor or an observer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
5	9. Multicultural societies (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007b, p. 100)	To write an article that debates a topic on living in multicultural cities, giving reasons to support alternative points of view and one's own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of others • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
	10. Fractured Fairy Tale (Dolan, 2014, p. 72)	To retell a popular story, changing the point of view or the plot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
	11. Music Hall (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007a, p. 80)	To write a short blog entry on the song "America" from the musical West Side Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of others • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
6	12. Interview room (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003)	To interview a person with a background different from their own about things they do in their everyday lives and compare obtained information with their own daily routines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of others
	13. This is how we do it (Lamothe, 2017)	To complete a series of tasks as they read a picture book <i>This is how we do it</i> ; to explore the lives and daily rituals of seven children and link them with their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of others • Perspective taking

7	<p>14. “If I were..., I’d be...” (Myself, my language and my culture) (Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2010)</p>	<p>To complete 12 stem sentences by choosing 12 metaphors, while thinking about themselves, their culture, and the target culture (sentences starting with If I were..., I’d be... or “If Norwegians were..., they’d be” and “If the British/Americans were..., they’d be...”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of others • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
8	<p>15. History corner (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007a, pp. 159–162)</p>	<p>To complete a series of tasks as they explore the story of Rosa Parks viewed from five different perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
	<p>16. The Other Side (Woodson, 2001; adapted from Rader, 2018, pp. 131–136)</p>	<p>To answer a series of reflection questions on their perceptions of the children’s book <i>The Other Side</i> by Woodson (2001).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness

The third focus of the EPIC was *perspective consciousness* (multiplicity of perspectives) and mainly encompassed the following EPIC entries: *Sunglasses story* and *Comic strips* (week 4); *Fractured Fairy Tales*, *Multicultural societies*, and *Music Hall* (week 5). These entries aimed to raise awareness of the notion of multiplicity of perspectives (or “lenses”), which are affected by our roles, interests, nationalities, education, etc., in other words, how we each see and understand the world through our diverse lenses. The analogy of coloured glasses emphasised the notion of perception being in constant change because everything can affect our understanding of the world. In addition, it encompasses an understanding that nobody else looks through exactly the same cultural lens. In *Sunglasses story*, pupils read a metaphorical story (see Appendix 1 for the full story). The teacher facilitated the discussion on the topic of our culturally conditioned lens. Another entry aimed at perspective consciousness was *Comic strips*. The entry was based on creating a series of comic strips featuring characters acting in a way that is regarded as perfectly acceptable in one context but that could be regarded as problematic in a different context. Pupils’ annotations and drawings were followed up by reflections on the behaviour we take for granted, e.g., lateness for meetings, non-verbal behaviour, gender roles. *Fractured Fairy Tales*, *Multicultural societies*, and *Music Hall* were part of an obligatory writing assignment and

were used to add an intercultural component to the instruction and assessment of writing in English.

The fourth tenet of the EPIC was aimed at *perspective taking* and entailed raising awareness of alternative perspectives and enabling the pupils to consider other people's perspectives. In *History Corner* (week 7), the participants were asked to complete a series of tasks aimed at encouraging reflection on the diversity of perspectives and context-specific perspectives in the past as they explored the story of Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement. They engaged in tasks aimed at perspective taking as a resource for expanding the meaning-making potential of a historical event. In week 8 of the intervention, *The Other Side* entry was based on a picture book by Woodson (2001) and allowed pupils to use this text as a resource for reflecting on multiple perspectives and intercultural encounters viewed from a range of perspectives (the past vs the present, race, generation, etc.).

4.4 Data collection

The present qualitative case study involved the following instruments for collecting data: pupil texts (completed EPIC entries by the pupils), focus group interviews with pupils, teacher interviews, and a questionnaire as an additional data collection instrument for obtaining the pupils' demographic data. The data collection procedures are described in Table 11.

The pupils' texts provided insight into the individual pupil's experience and ILL through the EPIC. The focus group interviews with pupils centred on their experiences with the EPIC and reflections on specific EPIC entries, seen through self-awareness and perspective taking. Semi-structured face-to-face teacher interviews provided insights into individual teacher perspectives on the affordances of the EPIC to develop a better understanding of the EPIC as a tool of ILL. The following sections describe each of the data collection methods in detail.

Table 11. Summary of data collection methods

Stage	Method	Data material	Participants involved in data collection	Duration and frequency of data collection sessions
Before the intervention	Questionnaire (February 2018)	56 questionnaire responses collected and analysed through SurveyXact	56 pupils	15 min
	Collecting the pupils' texts (February–April 2018)	329 content entries 409 reflection prompts	56 pupils	14 lessons over a period of 8 weeks
After the intervention	Focus group interviews with pupils (April–May 2018)	209 minutes of transcribed data	FG1 (6 pupils) FG2 (7 pupils) FG3 (7 pupils) FG4 (6 pupils) FG5 (7 pupils) Total 33 pupils	FG1 – 35.5 min. FG2 – 42.5 min. FG3 – 40.0 min. FG4 – 49.5 min. FG5 – 41.5 min.
	Interviews with teachers (April–May 2018)	92.3 minutes of transcribed data	3 teachers	Heidi's interview – 32.2 min. Lucas' interview – 30.1 min. Peter's interview – 30.0 min.

4.4.1 Pupil texts

The pupils' texts were collected during the intervention in order to answer the research question of the study, and they added an individual component to the overall dataset as well as insights into how the pupils responded to the EPIC during the entire process of the intervention. The texts were collected throughout the intervention from week 1 to week 8. Therefore, they provide a record of the pupils' responses to the EPIC content and their reflection entries. These were mostly verbal texts, but also included audio recordings, drawings, annotations, and PowerPoint slides. The collection of pupil texts provided a rich corpus of data for the analysis and comprised 738 pupil texts in total (see Table 12 for more detail). The pupils completed the EPIC entries for each task.

However, and, as can be seen in Table 12, some EPIC entries consisted of both a content entry and a reflection prompt entry, some EPIC entries consisted of only one of those entries, and not all the pupils completed all the entries.

Table 12. Overview of the collected pupil texts

<i>EPIC entry</i>	<i>Week</i>	<i>Number of texts</i>		<i>Description</i>
		Content entry	Reflecti on entry	
About me	1	47	47	Individually written answers to questions related to places (town, region, and country) where learners were born, live, spend their holidays, etc.
The ID T-shirt	1	29	37	Drawings and written responses to questions related to a task to create/design a T-shirt of their choice, representing who they are and what are the most important things that make up who they are.
Onion of identities	2	37	31	Individually written texts or audio recordings answering the question: “Who am I?” and constructing a model of their Self as an onion.
My cultural and national identity	3	45	45	Individually written texts, audio-recordings, and PowerPoint presentations, in response to questions about the ways people make associations and stereotypes about their own culture and whether those stereotypes reflect their personalities or not.
Identity Tag Game	3	n/a	45	Individually written texts and reflections on the in-class activity aiming to describe the most important things that make up who they are by writing their identities (as many as they can think of) on the name tags, completed as part of a whole class activity.

Seven Identities Game	3	n/a	51	Individually written texts and reflections on the activity aimed to make pupils reflect on a list of the top seven core “elements” of their identity and then they narrow it down to one last element they consider the most important, completed as part of a group discussion.
Sunglasses story	4	50	n/a	Individually written responses to a metaphorical story about the notion of different “lenses” or “glasses”, different cultural perspectives, and how we each see the world through our culturally conditioned lens.
Comic strips	4	6	32	Drawings, written texts, and annotations as a response to a task to make a series of comic strips related to how seemingly ordinary activities can have different meanings depending on whether one is an actor or an observer.
Fractured Fairy Tale	5	17	n/a	Written texts, retelling a popular well-known story of their choice, completed as an optional task on an exam.
Music Hall	5	2	n/a	Written texts in the form of a short blog entry in response to questions related to their reflections on the song “America” from the musical West Side Story, completed as an optional task on an exam.
Multicultural societies	5	0	n/a	Written texts – essay in the form of an article that debates the topic of living in multicultural cities, giving arguments for and against alternative points of view, completed as an optional task on an exam.
Interview room	6	11	11	Individually written texts – interviewing people beyond the classroom (a person who has a different cultural background) about things they do in their daily lives and comparing the obtained

				information with their daily routines.
This is how we do it	6	9	9	Individually written responses to questions related to a picture book (<i>This is how we do it</i> by Lamothe (2017)) about the daily lives and routines of seven families and linking them with their own lives.
If I were..., I'd be...	6	42	42	Individually written texts in the form of three tables – completing metaphors in 12 stem sentences (If I were..., I'd be...); in the second and third stages the same metaphors were replaced with “If Norwegians were..., they'd be...” and “If the British/Americans/... were..., they'd be...” to reflect on their individual Self, their own culture, and the target cultures (British or American).
History corner	7	34	30	Individually written texts and responses to questions and tasks related to the story of Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement (bus boycott).
The Other Side	8	n/a	29	Individually written responses to questions related to a picture book (<i>The Other Side</i> by Woodson (2001)).
Total		329	409	

As can be seen, the number of texts varies for different reasons. A lack of submission could be related to absence from school or failure to complete or upload the text. As for week 5 of the intervention, *Fractured Fairy Tale*, *Music Hall* and *Multicultural societies* were optional tasks on an exam, where the pupils could choose between six different assignments. Therefore, only a limited number of texts were collected. As for the entries *This is how we do it* and *Interview room*, the pupils were asked to choose one entry out of these two. In addition, the pupils were given the freedom to choose the mode of submission for the EPIC entries (typing, handwriting, drawings, audio, video); the vast majority of texts collected were, however, written texts.

The limitation of this dataset is that these texts were uploaded to the Google Classroom online platform, so the participants were aware that their teachers might be able to read their responses. The choice of language may have also influenced how the participants expressed the self in the EPIC. Although, it was considered that this would not immensely influence the results, since the pupils could use Norwegian when necessary; in the EPIC, however, the pupils chose to use English as the main language.

4.4.2 Focus group interviews with pupils

A focus group interview is an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to elicit their views on a topic (Gibson & Hua, 2016, p. 182). The use of this method as a follow up data collection instrument entailed bringing a group of pupils (6–7) from each class together to add an interactional aspect to the data, to encourage participants to discuss and challenge each other's views on the topic in order to supplement the e-portfolio data. Thus, the aims of the focus group interviews were the following: (a) to complement the pupils' texts through providing insights about their experiences of the EPIC as a tool and specific EPIC entries; (b) to explore a range of views, opinions, and attitudes about the opportunities provided by the EPIC as a tool for raising their self-awareness and perspective taking. Thus, the purpose of the interviews was exploratory, which entails increasing researcher understanding of an issue (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

Focus group interviews, rather than individual face-to-face interviews with pupils, were used for several reasons. Firstly, the aim was to ensure that the perspective of the participants as a group would be added to the research to complement individually written pupil texts. Secondly, the focus group interview can provide a safe environment where students can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes (Madriz, 2000). Focus groups are considered more appropriate for young participants, such as those in this study, who may find one-on-one researcher-participant interaction intimidating (Cohen et al., 2011; Eder & Fingerson, 2002). Thirdly, by gaining access to the interactional aspects of how people discuss a topic, researchers can observe people's thought processes, as focus groups hold the unique position of "approximating an understanding of communication in vivo, but in a laboratory setting" (Davis, 2017, p. 2). Wilkinson (2004) argued that the advantage of this method is that

a focus group provides a more natural setting due to the group being comprised of people who know each other. This was one of the main reasons for arranging groups of 6–7 from each class, in line with the teachers’ recommendations. In addition, focus groups are useful when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when time to collect information is limited (Creswell, 2003; 2013). Focus group interviews are economical on time and produce a large amount of data in a short period of time (Cohen et al., 2011). Another advantage of this method of data collection is that focus groups can provide an environment conducive to unexpected outcomes or spontaneous responses (Galloway, 2019, p. 295). For example, a researcher may manage to elicit spontaneous responses from the interviewees, or they might pose unexpected questions to each other that are not generated by the researcher. To sum up, I chose focus group interviews to provide a space for discussion among the pupils as a group, to capture a range of their opinions about the EPIC by drawing on the interactive dimension of focus groups, and to potentially reduce the control of the researcher, hence minimising the power imbalance.

Focus groups are a valuable, versatile, and effective method for use with children and youths, but conducting focus groups is not without its challenges (F. Gibson, 2007, p. 482). As for potential drawbacks of focus group interviews, this method requires some careful considerations in terms of recruiting participants and managing group dynamics, and greater attention needs to be given to the specific context associated with adolescents. Firstly, overly dominant and talkative participants can influence the group (for example, making less confident participants reluctant to speak) (Galloway, 2019). The researcher therefore needs to be aware of this and be able to deal with this in a constructive and ethical manner. Secondly, focus group interviews may prompt participants to disclose personal information unintentionally; this requires careful and sensitive facilitation of the further discussion by the researcher. In the focus group interviews in the present study, the pupils could discuss their experiences with the EPIC without bringing in any personal information. However, due to the nature of the topic related to their self-awareness and the setting (peer interactions, which tend to be less intimidating than speaking to a researcher one on one (Braun & Clarke, 2013; C. Kennedy et al., 2001)), interviewees might respond to the questions by drawing on their personal experiences, in other words, by disclosing information on personal matters

(Heary & Hennessy, 2012). Alternatively, “group thinking” might also hinder the disclosure of personal opinions (Galloway, 2019, p. 299), which again poses a complex set of challenges for discussion management and for the overall quality of the study. Thus, the researcher has to be prepared for how to include all the participants’ voices in the discussion in an ethical manner by, for example, talking to teachers who know their pupils during the sampling of groups, piloting training sessions with other groups, and practising interviewing skills (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 127). Overall, it is important for the researcher to be mindful of the context of the group and the possibilities and challenges that group discussions entail. Thirdly, the researcher is present as a facilitator during focus group interviews and the issue of power is relevant. It should be acknowledged that children and adolescents might orient their answers towards what they think is expected from them (Alter, 2015). Hence, their focus group interview comments could show some signs of social desirability (see Dervin, 2010). In order to reduce the power imbalance, I provided a less threatening environment for the pupils and reduced the chances to impose any of my views on the participants. I tried to make the interviews and interview questions as informal as possible. I also used visual prompts during the interviews as part of “projection technique” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 434), i.e., instead of asking direct questions. This also aimed to reduce the possibility of a biased answer, where the respondent may be looking for cues in the question as how to respond (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 434).

Based on the discussions with the teachers, as well as practical considerations, it was decided to conduct five focus group interviews (one group per class) and invite approximately six pupils per group. In two classes, the number of participating pupils was seven per class. Therefore, it was decided that all of the pupils would be invited to take part in the focus groups. As for the other three classes, several considerations were taken into account during sampling procedures: ensuring an even gender balance, advice of the teachers regarding interpersonal relations between the participants, the total number of the EPIC entries submitted by the pupils, and participants’ background (to invite pupils whose parents have both Norwegian and non-Norwegian origin). Lists of purposefully selected pupils from those who consented to participate were assembled and shown to the teachers to make final adjustments, who made a few changes to two groups. Selected pupils from each class were invited to

participate. In total, there were 33 pupils (10 boys and 23 girls). The final make-up of the focus interview groups (referred to as FG 1–5) is presented in Appendix 5.

Focus group interviews were conducted at the school, during the English classes. During the focus group interviews, the participants were seated close to each other, around a table, in one of the school rooms. Before the interviews started, the participants were invited to sit down at one of the places and some casual conversation was initiated in order to make the participants feel more comfortable. The aim of the interview was introduced, as well as a set of guidelines (Appendix 6). In the introduction, the structure of the interviews was provided, and participants were given an explanation of how the recordings of the interviews would happen. This was done in Norwegian, and the pupils were also invited to ask questions.

The main language of interviews was English. It was the main language of the EPIC intervention, so it was considered important to conduct the conversation in English during the focus group interviews. The second reason for using English was linked to the context of the interviews, which was during the regular English lessons. It was hence considered more suitable to conduct the focus group interviews in English to support their language learning outcomes and not intervene with the instruction. The choice of language may have influenced how they expressed their opinions in the focus group interviews. However, the pupils were informed that they could use Norwegian when necessary and several pupils used this opportunity.

The interview guide was semi-structured, focusing on the specific areas I wanted to cover to elicit data from the pupils on the researched phenomena in accordance with the research aims and research question of the study. It comprised five main parts: 1) Self-awareness; 2) Awareness of others; 3) Perspective taking; 4) Summing up; 5) Experiences with the project. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix 7. The formulations of questions I asked might have varied to a small degree in all five groups. I have included the questions that were the starting point for the specific discussions of awareness of others, self-awareness, and perspective taking.

The first block of questions was focused on the awareness of the self and metaphorical representation of the self. The questions were framed as follows: What is your identity for you? Why it is important? What have you learned about yourself during this project? Then, I asked the participants to provide any metaphors related to how they envisioned themselves in order to initiate a discussion about the multiplicity of the self and self-awareness. If participants did not suggest any, I provided them with some prompts to facilitate the discussion (Appendix 8). These prompts were used as visual stimuli related to the entries covered during the intervention to allow for the possibility of varied responses. This initial discussion was followed by more specific questions about their experiences with and perspectives on the EPIC entries aimed at self-awareness (*Onion of Identities*; *ID T-shirt*; *Identity Tag Game*; *Seven Identities Game*). The pupils were then asked to recall the following EPIC entries: *Sunglasses Story*; *Fractured Fairy Tale*; *If I were..., I'd be...*; *History Corner*; and *The Other Side* and discuss their experiences in the light of perspective taking and the awareness of others. The questions centred around their ILL and benefits and challenges they faced during the EPIC project. I showed them some images to remind them about the entries and to make their discussions more engaging. These questions were followed by the block of questions inviting them to summarise their experiences about the project. Finally, there were rounding up questions, final comments, and thanks. In total, 209 minutes of audio-recordings were transcribed (see Table 13 below for how this time was distributed between the interview parts and the groups).

As for my role during the focus group interviews, I chose the role of both researcher and moderator (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). I used both open questions and probes to stimulate discussions, as I wanted to keep the discussion focused on the issues that were the focus of the study and gain deeper insights from the participants, both as individuals and as a group. The way I asked questions was flexible, as the main job of the interviewer is facilitation, not control (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 128). I tried to keep the interview on track and discuss the planned questions; there were, however, moments when I interjected to follow up on or seek clarification about something that had been said. At times, I had to encourage the participants to stay on topic and to ensure that the participants understood the questions. This was done through keeping eye contact, nodding, and making comments such as “that’s interesting, could

you tell me more about this”. As a moderator, I tried to capture the emotional climate as well as the spoken word of the participants (F. Gibson, 2007, p. 480).

Table 13. Overview of focus group interview times in minutes, divided by interview parts and groups

Part	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	Total
1	11	13	13.5	11	14	62.5
2	8	12	8.5	6.5	6.5	41.5
3	6	7	7	16.5	7.5	44
4	6	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	32.5
5	4.5	4	4	9	7	28.5
Total	35.5	42.5	40.0	49.5	41.5	209

As one of the main data collection methods in this study (along with pupil texts), focus group interview data were utilised in Article I and II. In Article I, I used data from Part 1 and Part 2 of the transcribed texts of the interviews, i.e., only the parts of discussions that focused on the self-awareness component in the pupils’ responses. Article II explored the participants’ reflections prompted by seven EPIC entries in focus group interviews at the conclusion of the project. Therefore, based on their relevance to promoting perspective taking, three main parts of the focus group interviews were included in the data set: Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4.

4.4.3 Teacher interviews

Teacher interviews as a research method were chosen to obtain a thorough understanding of the teachers’ experiences with the use of the EPIC and the perceived affordances of the EPIC as a tool for ILL. According to Borg (2003), teachers are active decision-makers who “make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (p. 81). The teacher interviews were conducted in order to complement data obtained from the pupils, allowing for data triangulation to bring different perspectives on the context of the study.

An interview, according to Kvale (2006), is a meeting where an interviewer obtains information from a person to achieve a specific goal (p. 483). Interviews are hence considered central in qualitative research and entail the construction of knowledge by investigating individuals’ experiences, beliefs, or

constructions of a particular phenomenon (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher refers to an interview guide with preprepared questions but leaves room to explore topics raised by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013). I was conscious of the imbalance of power, as the interviews were designed by the researcher. I adopted an open and reflexive stance in the interviews to reduce my own bias and minimise power asymmetry (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). As an interview is not a reciprocal interaction between two equal parts, I made an effort to find a balance between openness and flexibility towards the interviewees and the need to keep the interview moving forward and “directiveness” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 422). Therefore, the interviews were conducted with sensitivity both to the interview guides and to the interviewees, as the main principle of the interviewer was to be clear, neutral, and relevant by using simple language and showing non-judgemental interest towards the interviewees and the object of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013), trying to see participants as they were, rather than imposing one’s own ideas and biases on them (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 161).

Prior the interviews, I collected background information about the teachers’ age, teaching qualifications, and English language teaching experience at school, etc. by sending a short survey to the teachers via email. The reason for this was to ensure to spend more time on discussing issues related directly to the focus of the study and to keep demographic questions to a minimum during the interviews to maintain the respondents’ motivation (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 423). The survey contained two main sets of questions, demographic data, and teaching experience and teacher education (see Appendix 10).

The semi-structured interview guide served as a general guide for open-ended questions rather than as a strict template. Using a semi-structured approach ensured consistency in data collection across the three teachers (Appendix 11). Follow-up questions emerged spontaneously during the interview process. The interviews focused on the teachers’ experiences of what benefited or hindered them and their pupils in the process of working with the EPIC and thus provided an additional perspective on the opportunities provided by the EPIC, in addition to my own and that of the pupils. The first part of the interview aimed to identify the context of the participants’ experiences and focused on their teaching perspectives and practices. The participants were asked to reflect upon their approach to teaching ILL within English language teaching. The second part of

the interview encouraged the teachers to reflect on the details of their experiences with the EPIC, the perceived affordances (both advantages and constraints) of the EPIC, ILL outcomes of the project, and the pupils' engagement with the activities. Finally, a block of questions gathered information on their plans with respect to their potential use of EPIC activities and suggestions to improve the EPIC or any other comments.

The interviews were conducted in English. There were two main reasons for choosing English rather than Norwegian, the first language of the teachers. Firstly, as mentioned above, all the teachers were qualified English teachers and the main language of instruction during the EPIC project was English. The teachers were therefore familiar with the concepts and language used to discuss the EPIC entries, their objectives, and the terminology related to ILL utilised during the intervention. Hence, it was decided to keep English as the main language during the teacher interviews. However, I acknowledge that the impact of language choices on cannot be ignored since “the presentation of events may vary greatly with the language of the telling” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 172, as cited in (Rolland et al., 2019, p. 284). The other reason was related to the issues of translation fidelity as it represents a particular challenge and risk of bias to be negotiated when researchers collect, translate, analyse, and report data in multilingual research (Thompson & Dooley, 2019). As argued, one of the areas of potential translation bias relates to the selection of labels for codes and themes that may arise when a researcher-as-translator translates based on one's own experiences, rather than the interview subjects (Thompson & Dooley, 2019, p. 72). Therefore, I have chosen English for the teacher interviews to ensure that interviews have experiential and conceptual equivalency and translations do not affect the trustworthiness of the findings (Thompson & Dooley, 2019). I discuss the language choices from the perspective of the ethics of this research in Section 4.8.

All the interviews took place in a school group room in accordance with the teachers' suggestions, during three consecutive days after teaching hours in early May 2018, once the EPIC intervention had been completed and the focus group interviews with pupils conducted. Interview lengths were quite similar across the teachers: Heidi's interview lasted 32.2 minutes, Lucas' interview lasted 30.1 minutes, and Peter's lasted 30.0 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim (see Appendix 12 for transcription

conventions). As soon as the interviews were completed, I made notes about my thoughts and questions I wanted to explore. At a later point, I listened to the interviews again and repeated the same process of initial data analysis and making myself familiar with the interviews. The recordings were transcribed by me, with the assistance of NVivo 12 Pro software, also used for storage and analysis of the data. The software was helpful to facilitate the playback pace to produce transcripts of the interviews. Each teacher was allocated a pseudonym, and each transcription was saved as a separate Word document on password-protected computer. In total, the three interview transcripts resulted in 12,150 words.

It should be noted that there are some limitations to the focus of the interviews with the teachers. For example, some issues regarding more in-depth accounts of the teachers' views on IC as well as their beliefs and perspectives about implementing ILL were not discussed during the interviews. Retrospectively, discussing these issues in more detail would considerably enrich the data of the present study. Another possible limitation of this data collection method was that I opted not to include other methods of data collection that would elicit the teachers' actual practice before or during the intervention. I did not conduct preliminary interviews (pre-project) with the teachers. It should therefore be noted that interview data were considered as complementary to the data obtained from the pupils and were used to shed light on the teachers' attitudes, opinions, and experiences in relation to what they saw and perceived as the affordances of the EPIC as a tool for ILL. Thus, the data obtained from the teacher interviews were grounded solely on their perceptions of what had happened in the class and the interviews provided insights into individual teacher perspectives on whether and how ILL was achieved during the EPIC project and their perceptions of the affordances of the EPIC. The interview data was used in Article III. The analysis was mainly guided by abduction (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018; Brinkmann, 2014), which implied searching for codes and categories in the interview data and analysing them in the light of previous literature on affordances (see Section 4.5.3).

4.4.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire aimed to obtain background information about the individual participants, including their demographic details, English language learning

experiences in their families and in formal educational settings, contact and intercultural experiences with people from various cultures through travelling and family or friends. The questionnaire was distributed to the pupils in class, immediately before the intervention, through the online survey programme SurveyXact. It consisted of 33 questions. The questionnaire was divided into five main parts: (1) background questions (age, parents' place of birth, mother tongue (items 1–6); (2) intercultural contact and travelling to other countries (items 7–11); (3) language learning and use (both English and Norwegian) (items 12–20); (4) English language learning and using English at home and in school (items 21–25); and (5) knowledge about other people's culture and experiences with other people and awareness of the concept of IC (items 26–28, 31, 32). See Appendix 9 for a full text of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire comprised a mix of closed and open-response questions, and Likert scale questions. Also, closed questions were provided with a text box “please specify” or “other” space, thus providing an opportunity to participants to give more details on an issue. The Likert scale questions varied from four to six options. Items 29 and 30 aimed to explore participants' self-perceptions of their ability to take perspectives and their attitudes towards and willingness to become more aware of others. This block of questions was adapted from the Intercultural Competence Tool (Lázár, 2013) and the PISA 2018 Global Competence Assessment Questionnaire⁴³ to allow the pupils to reflect on and describe their current attitudes and components of IC and recognise their strong points that can be associated with self-awareness and perspective taking as the main focus of the study⁴⁴. Item 33 was a final question to obtain additional comments from the participants. The last item asked participants to fill in a password, which they had received from me to ensure their anonymity. The time for completion was around 15–20 minutes. The questionnaire was distributed in both Norwegian and English, and the pupils chose the language

⁴³ <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2018-Global-Competence-Questionnaire.pdf>

⁴⁴ These questionnaire items aimed to elicit current dispositions of the participants and help them to think of themselves in the context of the people surrounding them and also orient themselves towards the objectives of the study. These items were not used in further discussions in the thesis, as I have decided not to rely on self-assessment tools as such.

they preferred. The questionnaire was completed by all 56 learners who had consented to be part of the study.

4.5 Data analysis

This section describes the methodological procedures used to analyse the data. The overarching research question was addressed through the three articles, each of which drew on a different dataset and data analyses. The data in all articles were analysed using qualitative methods, central to which was thematic analysis. In what follows, I describe the main principles and procedures utilised for all three articles when completing data analysis. Then, I briefly describe the main analytical procedures used in each article.

In line with the exploratory approach taken in the study, the entire dataset collected during the study, was first transcribed and transferred to NVivo for an initial reading to identify the research foci of the three articles and search for patterns. The thematic analysis used in the study entailed six analytical steps: familiarisation, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up (producing the report) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These steps of thematic analysis were applied in all three articles, to all the three datasets (pupil texts, focus group interviews, and teachers' interviews). Although presented as a linear method, the analytical process was always dynamic and recursive. Nowell et al. (2017) point out that thematic analysis is an iterative and reflective process that develops over time and involves a constant moving back and forth between phases. I revisited the transcripts multiple times, both to become familiar with all the data as well as to highlight themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Then, I determined the subsets of data related to each of the foci; I analysed each of the subsets separately.

I started the analysis for the individual articles by familiarising myself with the dataset through listening to audio recordings and reading the transcripts. The process of refining research questions also took time, and I revised research questions for all the articles several times during the process. The formulations of the research questions for the individual articles were refined throughout the analysis. Overall, the emerging ideas about the research foci were built into the design of the EPIC (awareness of self and other, and perspective taking), apart from the research question for Article III, which explored the overall

perspectives of the teachers on the affordances of the EPIC. The focus of Article III was identified through re-reading the transcripts of the teacher interviews at a later stage.

Summing up, the movement from the dataset to the written study was not a strictly linear process, as each stage influenced all the others (Holliday, 2016). Figure 7 below shows the overall process from the corpus of raw data to the written study.

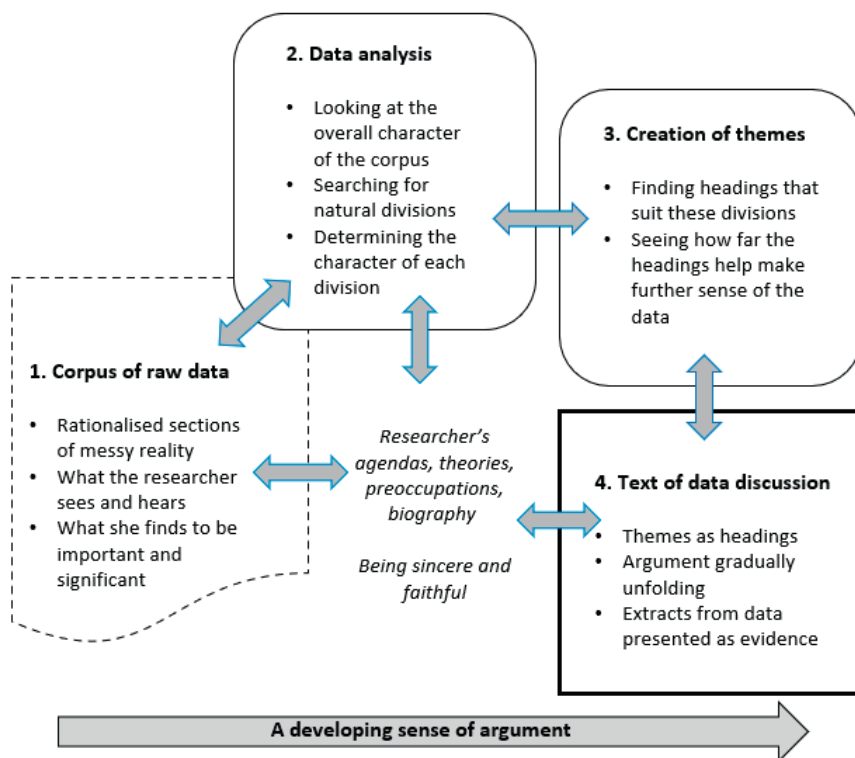


Figure 7. Overview of the data analysis of the study (adapted from Holliday (2016, p. 99)).

As shown in Figure 7, during the initial analysis, I familiarised myself with the corpus of raw data material by reading transcripts of focus group interviews, pupils' texts, and teacher interviews. This stage is represented by "the jagged bubble" to depict the original, complex, "messy" reality (Holliday, 2016, p. 99).

I made notes and searched for patterns and natural divisions to identify themes (stage 2 in Figure 7). As a result of this, I generated themes (stage 3) that helped to make further sense of the data with regard to the three main research foci, namely, exploring the pupils' self-awareness, examining how the pupils considered the perspectives of others, and investigating the teachers' perspectives on the affordances of the EPIC. Finally, the thematic headings became the basis for the data discussion, under which the argument is organised in the written study (stage 4).

All transcriptions of qualitative data were imported into qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 12 Pro (version 12.4; at a later point, version 12.6.0.959), primarily for the purpose of coding. Cases were created for each participant, for each focus group interview, and for each EPIC entry. I anonymised all the transcripts using codes for the pupil participants and pseudonyms for teacher participants. I attributed a numerical code to each participant and a letter code to each EPIC entry (for example, *About me* as *a*, *Onion of identities* as *b* etc.). Hence, for instance, the EPIC entry text (e.g., *Onion of Identities*) for a particular pupil from class 9A was attributed as A06b. Similarly, I also assigned passwords to each pupil which they entered in their questionnaire response.

NVivo was utilised in order to search for patterns, generate initial codes, and sort the codes into potential themes. Code labels were displayed in various colours. However, the software “does not actually code the data” (Saldaña, 2016), and the researcher is still the main driving force behind the analysis. I also used the software to experiment with different data visualisations. For example, I used the transcripts to create word clouds showing the most frequently repeated words for each of the EPIC entries related to self-awareness, to visualise how the pupils described themselves. I used those as a visual presentation of the findings during conferences or seminars.

I also used memos as a helpful source of discovery and exploration in the data analysis. Memos are viewed as a way of theorising and commenting as one goes about the thematic coding of ideas and about the general development of analytical framework (Gibbs, 2018, p. 44). Memos took a number of forms, ranging from short ideas to annotations and diagrams. I noted down memos throughout the analysis using the memo feature of NVivo. I utilised it to explain

or elaborate code labels, to make note of any idea about the data material, to indicate a pattern or deviation from a pattern, or include possible conceptual models through which to present the data. Those were at times discussed with fellow PhD students or supervisors regarding possible coding or generating themes.

As for the two most common approaches to data analysis, inductive and deductive, in this study, the combination of the two was applied in the analysis for all three articles. Inductive codes are codes that “emerged” from the data, and deductive are “codes that are identified prior to analysis and then looked for in the data” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 565). Therefore, the analysis was not strictly inductive, as the EPIC structure and the selected tenets of the instruction informed the overall process of data analysis, and I followed the logic and structure of the EPIC in order to search for patterns in the datasets. Hence, the approach to data analysis known as abduction was also applied. Abduction can be defined as the inference mechanism that is guided by the theory development and involves moving back and forth between data and theory, using both induction and deduction. Abduction involves three steps: the application of an established interpretative rule (theory); the observation of a surprising empirical phenomenon in the light of the rule or theory; the imaginative articulation of a new interpretation (theory) that will resolve the puzzle (Alvesson, 2011, pp. 58–59). Abduction is quite common in case-study research processes (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018). Referring to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2018, p. 6), data are always contextually inserted in a semantic frame, which gives them their sense to begin with. For example, in Article II, the categories of Commitment of Similarity and Commitment of Difference were adopted from Glăveanu and De Saint-Laurent (2018) simultaneously with the process of identifying the patterns of PT in the focus group interview transcripts. I found the framework developed by Glăveanu and De Saint-Laurent (2018) beneficial in approaching the construct of PT when doing the analysis for the present study. However, I operationalised this analytical framework to highlight the patterns in the data material and expanded on it through “the imaginative articulation of a new interpretation” of this framework (Alvesson, 2011, p. 59). Thus, codes for Article II were generated abductively, based on prior research and conceptual framework used for this study and an inductive search for patterns within the data material. The research process in

the thesis therefore alternated between theory and empirical facts, whereby both are reinterpreted in light of each other (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2018, p. 4).

In Article I and Article II, I used descriptive counting. For example, I counted frequencies in Article II that allowed me to see the most frequent themes across the EPIC entries and explore the interconnection between the EPIC entry as discussed in the focus group interviews and manifestations of PT. The codes created in Article I related to the Self of the pupils as manifested in their EPIC entries, were also counted in order to make inferences about the ways they demonstrated their self-awareness and hence answer the research question of the study. Overall, counting the frequency of code occurrences served as the basis for drawing qualitative inferences.

To sum up, the process of developing and refining foci for the three articles was complex and non-linear, and involved constant switching of the approaches to coding of the data. In what follows, I describe the analytical procedures for each article.

4.5.1 Article I

In order to respond to the research question (*In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC)?*), the analysis combined data elicited from the pupils' EPIC entries (content entries and reflection entries) and the focus group interviews. Three EPIC entries were analysed: *Onion of Identities*, *Seven Identities Game*, and *Sunglasses Story*. As for the focus group interviews, Article I included only the parts of discussions that focused on the self-awareness component in the participants' discussions. Thus, the study drew on 53 minutes of audio recordings and 169 EPIC entries in total; all these datasets were transferred to NVivo.

Firstly, the texts of the pupils' EPIC entries were analysed descriptively; both the EPIC content entries and reflection entries were analysed. For example, to capture the core aspects of participants' self-awareness, I created codes according to what the participants identified themselves with in their *Onion of Identities* and *Seven Identities Game* entries (for example, family, friends, hobbies, etc.). The topics listed in these entries were categorised according to

commonality, for instance, “brave”, “shy”, or “sensitive” were grouped under the theme of Psychological attributes. Overall, the following themes were identified: Personality (102 items), Roles (96 items), Gender (11 items), Ethnicity (9 items), Religion (8 items).

As for the reflection entries for *Union of Identities* and *Seven Identities Game*, I first examined the data for patterns to generate initial codes for all emergent instances of self-awareness or any other codes linked to self-awareness. Some text units (of various length) were tagged for more than one code. Codes that shared some characteristics were grouped into categories. For example, the codes under Recognition of multiple selves and Deepening self-awareness were grouped under one category Awareness of self. Overall, one major theme (Awareness) and three categories emerged (see Table 14).

Secondly, the focus group interviews were also coded and searched for themes relevant to the research focus of the article (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The codes generated were named and defined, and these codes were turned into categories and further into themes. The following themes emerged: Personality, Sense of self, Roles, Ethnicity, Religion, Gender, Choice, and Recognition of multiple selves. Due to the multiplicity of datasets and difference in the design of the guiding prompts for the tasks, the codes and analyses for different datasets were kept separate (in the presentation of the results).

Table 14. Coding framework (also presented in Article I)

Theme	Category	Code
Awareness	Of self	Recognition of multiple selves
		Deepening self-awareness
		Family value
	Of others	Perception of one’s characteristics
		Deeper understanding
		Recognition of diversities
		Recognition of similarities
	Of challenges	Addressing a particular topic
		Reducing one’s own self to one aspect
		Describing oneself

4.5.2 Article II

The main research aim addressed in this article was to explore connections between types of tasks implemented in the EPIC and the ways participants considered the perspectives of others in their focus group interviews. Therefore, the focus group interviews were analysed following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were organised into coded segments of text units based on the focus of PT chosen for the article. The length of a meaningful text unit ranged from a minimum of one sentence to a long exchange. All the instances in the transcripts in which pupils both (a) considered the perspectives of others and (b) reflected on the EPIC entries were coded. Each unit of data was related to one EPIC entry. The codes Specific PT (SPT) and General PT (GPT) were used to capture two types of PT listed below:

- Specific PT (SPT): Projection of oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference in a specific situation or context, hence taking a situation-specific perspective.
- General PT (GPT): A general, or an outsider, perspective of the situation.

For example, the codes under General PT included “awareness of stereotypes”, “meaning making”, and “conflict resolution”. An example of SPT is the following quote: “I guess I don’t think I would have called the police” (*History Corner*, FG 4). Codes related to the enhanced awareness of the diversity of perspectives are grouped under the theme Perspective Consciousness (PC). PC is viewed as the recognition that one has a view of the world that is not universally shared and that others have views of the world that can be different from one’s own (Tseng, 2002). The themes Commitment to Difference (CDif) and Commitment to Similarity (CSim) were used to capture any pupils’ responses related to EPIC entries when they recognised or made more explicit difference (recognition of the opposition between the self and other) or similarity (recognition of the likeness between the self and other), respectively. These codes were adopted from the CMPT approach developed by Glăveanu and De Saint-Laurent (2018). All coded instances referring to “awareness of differences” and “awareness of similarities” were grouped under these themes, either CDif or CSim, respectively. Table 15 shows a detailed overview of the description of the final themes and their frequencies across the focus groups.

Table 15. Overview of the final themes and frequencies in the dataset of Article II

	Theme					
	PT		PC	CDIF	CSIM	
	SPT	GPT				
1	1	1	3	2	3	10
2	0	3	6	3	5	17
3	0	0	3	3	0	6
4	1	1	2	0	0	4
5	1	1	3	2	2	9
Total	3	6	17	10	10	46

The analysis of all five focus group interviews yielded 46 coded instances related to the four main themes. At the end of the coding process, all the themes were grouped in accordance with the EPIC entries to which they referred. As such, the patterns and frequencies across different entries were investigated (Table 16).

Table 16. Overview of the identified patterns and frequencies in Article II

Theme	EPIC entry						
	Sunglasses story	Fractured fairy tale	Interview room	This is how we do it	If I were..., I'd be...	History Corner	The other side
SPT	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
GPT	0	2	1	0	0	3	0
PC	3	2	1	0	3	8	0
CDIF	1	0	4	5	0	0	0
CSIM	1	0	3	1	0	1	4
Total	5	4	9	6	3	15	4

4.5.3 Article III

The focus of Article III was to explore the teachers' experiences with the use of the e-portfolio as a tool for ILL and their perceptions of the affordances of the EPIC. For the analysis, the transcriptions of the audio recordings of the teachers' interviews were coded. The analysis was guided by abduction, which required the researcher to search for codes and categories in the interview data and analyse them in the light of previous literature on affordances. Hence, the

coding process was centred around the teachers' comments about any aspect of their and their pupils' use of the EPIC, either challenging or beneficial. I identified sections of text and coded them if they related to these areas. After coding the entire dataset, the codes were sorted into categories and further into themes. I searched for common patterns in the texts across the respondents, in other words, the teacher responses were analysed as a group of three, rather than as individual cases. Five themes were generated (see Table 17 for an overview of the themes and categories in Article III).

In accordance with the recommendations given by Braun and Clarke (2006), the themes were constantly reviewed (phase 4 of the thematic analysis), and several themes were refined. For example, initial themes labelled as Organisational affordances and Pedagogical affordances were further subdivided into several themes. Timeframe theme was at a later point reframed into Practical concerns and this theme was subdivided into three categories, including the Lack of time category.

Table 17. Overview of themes and categories identified in the interview data in Article III

Theme	Category
Reflection	Self-awareness
	Multiple selves
	Perspective taking
	Metacognition
	Lack of reflection
Flexibility	Variation
	Appropriateness for learners
	Digital environment
Practical concerns	Lack of time
	Number of tasks
	Repetitiveness
Language learning outcomes	Writing
	Vocabulary acquisition
Emotions	Positive feelings

While writing the discussion for Article III, it was decided that the themes Language Learning outcomes and Emotions, although important for the overall analysis, did not have enough data to support them. Moreover, since the transcriptions were analysed from the two perspectives, namely, the affordances (both challenges and benefits) of the EPIC as viewed by the teachers and the teachers' perspectives on ILL among the pupils, codes related

to these perspectives were in focus when writing the article. Therefore, due to the space of constraints of Article III, the themes Language Learning outcomes and Emotions were described briefly but the focus of attention was given to the themes Reflection, Flexibility and Practical concerns.

4.6 Quality criteria

It is important for the researcher to have quality criteria to establish consistency within one's own research and ensure transparency of the results. However, the recognised quantitative concepts such as reliability, validity, and objectivity cannot be directly applied to qualitative research. These terms were first generated in the positivistic tradition and hence they do not carry the same connotations in qualitative research as they do in the quantitative research (Yazan, 2015). The present exploratory case study thus followed the criteria of *credibility* (broadly corresponding to internal validity in the quantitative paradigm), *transferability* (external validity), and *dependability* (reliability) (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Credibility is viewed in this study as a reflection of the extent to which readers can have the confidence in the truth of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to increase the credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied, as the study involved different data collection methods in order to capture authentic ways of how the pupils engaged with the EPIC. In order to ensure the accuracy of the results in relation to the empirical reality, this study was grounded in methodological triangulation as conceptualised through the data collection methods drawn on from three different perspectives: the pupils' individual experiences with the EPIC entries (pupils' texts); post-project focus group interviews with the pupils; and the teacher interviews. This triangulation of methods reduced the researcher bias and hence enhanced the credibility of the study. For instance, in Article I, which addressed the ways in which the pupils engaged with the EPIC entries aimed at self-awareness, through analysing both the texts and focus group discussions, I managed to capture a picture of both kinds of data in relation to the main objective of the study. Hence, the focus group interviews were included to investigate multiple voices and perspectives to be discussed and shared (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017, p. 93), which made them suited to illuminate perspectives that might be hidden in their

EPIC texts. Thus, the data analysis in this article was triangulated and provided a more complete account of the participants' self-awareness through the EPIC.

As for other ways I enhanced the credibility of the findings, I formulated interview questions in such a way as to be an effective means of eliciting the participants' opinions and views, but I tried not to include leading questions (for instance, I used such formulations like "What do you mean by that?" instead of saying "So you mean that..."). In addition, the audio recorded interviews, which were transcribed verbatim allowed me to gain insights into a sufficient number of quotations from participants, which in turn gave me opportunities to capture what actually took place and what participants actually said (Yilmaz, 2013, p. 321). Prolonged engagement with the participants is another credibility procedure used in this study, which entails that the researcher stays at the site for a prolonged period of time, during which the researcher builds trust with participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Transferability refers to a study's meaningfulness in relation to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By their nature, qualitative findings are highly context and case dependent. Along the same lines, one of the inherent characteristics of classroom research is that it is often limited to those contexts and samples to which the researcher can gain access (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, there is seldom a large pool of volunteers from which to choose (Patton, 2015). The above-mentioned limitations related to the sample are inherent in purposeful sampling strategies, which were used in this study. A more detailed account of limitations related to sampling of the participants is given in Section 6.4. In order to enhance transferability of the study, I have contextualised the characteristics of the participants that might be important for further investigations or comparisons across different contexts. Five classes were intact, mainstream classes of mixed ability pupils who would otherwise have been present in any other Norwegian lower secondary school. The findings of the study are thus potentially transferrable to other schools in Norway. More importantly, in this thesis and all the articles, I tried to provide a detailed account of the contextual factors related to the participants to provide enough information about the settings in which the research was carried out so that others can judge whether it would be possible to apply the findings to other contexts. Additionally, I asked peers, namely colleagues, who were competent in the research area or relevant topics; they asked questions and commented on

the findings to ensure the quality of the research. Overall, the transferability of the findings in this study relies on its methodological transparency and providing rich descriptions of the phenomena examined, supported by constant reflexivity and the process of peer debriefing (the review of the data and the research process by someone who is familiar with the phenomenon being explored).

Dependability refers to whether the findings are consistent throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of several data collection methods increased the dependability of the findings. All steps of data collection and analysis were documented and recorded at different stages in the process. Coding was performed systematically. Regular and consistent use of participants' own words also ensured that my interpretations are consistent. Another dependability measure was the transparency about negative cases and honest accounts about the project and its outcomes. These are especially evident in Article II and Article III. In Article II, the selected extracts from the focus group interviews (in particular, Excerpt 2) provided some evidence of stereotypical representations of two different nations made by the pupils. Article III reported on the teachers' negative comments about repetitiveness in terms of the number of entries implemented during the intervention and lack of reflection among the pupils.

As regards the analytical procedures, the qualitative data analysis software NVivo was helpful in organising and categorising the data. The coding was reviewed and adjusted several times to ensure that I had categorised the material. In this study, I did not use a second person to independently code all data. Nevertheless, there were several times during the data analysis process when a fellow researcher(s) reviewed my initial coding categories and transcripts and quotes of the participants and made comments regarding the consistency of the labels used and taxonomies of themes of the data. I kept records of my notes, ideas about coding, and all the drafts of the articles; this helped me to systemise and keep track of the data analysis process. In sum, peer debriefing, audit trial, triangulation, and transparency about the data analysis ensured that dependability was established.

Dependability also entails that the researcher is open to necessary changes in the data collection and analytical procedures. One of the challenges in this study

was to determine which data would be most representative and relevant for the study's overarching objective. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the total set of collected data in the project was more comprehensive than what was utilised in the three articles included in this thesis. Making choices in terms of whom to interview, when to interview, and what datasets to use when writing the articles can all influence the results of the study. It takes sensitivity and flexibility to determine what data to collect and how to organise the data collection process as efficiently and transparently as possible (Slavin, 2007). The research questions of the three articles and the study's overarching question have therefore been continuously refined and developed. These developments emerged from increased understanding of the phenomena under investigation, as well as from transformations of my own perspectives and position towards the participants, theoretical concepts, and worldview. For more details of the reflexivity and the changes that have been made, see Section 4.7 below.

4.7 Researcher position and reflexivity

In what follows, I describe my position as a researcher and the issue of reflexivity, which is essential in all aspects of research. Reflexivity is viewed as

the sets of dispositions and activities by which researchers locate themselves within the research processes whilst also attending to how their presence, values, beliefs, knowledge, and personal and professional histories shape their research spaces, relationships, and outcomes (Consoli & Ganassin, 2022, p. 1).

Throughout all the stages of the present study, reflexivity as the research practice was taken into consideration, starting from the initial research proposal and planning the research, to the representation of findings in the articles and discussion of the results in this doctoral thesis. Being reflexive ultimately means being aware of not only one's positionality or motivation for initiating a research topic but also of one's own personal and professional stories (Consoli & Ganassin, 2022). Researchers are thus encouraged to bring the richness and diversity of their life capital, which comprises two interacting dimensions: *prospective* and *retrospective*; prospective reflexivity concerns the effect of the whole-person-researcher on the research and retrospective reflexivity concerns

“the effect of the research on the researcher” (Attia & Edge, 2017, p. 35). In what follows, I address these dimensions of reflexivity as applied in this study.

As for prospective reflexivity, referring to Holliday (2016), the influence of the researcher on the research is unavoidable and is a resource (p. 145). Both the qualitative research paradigm, grounded in constructivism, and explorations aimed at ILL in educational contexts do not assume one objective reality; they both largely draw on the assumptions that people construct their own meanings and knowledge based on their own perceptions. I recognise that my personal background and my viewpoint as a researcher are integral to what I see and how I interpret the findings. Therefore, I am aware that my participation in the design of the study, implementation, and interpretation of the results has been influenced by my personality, my personal and professional experiences.

During the data collection, my position was as the-observer-as-participant (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 457), i.e., not a member of the group, but a person who may participate a little or peripherally in the groups’ activities, and whose role as a researcher is clear and overt, although as unobtrusive as possible. While the three teachers were the main instructors, I did participate in describing the EPIC tasks at times, I observed classes, and I facilitated a few lessons as a teacher. Therefore, my research role was overt to the participants. Court (2018) states that the researcher comes from an academic setting, with academic knowledge that the interviewee(s) or participants may not possess, may not recognise, or may not respect. All of this puts the researcher in a position of power. Thus, by its very nature, any research creates an unbalanced relationship. Overall, I tried to be respectful and patient (Court, 2018, p. 48) in order to respect the research participants’ preferences; I also learned to be sensitive to the participants and listened to their voices, and I accurately described their views and opinions expressed during the teacher interviews and focus group interviews. These issues will be discussed in more detail in the section on ethical considerations (Section 4.8) below.

As far as retrospective reflexivity is concerned, this research project and the experiences I have obtained throughout this PhD study have shaped my personality and my professional life. I have gained deeper insights into my Self and have developed an understanding that I embrace multiple selves as being, among others, a human, a female researcher, and a researcher interested in

intercultural learning within educational contexts, as well as embracing other social, national, and generational affiliations, and stories. All these elements constitute my own *culture* and life capital, which to a large extent have been affected by the fact that I conducted the present doctoral study.

This research has not only influenced my view of myself, but it has also enriched my understanding of the characteristics of the process of integrating ILL into the classroom, as becoming intercultural is viewed in this study as an ongoing personal journey (Kim, 2001). When I started this research, I was a novice researcher who could not fully envisage the results of this study. I have learned to be more open to changes, as now I recognise that one important insight, I have gained from this doctoral research is that research is a continuous process of opening “doors for understanding” (Court, 2018, p. 11). The issue of being able to be more open for understanding is also linked to how I have constantly reviewed the methodological and theoretical positions of the three articles during the study. The ways of conceptualising and operationalising the notion of IC have also changed considerably during these years, shifting away from, for instance, investigating it as a holistic theoretical construct comprising all the three constituent aspects, including knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs, to narrowing down the focus of the study on self-awareness and perspective taking. Building the study around the conceptual metaphors of Mirror, Window, Coloured Glasses, and Reversed Mirror has helped me to streamline the focus of the study and guide my choices when conducting the data analysis for the articles. Furthermore, the concept of affordances, as used in Article III, had not been initially included into the scope of the thesis. However, as the teacher interview guide included questions on the teachers’ use and experiences with the e-portfolio and various opportunities for ILL were discussed during the interviews, I decided to add this notion to the theoretical framework of Article III. Moreover, the concept of affordances allowed me to keep my thesis in line with the overall aim of the study, which is exploring the opportunities afforded by the EPIC when the teachers and pupils put it into action. Overall, this project has taken a significant amount of time and resulted in several years of thinking and writing about the underlying theoretical concepts. Time is an important factor for the development of ideas, as new insights result from revisiting the data and adding complementary theoretical conceptualisations. Time and

detachment from my doctoral work have allowed me to be more reflexive about the research processes.

Summing up, I have grown considerably both as a researcher and an intercultural researcher; I have learned to be more open and flexible towards changes, which I see as a fundamental part of any research journey connected to intercultural learning and teaching. The roots of both qualitative research and the concept of IC imply an ongoing process of constant reflexivity and self-awareness. Overall, this research has enriched my own personal and professional life story and, vice versa, the researched phenomena have largely been interpreted through the lens of my own personal and professional experiences. This study has therefore been informed by the two types of reflexivity described above, namely, retrospective and prospective reflexivity.

4.8 Ethical considerations

This section describes key considerations that need to be addressed to ensure that the research was conducted ethically, i.e., in accordance with moral principles, from its inception to completion and publication of results and beyond (Sterling & De Costa, 2018). Firstly, I describe a number of formal ethical guidelines for this research, provided by professional organisations and ethical review boards (macro-ethics) (De Costa et al., 2019). Secondly, I discuss issues related to micro-ethics in qualitative research. Micro-ethics is viewed as “everyday ethical dilemmas” (Kubanyiova, 2008, p. 504) and practices that are customised to manage ethical dilemmas in an emergent manner (De Costa et al., 2019). Ethical considerations in terms of involving adolescents as the main age group of the participants and ethical concerns related to teacher interviews are further discussed. Finally, this section describes ethical challenges related to the data analysis.

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines developed by the National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NESH) (2022). In Norway, the Norwegian Agency for Shared

Services in Education and Research (SIKT)⁴⁵ performs the task of assisting researchers in Norway in fulfilling their responsibilities related to data protection services and quality assurance of their research. Approval was sought and obtained, ensuring that the treatment of participants, both the teachers and the pupils, and data collection, were in accordance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Out of respect for children, "they should be provided with essential information and asked whether or not they wish to participate in the research" (Court, 2018, p. 83). Although participating pupils did not have the legal capacity to consent to participating in research (although some of them were 15 at that point in time), it was considered important to involve them in the process by explaining the study to them and by verbally stating their decision about whether they wanted to participate or not. As most pupil participants were under 15 years of age at the outset of the project, approval was required from the pupils themselves and a parent or guardian. The participants (both the pupils and teachers) received information about the purpose of the research, who would receive access to the information, and the consequences of participation in the research project (Appendix 2 and 3). I handed out consent forms for the pupils to the teachers, who passed them to the pupils and their parents/guardians. I informed the classes about the topic of the research, dissemination, and their right to withdraw from the project. In addition, it was highlighted that their choice whether to participate in the project or not would not in any way influence their grades.

As argued, providing full details in the informed consent could potentially provoke the Hawthorne effect (discussed in a more detail in 6.4) (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 81), i.e., that it might disturb the natural behaviour of participants. On the other hand, in this study, it was important to build trust with the participants and give them the "full picture" of the research. Therefore, I provided relevant information about what it meant to take part in the research project. This was done in Norwegian and in simple language. The pupils were given opportunities to revisit their consent throughout the data collection. A more detailed account

⁴⁵ SIKT was established in 2022. The organisation is the result of a merger between NSD (Norwegian Center for Research Data AS), Uninett AS and the Norwegian Directorate for ICT. When the study was first initiated and before data collection was conducted, the approval from NSD had to be obtained (see Appendix 13).

of the project content was given to the teachers and the head teacher, as the teachers were part of the instruction processes, and I sought active assistance from them. Moreover, I tried to minimise any power imbalance between the teachers and me, as they were expected to be actively involved in shaping the entries and fully aware of the EPIC entries' instructions and learning aims of the instruction (see information letter sent to the head teacher and teachers, Appendix 4). Furthermore, I found it important to continuously negotiate with the teachers regarding their responsibilities, as they were the main gatekeepers in the research; they taught the classes, provided me with access to the pupils, assisted in forming the focus groups, and gave me information regarding the pupils' relationships in their classes.

As for anonymity and confidentiality of the study participants, these issues were ensured as much as possible. First and foremost, I used software that reduced the chance that someone would gain unauthorised access to the data. The questionnaire did not include details that could readily identify the participant, and all related documents and administrative databases were accessible only by me. As for the data analysis, pseudonyms for the teachers and codes for all participants and classes were used in the study, including in transcriptions and all the related notes and memos. As for the ethical issues concerning the implementation of the e-portfolio, pupils' texts were uploaded to Google Classroom, and the pupils were aware that only the researcher and the teachers would be able to read their texts. This could have influenced the way in which the pupils completed the tasks. However, it also increased transparency of the findings and credibility of the study.

Being an ethically skilled qualitative researcher involves more than respecting the integrity of the research subjects and respecting their confidentiality. Ethical researchers also need to take into account the cultural context of their research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 162). The language used in the research and my cultural background as a native speaker of neither English nor Norwegian influenced some of my decisions and affected ethical choices I had to make. According to Rolland et al. (2019), factors related to language choices cannot be ignored when it comes to the opportunities and challenges of researching individuals and the quality of the research. Therefore, they need to be addressed at several stages of the research process. A particular ethical dilemma for me was whether I should conduct focus group interviews and teacher interviews in

Norwegian or English, given that Norwegian was the main language of instruction at this school, and for most of the pupils and all the teachers, Norwegian was also their first language. However, I chose to conduct the interviews in English to maximise the expected learning outcomes, as it was the target language of instruction in classes. Furthermore, English is my second language, whereas Norwegian is my third language. As argued by Rolland et al. (2019), using a language that is foreign for both parties can be a resource for the creation of a “third space” in the interview (p. 285). Additionally, I would otherwise have to translate the data from the interviews, and translation is another challenging aspect when doing research, as it is an interpretive process in itself. However, importantly, during the focus group interviews, the pupils were given a choice to speak Norwegian or to codeswitch if they wished to, allowing them to draw on their full linguistic repertoires (Rolland et al., 2019, p. 285). Overall, I carefully addressed the language choices I made in terms of “realization, consideration, and informed and purposeful decision-making” (Holmes et al., 2016, p. 90).

Another issue related to micro-ethics in this study was to ensure the careful treatment of adolescents as the main participants in this study. The relational and social development of adolescents was an important issue considered in this research. Parents (or guardians) and teachers play an important role in social and cultural development in this life stage. On the other hand, adolescents at this age are considerably more independent than younger children. As such, the participants were capable of making their own informed choices regarding participation in the study, to be more actively involved in discussions and be responsible for their opinions during the focus group interviews. A number of ethical considerations connected to the target group, adolescents, should be addressed when conducting interviews or focus group interviews with them. Firstly, the researcher needs to be aware of always being in a position of power (Kjørholt, 2012, p. 25). Moreover, at this age, peers tend to be easier to talk to than adults (Hasselgreen & Caudwell, 2016, p. 5). This may have influenced group dynamics in focus group interviews. It was noticeable during some of the focus group interviews that some pupils were more capable of challenging my authority than others. Children and adolescents are not a homogeneous group, and their preferences may vary depending on the topic, the interview sample, and other personal factors (Heary & Hennessy, 2012). I used visual prompts

during the interviews and both verbal and non-verbal language of engagement to ensure that the pupils were provided with different ways to express their ideas (F. Gibson, 2007, p. 480). Written notes were not used, as I audio recorded the interviews, choosing only one method of recording to make it less intrusive (F. Gibson, 2007).

Secondly, as the only researcher, I was responsible for the research process, including the methodological perspectives and questions asked, as well as for protecting the participants from anything that could be harmful to them (Kjørholt, 2012). I interviewed only pupils whose parents/guardians had given consent for their child to be interviewed. There was one participant (from FG1) who withdrew from participation in the focus group interviews and the decision was respected. Next, although the focus group interviews in this project were not designed to elicit sensitive or personal information, interview topics allowed for the discussion of the pupils' personal experiences and disclosure their personal opinions and details of their lives in front of peers. Thus, raising issues of self-awareness and awareness of others in one's classroom or circle of friends inevitably triggered several instances of discussions of a relatively personal nature. I protected their rights and did not use such comments in my publications. I always tried to respect the rights of the participants to let them decide what information they wanted to share with me and what they wanted to withhold. Researchers should "respect the participants' human dignity and consider their personal integrity, safety, and well-being" (NESH, 2022). For the purposes of the study and to ensure adherence to ethical principles, it was crucial that the participants felt at ease and respected in the focus group interviews. Therefore, I tried to lead the discussion over to a different topic when instances of discomfort or tension occurred.

Ethical issues related to power in both interviews with the teachers and the focus group interviews with pupils were considered. As mentioned above, power relations between the researcher and the participants were an important aspect that could potentially influence the outcomes of the interviews. I therefore tried to build trust with the participants by managing my appearance, behaviour, and self-representation (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005), so that respondents felt at ease. I chatted with the pupils outside of the classroom and avoided situations where the participants would experience a power imbalance and uneasiness when talking to me. Attitudinal, emotional, and relationship

issues are crucial with children and adolescents (Kuchah & Pinter, 2012). Employing rapport strategies may not only reduce the power gap between the researcher and the participants, but also encourage them to transcend any cultural inhibitions (Kuchah & Pinter, 2012, p. 286). Times and locations of data collection were also chosen to cause the least discomfort to the participants. Moreover, the combination of a group of pupils and one researcher helped to balance the asymmetric power relations between adult and child (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Qualitative one-on-one interviews with the teachers yielded a rich pool of data regarding the teachers' engagement with the EPIC and their perceptions of the affordances of this tool for ILL. However, I recognise that interviews entail "one-directional questioning" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 164) and the interviewer hence has a monopoly on the interpretation of the interview (both focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews). As Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) argue, the research interviewer maintains "an exclusive privilege to interpret and report" what the interviewee really meant (p. 165). The data I have obtained from the interviews provided me with descriptions, which I interpreted according to the study objectives in order to address research questions of the study. These issues related to the data analysis are connected to the choices I made when adhering to the principles of abduction in the data analysis (as discussed above in Section 4.5).

The study's dataset was not homogeneous and included a range of diverse formats, namely, interview transcripts, pupils' texts, transcripts of audio recordings, drawings, and annotations; this posed additional challenges. All the data material was imported into NVivo, and I systematically read through the dataset. Transcription and interpretation of the transcribed data from the interviews were other aspects of the micro-ethics that I considered. Kvale (1996) argues that "[t]ranscripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purposes" (p. 165). Researchers need to be alert to the negotiations and assumptions transcription involves. Overall, in the data analysis phase, as for the bias connected to the interpretation of the findings, I recognise that the choices I made in accordance with what to represent in the findings and what findings to omit (due to space limits) might have affected the overall discussion of the findings in this thesis.

Summing up, I recognise that, being a researcher, I was the driving force behind the interpretations of the results in the study. However, according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2005), even in a constructed world, with its mistrust of universal theories and truths, there is still room for a moral reality (p. 175). Moral reality is a practical reality where truthfulness is more important than absolute truth and where practical wisdom – the skill of clear perception – becomes more important than the ability to use abstract principles (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 175). In this study, I tried my best to make the entire process of data collection and data analysis transparent and conform to the ethics, guided by truthfulness, moral principles, and reflexivity.

5 Summary of the results of the articles

This chapter summarises the main results from the three articles comprising the present doctoral study. The three articles are qualitative case studies that explore the opportunities for ILL by means of the e-portfolio from two perspectives: the pupils and the teachers. These different perspectives are explored by means of analysing three different datasets, namely, pupils' texts and focus group interviews (Article I), focus group interviews (Article II), and interviews with the teachers (Article III). Article I and Article II address the two integral dimensions of IC: self-awareness and perspective taking, examined from the learner perspective. Article III explores the affordances of the e-portfolio as a tool from the teachers' perspectives, relying therefore more on a holistic account of the teaching by means of the EPIC. Table 18 below shows an overview of the research questions for each article and the overarching question for the doctoral study.

Table 18. The overarching question of the study and the research questions in the three articles

Overarching research question	
What opportunities does the intercultural e-portfolio offer for intercultural language learning about the self and the other through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers?	
Article	Research questions
I	In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC)?
II	How do the pupils consider perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews?
III	What are the affordances of the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) as perceived by the teachers?

5.1 Article I – In pursuit of intercultural competence: Exploring self-awareness of EFL pupils in a lower-secondary school in Norway

The first article explores self-awareness as an integral component of IC in the English as a foreign language classroom in Norway. The research question raised in this article is as follows: *In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC)?* The article draws on data generated from the EPIC texts collected during the intervention and focus group interviews with pupils conducted in the end of the project. The focus of the article is narrowed down to three EPIC entries, *Onion of identities*; *Seven identities game*; and *Sunglasses story* (see Appendix 1 for a detailed description of the entries). In total, fifty-three minutes of audio recordings of focus group interviews with the pupils and 169 text entries were analysed for this article. The datasets were analysed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings were organised in accordance with the two datasets: the EPIC entries (subdivided into the EPIC entries and reflections) and the focus group interviews.

The findings drawn from the EPIC entries derived from *Onion of identities* show that two aspects within the self, namely, Psychological attributes and Family relations, were the most frequently mentioned as forming the basis of the self (“core layer”). The two most frequently mentioned aspects in the “outer layer” (i.e., less important) domain were School/student and Hobbies and interests. These results correlated to what was found for the most recurring theme in *Seven identities game*. Five broad categories emerged from the summarised results of the entries (*Onion of identities* and *Seven Identities Game*), namely, Personality, Roles, Ethnicity, Religion, and Gender. The results also show that the most frequent categories are related to Personality and Roles, whereas the less frequent ones are Ethnicity, Religion, and Gender. A qualitative analysis of *Sunglasses story* (a story that, through the coloured glasses metaphor, shows how we see ourselves and how others see us) shows that the pupils displayed their awareness of how we see the world through our own pair of lenses, and this enabled the pupils to reflect on how they perceive other people as well (Stadler, 2014).

As for the analysis of reflection entries, three categories under the theme of Awareness emerged: Awareness of self, Awareness of others, and Awareness of challenges. The most frequent comments were related to how pupils reflected in more depth about themselves in terms of their extended awareness of multiple selves (e.g., “I felt more complex, and I got to know myself better”) and new insights about their perception of their personality (e.g., “I learned that I am a very closed person and that I don’t like to be so open about myself”). The pupils also commented on their discomfort regarding, for example, reducing the self to only one aspect and particular aspects when describing the self, e.g., religious issues, feelings (e.g., “It was hard and weird to define myself in a couple of words and phrases”). Such remarks show that feelings of discomfort are part of the process of becoming more self-aware, particularly when individuals undergo a shift in their awareness of one’s complexity (see Houghton, 2011).

The analysis of the focus group interviews indicated that choice was the most salient aspect when thinking about the self. For example, their comments were related to the Self as the ability to make active choices: “that is something you choose so it’s not something you were born with”, “you have lots of choices”. They also displayed recognition of the complex nature of the self (e.g., “so many things can describe what you are”, “you are everything, not just one thing”). In addition, the visual representations of the self were also discussed during the focus group interviews. Representation of the self as “coloured glasses”, “onion”, “hand/palm”, “book”, and “tree” were mentioned. Recognition of the link between self-awareness and awareness of others’ priorities and values was pointed out by one pupil during the focus group interview: “I think it is important to remember your own identity, and also acknowledge that other people might not have the same priorities as you.”

Hence, the study added empirical evidence to the sparse research on self-awareness within the field of IC by focusing on Norwegian adolescents. The findings highlight that substituting “the nation as the primary unit of analysis” (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) with an alternative concept of (multiple) self can allow pupils to reflect on the variety of facets of diversity. The pupils gained a deeper self-awareness, often related to a greater understanding of one’s own self by (a) noticing the complexity of their own self, or “within-self diversity” (Houghton, 2011); (b) acknowledging how people see things differently; (c)

recognising how diverse and, at the same time, similar they are to the other pupils in class; (d) reflecting on feelings of discomfort and resistance when becoming more self-aware. Previous research showed that highlighting the existence of in-group diversity may diminish the perceiver's tendency to make generalisations about others (Houghton, 2011). The analysis of this study also revealed that pupils were more eager to describe themselves in terms of their family composition and circle of friends, psychological traits, interests, and hobbies than in terms of ethnic, gender, or national characteristics. This finding echoes the findings by Krulatz et al. (2018) and Holmes and O'Neill (2010). Furthermore, the pupils often moved away from their "comfort zone" (Giorgis, 2018, p. 26), since gaining self-awareness is not always straightforward and positive (Holmes & O'Neill, 2010, p.176). To sum up, the findings show that supporting pupils in raising their self-awareness through carefully designed tasks can lead to an increased ability to reflect on the complex nature of the Self, which in turn can be tied to the awareness of the complex nature of others (Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Houghton, 2011; Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016). The findings therefore suggest that FL teachers can choose to select among numerous points of departure in their FL classrooms to facilitate their pupils' self-awareness (family composition, hobbies, personality, etc), not focusing solely on the national characteristics of their own and the target culture.

5.2 Article II – Considering perspectives of others: A case study of intercultural learning among English language learners in Norway

The second article focuses on investigating connections between types of tasks implemented during the e-portfolio project and the ways the pupils considered the perspectives of others in their focus group interviews. The aim was to explore manifestations of PT that emerge in focus group interviews in response to the e-portfolio-based intervention project. The research question was: *How do the pupils consider perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews?*

The study drew on data collected from five focus group interviews with thirty-three pupils. The focus group interview as the main method was chosen to

identify links between the EPIC entries and the way the participants considered the perspectives of others through conversations with peers and the researcher. All the instances where a pupil both (a) considers the perspectives of others and (b) reflects on the EPIC entries were coded. Four main themes were generated: Perspective taking (PT), Perspective consciousness (PC), Commitment to difference (CDif), and Commitment to similarity (CSim) (see Section 4.5.2 for the details of the data analysis). The analysis yielded 46 coded instances; the most recurring theme across all groups was PC (n=17), followed by CDif (n=10) and CSim (n=10).

As for the themes PT and PC, the findings show that most opportunities for PT were concentrated when the pupils were discussing the entry *History Corner* (n=14). The analysis identified three instances of the Specific PT theme, all related to the *History Corner* entry. The in-depth analysis of an excerpt from the interview with Group 1 revealed that the pupils projected themselves into an unfamiliar frame of reference when they contrasted *now* and *then*, thus becoming more aware that other perspectives do exist, and these perspectives may be different in many ways, depending on context and time and even among classmates. As for the second group of themes (CDIF and CSim), the analysis shows that most of the coded instances related to CDif and CSim are attributed to two entries, namely, *Interview Room* and *This Is How We Do It*, both of which deal with comparing and contrasting one's own daily routines and those of another person from a different cultural group. These two themes were further illustrated by a focus group interaction in which the pupils discussed their experiences from interviewing other people, comparing the routines and ways of living of people from different cultures. The focus in this episode was on differences and similarities of people from different countries, and more generally, on national cultures. However, the pupils challenged and questioned each other's opinions through dialogue. Pupils highlighted the importance of learning from and about others and not having prejudiced representations about another national group.

Overall, the results indicate that storytelling and engaging with the notion of the reversed perspectives (as in *Fractured Fairy Tales*), narrative accounts of past events (as in *History Corner*) and metaphorical representations related to different perspectives on the self and other (as in *Sunglasses Story* and *If I Were... I'd Be...*) enhanced the awareness of diversity of perspectives among

the pupils. This echoes with the findings of previous research (Kearney, 2015; Sell, 2017; Thein et al., 2007). Overall, the recognition of a variety of perspectives might be a steppingstone towards “active projection into another or unfamiliar frame of reference” (Kearney, 2015, p. 170). On the other hand, the entries based on interviewing people from other cultural backgrounds suggest that engaging with comparing and contrasting can lead to enhancing oversimplifications and stereotypes. Thus, it might be useful for teachers to spend more time on selecting their tasks and also discussing the issues of similarities and differences on a deeper level in the classroom (during conversations with pupils). Overall, the study shows that realisations of PT among adolescents were complex and varied, and the ways they considered the perspectives of others were often contingent on the type of the entry they discussed. The findings therefore indicate that teachers need to reflect critically and didactically on what kinds of tasks they use as well as how they use them because such tasks might eventually influence how their pupils will interact and meet others. Thus, the role of the teachers and decisions they make in terms of selection and design of activities is crucial.

5.3 Article III – The affordances of an intercultural e-portfolio: A case study on perspectives of English teachers in Norway

Article III reports results from an analysis of three individual interviews with the teachers partaking in the study. The aim of the study was to investigate the teachers’ perceptions about the affordances of the e-portfolio as a tool and therefore enrich the project as a whole with the teachers’ perspectives and experiences with the EPIC project. This study offers complementary insights into the way e-portfolios can be integrated into EFL teaching as a tool for ILL. The research question was: *What are the affordances of the e-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) as perceived by the teachers?* The study drew on the construct of affordance viewed as the perceived action potential emerging from interaction with the tool (van Lier, 2004, p. 92), entailing both benefits and constraints.

The data gathered through interviews were thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Five themes were identified, and the following three main

themes were presented in this article: Reflection, Flexibility, and Practical concerns due to their frequency in the dataset and the direct relevance to the study's research question. The findings grouped under the theme Reflection show that the e-portfolio provided support for the teachers' work with aspects related to intercultural competence, such as self-awareness, awareness of others, and PT. The data indicate that one of the benefits of the e-portfolio is that one can collect learner artefacts to track their learning outcomes and reflections on the pupils' enhanced awareness of the plurality of their selves. The level of cognitive development has been also mentioned as a factor that might have led to pupils' lack of reflection. The affordances of the EPIC identified under the theme of Flexibility highlight that the e-portfolio provided variation in terms of materials, which were tuned to the developmental level or interests of the pupils. The teachers considered that the e-portfolio allowed for greater adaptability and variation and increased ILL opportunities to go beyond the prescribed curriculum or textbooks. One of the major issues related to the Practical concerns of the EPIC as perceived by the teachers was the time involved in implementing the e-portfolio activities. These findings show the complex and time-consuming nature of the process of incorporating the e-portfolio aimed at ILL (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007). Another concern mentioned by one of the teachers was related to insufficient time left for language teaching; finding a balance between culture and language learning within the span of one lesson was identified as a struggle for the teachers.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that, on the one hand, the EPIC provided the pupils and their teachers with a flexible tool for raising self-awareness and perspective taking and a tool that can be easily adapted to the age of the pupils. On the other hand, the EPIC intervention demonstrated that the process of enhancing ILL through the e-portfolio requires time. Regarding this, one important implication from the study was that teachers need to be given sufficient time to plan, implement and work with the e-portfolio. To overcome limitations on time and the nature of the tasks in the e-portfolio, teachers can narrow down tasks, find a balance between culture and language components within the e-portfolio, and spread them out over a longer period of time so that the learners can complete them more effectively. Another empirical implication of the study is that reflection is a key element of the e-portfolio as a tool for ILL. The findings of the study reveal that ILL was stimulated through

noticing and reflecting (see Biebricher et al., 2019; Conway & Richards, 2018; Oranje, 2021). The study hence shows that the pupils at this level would benefit from a portfolio-centred intercultural learning and teaching approach, although it is a long-term and demanding process (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Oranje, 2021). The results of the present study have thus contributed empirical knowledge to an under-researched field, studying adolescent ILL through the e-portfolios in the Norwegian context.

6 Discussion and conclusions

Following the meaning of the word *synopsis*, entailing a condensed statement or outline, this final chapter provides an integrated discussion of the findings obtained in the three articles included in the present doctoral research. This chapter further discusses the overall findings of the research in terms of their contributions and implications for the English classroom. Finally, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are addressed.

6.1 *Integrated discussion of findings*

The three articles included in this doctoral study aimed to answer the following overarching research question: What opportunities does the intercultural e-portfolio offer for intercultural language learning about the self and the other through the lens of lower secondary school pupils and teachers?

Article I explores the opportunities and manifestations of self-awareness in the pupils' texts and focus group interviews. Article II is a case study on how the pupils considered the perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews. Article III focuses on the perspectives of the teachers on the affordances of the e-portfolio as a tool for ILL. Thus, the three articles included in this doctoral research project provide interrelated and complementary insights into the multiple opportunities for ILL provided by the EPIC through the lens of pupils and teachers. In what follows, to answer the overarching research question, I discuss the integrated findings in the three articles, focusing on each of the research foci (self-awareness and perspective taking) separately but viewing them through the lens of the opportunities provided by the EPIC from the perspectives of both the pupils and the teachers.

When it comes to the pupils' self-awareness, three main opportunities for ILL afforded by the EPIC were identified: (a) diverse manifestations of the self in enhancing self-awareness among the pupils; (b) the emerging nexus of self-awareness and the awareness of others through the EPIC; and (c) the pupils' discomfort and tensions as a challenge.

Firstly, the lower secondary school pupils' self-awareness facilitated by the EPIC is characterised by openness and the tendency to perceive themselves in terms of a range of descriptions of the self (such as their family composition, friends, and personal interests, rather than solely ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds). This finding is similar to what recent research has found, namely, that extending the self to aspects other than nation, ethnicity, or religion might be beneficial for the learners (Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Houghton, 2011; Krulatz et al., 2018). As Hoff (2020) rightfully points out, there are many different markers of identity that influence people's reaction to an event. In addition, the rationale behind people's responses is varied and may be highly personal. The findings of the present study hence support the argument that the pupils' existing background, knowledge, first language, etc. all play roles in the exploration of the self and others, and it seems crucial to take a broad approach to the concept of the self as having many facets. The EPIC afforded such awareness of the multiplicity of ways one can see and describe oneself (e.g., *ID T-shirt*, *Onion of identities*, *Identity tag game*, *Seven identities game*, etc). From the teachers' perspectives, the importance of relying on more than one marker of the self was highlighted. The teachers pointed out the changes among the pupils, in terms of increased awareness at the individual level ("I had a few people say: 'Okay, so I'm multicultural here and so there were a few light bulbs we turned on.'")

Secondly, the opportunities afforded by the EPIC highlighted the emerging nexus between the self and the awareness of others. Acknowledging the internal diversities of others in the classroom is a building block for noticing and accepting the diversities of other people in larger social groups (e.g., Cutrim Schmid, 2021; Houghton, 2011). Hence, the awareness of others might start from the awareness of peers in the same classroom. The focus on the internal diversity of the classroom provided by the EPIC has thus afforded some positive results for the pupils' ILL in this study (Article I). The pupils became more aware of their own classmates' interests, families, and hobbies and consequently moved closer to acknowledging diversities within their community. They reported that national culture is not the only source of (intercultural) differences and similarities. The pupils have received intercultural input from within the classroom, and their own classrooms' diversities have become more visible. For instance, the pupils have noticed the

priorities of their classmates, they got to know others “more as a person”, and they managed to get to know each other in a different way (Article I). The findings of the study also reveal that pupils’ awareness of others was, for instance, promoted through their extended understanding of the perspectives of others in the class which has emerged from the whole class discussions and the awareness of the diversity of perspectives in general (Article II). As shown in Article II, the pupils enhanced their awareness of the concept of the diversity of perspectives, as perspective consciousness (PC) was the most recurrent theme within the dataset and the excerpts from the focus group interviews also showed that the EPIC provided the pupils with the opportunities to reflect on “a deepened sense of perspective” (Andenoro et al., 2012). The teachers also pointed out that the pupils managed to see the links between the recognition of one’s own “complex identity” and becoming more open “towards different groups of people” (Heidi).

Thirdly, the pupils’ exploration of the self in this study was at times characterised by feelings of unease and discomfort. For example, when the participants were asked to describe themselves, they quite often struggled to do so and reported feeling discomfort; some pupils reported that it was challenging for them to comment on some parts of the self (e.g., “It was hard and weird to define myself in a couple of words and phrases.” (P01c)). In this regard, the findings of this study largely correspond with those obtained in other research settings. For example, Forsman (2006) also points to the feelings of frustration and negative attitudes towards how the participants defended their own habits and when they explored themselves. Kramsch (1993) argues that resistance towards exploration of oneself and an unwillingness to distance oneself from one’s native culture can often be found among young learners. This in turn may result in negative attitudes towards others, as adolescents might perceive others as providing a new and strange perspective (e.g., Burri et al., 2022; Forsman, 2006). Consequently, according to Kaikkonen (2001), anxieties related to foreignness are completely natural, and discomforting feelings are fundamental to transformation (Zembylas, 2015). The particular nature of the EPIC entries aimed at self-awareness brings to the fore individuals’ multiple selves; feelings of discomfort, frustration, or anxiety are thus connected to the inherent characteristics of IC development (see Méndez García, 2017). The teachers in this study (Article III) also expressed some concerns regarding the high tempo

of the project and the number of the entries included in the project, pointing out that the repetitiveness of some of the tasks on self-awareness had some impacts on the pupils' motivation and engagement. In this respect, the sequencing and high tempo of the project might have also impacted the participants' frustration towards writing and reflecting about themselves.

Another strand of findings relates to the second research focus of the study – perspective taking. Two key issues regarding the reported opportunities for PT facilitated by the EPIC emerged from the data. Firstly, the complexity of the notion of *perspective* through the EPIC is highlighted. Secondly, the pupils' PT and PC were mostly prompted by the EPIC entries highlighting a range of perspectives and the complexity of the other.

Firstly, the concept of perspective is a very adaptable and multifaceted concept, and many opportunities were afforded through the EPIC regarding its integration as part of ILL in the FL classroom. Article II suggests that PT can be embedded into the FL instruction in such a way that pupils learn to see themselves through their personal history and subjectivity, as well as through the history and subjectivity of others (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008). For example, one of the findings of the study is that reflecting on a historical event (or event from the past) enabled the pupils to realise that other people's perspectives change depending on the context and may be dependent not only on the national culture, but also on other factors such as place, time, etc. (e.g., *History Corner*, Article II). This discovery can potentially enhance the awareness of the multiplicity of meanings and enhance the complexity of the meaning-making processes in pupils (Étienne & Vanbaelen, 2017). When it comes to the teachers' views, the use of the e-portfolio allowed the pupils to consider other people's perspectives and think more deeply about the notion of perspective (Article III). For example, Peter observed that the EPIC entries provided opportunities for learners to see themselves through the eyes of others (“What does he or she think about me sitting like this?”, “[The pupils] try to understand whose perspective am I taking here”). Overall, the notion of perspective lends itself well to the e-portfolio structure and design of the activities that aim to encourage pupils to consider their own perspectives on self and cultural backgrounds, and to take into account the perspectives of others. Houghton (2012) suggests the positive outcomes of such learning, noting that learners genuinely “taking the perspectives of others into consideration while

critically reflecting upon themselves can enhance the quality of [their evaluations of self and other” (p. 45).

Secondly, the EPIC tasks that promoted the pupils’ perspective taking and perspective consciousness were anchored in engaging with a range of perspectives and the complexity of narrative realities. Examples of such tasks in the EPIC are *History Corner*, *Sunglasses Story*, and *If I were..., I’d be....*. One of the most prominent opportunities for ILL facilitated by the EPIC, as shown in Article II, is derived from connecting the pupils’ interpretations with their lived experiences and personal stories (especially, in the case of other peers and adolescents), as opposed to engaging them in comparing similarities and differences between their own and unfamiliar contexts (Burri et al., 2022; Yeom, 2019). These entries also emphasise the role of perception in facilitating ILL. The finding shows that, to foster the pupils’ openness towards different ways of seeing the world (Perspective consciousness), it is necessary to connect the awareness of the self and others to the notion of perception and the relative nature of perspective; these concepts are inherently linked and interwoven yet have received less attention in the empirical research (Stadler, 2014). The findings of the present study support the idea stated by Bresciani (2014), Stadler (2014), among others, that IC and perception are closely interconnected. From the pupils’ perspectives, this understanding has been made prominent in the focus group discussions (Article I). The analogy of the self as a “lens” or “glasses” was manifested in the pupils’ focus group interviews: “The way you see things changes the way you are” (FG2, P27). Studies on the facilitation of the awareness of perception among FL learners (e.g., Bresciani, 2014; Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009; Stadler, 2014) confirm that promoting these aspects is central to all forms of communication and thus all aspects of IC. Therefore, it seems beneficial for the pupils to draw on their own perceptions when it comes to the importance of perception in relation to intercultural interactions.

The teachers also commented that distancing from one’s own perspective and experimenting with alternative perspectives is one of the main affordances of the EPIC. This was evident, as one of the most frequent themes under the theme of Reflection was linked to Perspective taking (Article III). One of the teachers observed that the EPIC provided opportunities for pupils to see themselves through the eyes of others, and all the teachers reported that, when the learners engaged with retelling other versions of stories or viewed things from different

perspectives (for instance, in *History Corner* or *Fractured Fairy Tale* entries), they had opportunities to distance themselves from their own perspective. The opportunities afforded by the EPIC, as seen by the teachers, are consistent with previous research that documents that the reflective nature of portfolios helps learners examine their own cultural perspectives as well as the perspectives of others (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Oranje, 2021). Overall, the study confirms that PT has an important role to play in the process of ILL in the language classroom both from the teacher and pupil perspectives.

Other affordances of the EPIC related to opportunities for ILL viewed from the lens of both pupils and teachers are addressed below. Firstly, the teachers showed enthusiasm about how many various entries and activities were included in the EPIC. The digital environment afforded by the EPIC supported adaptability and active participation (see Abrams et al., 2006; Goodier et al., 2022; Snider & McCarthy, 2012). The digital nature of the e-portfolio can play an important role in this, giving learners access to authentic texts and various modalities; additionally, the amount of interaction capability afforded by the use of digital tools outweighs those which can be achieved through paper-based means (Oner & Adadan, 2011). As pointed out in Article III, in addition to the affordances linked to ILL, the teachers in this study also acknowledged opportunities for language learning, as they highlighted specific language outcomes related to vocabulary acquisition and writing (*Fractured fairy tale*). Language learning in this project occurred also through communicating in English in class during pair and group work (*Identity tag game; Seven identities game; If I were..., I'd be...*).

Secondly, reflection embedded in the EPIC in the form of reflection prompts constituted another important opportunity for ILL and stimulated ILL at various levels. Reflection was stimulated through the pupils becoming more aware of their own thoughts and feelings about the EPIC tasks and through external dialogues with others about the EPIC tasks, hence extending each other's ideas. In line with findings from other studies (Conway & Richards, 2018; Oranje, 2021), the teachers in the present study highlighted that the EPIC facilitated reflection in various ways. For instance, the pupils drew on their own experiences through open questions in the reflection entries such as "What did you feel when you read it?" or "What does this colour(s) mean to you?" The pupils made links between the entries and activities and their own lives,

feelings, and beliefs. Reflection is not a natural activity for everyone, thus, in the classroom setting, it has to be explained, encouraged, and modelled (Oranje, 2021).

Finally, when it comes to constraints, from the teacher perspective, lack of deeper reflections was attributed to the age of participants. The comments expressed by the teachers pointed out the diversity of this age group and the fact that the abstract reasoning skills necessary to consider life in an intercultural landscape were beyond what most of the pupils had personally experienced (see Howard et al., 2019). Hence, it is crucial for teachers to try to ground them in the pupils' lived experiences in order to stimulate opportunities for ILL for this age group. The objectives of the activities should be made more transparent for the pupils, and they need to be expressed in a more explicit and systematic manner, for example, by incorporating them in the beginning of the year. Overall, the teachers reported that the EPIC as a tool afforded the pupils and teachers with variation and flexibility, and they stressed the opportunities to implement the EPIC primarily as a tool that can be utilised from early stages of education and across different subjects (Article III).

6.2 Contributions of the study

By contributions, I understand originality and novelty of the present study, which I consider primarily in terms of the contribution to new knowledge. This study has made an important empirical contribution to understanding the opportunities the intercultural e-portfolio (the EPIC) offers for ILL in Norwegian and global research settings. In the following, I first introduce the overall empirical contributions of the study, followed by a discussion of the contributions of each article.

The major empirical contribution of this study is its novelty in terms of the design of the EPIC as a tool. Firstly, the EPIC has contributed to the research field in terms of novelty as a data collection instrument. The implementation of this tool allowed me to trace all pupils' experiences and reflections. Secondly, this study employed the EPIC designed and utilised specifically for Year 9 at a Norwegian lower secondary school. The EPIC framework was anchored in the conceptual metaphors of Window, Mirror, Reversed Mirror, Coloured Glasses, which were used as reflexive devices for implementing ILL. The EPIC could

be further developed and adapted for use in other contexts and levels of secondary or primary education; it could be an effective tool for tracking changes in pupils' ILL or further exploration of other dimensions (for example, intercultural attitudes, managing stereotypes, critical cultural awareness, autonomy, etc.).

As for another contribution of the study, the choice of the age group explored in the present study addresses previous calls for more research on adolescents. The literature has increasingly called for more classroom-based research focusing on ILL that embraces adolescent voices (see Gil & Luis, 2016; Ruest, 2020; Schwarzenhal et al., 2020; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). Therefore, the age of the participants in this study also adds new evidence to the research literature, since most studies on the benefits of e-portfolio within ILL have been conducted in higher education. Thus, the main empirical contribution of this thesis is increased knowledge about how adolescents engage with ILL with regard to the enhancement of the awareness of the self and others, as well as PT. There are certain nuances when it comes to this age group. Firstly, this group of learners differs from younger learners in terms of exposure to an increased number of hobbies, interests, and connections within and beyond their relational contexts (family, friends), both inside and outside school settings. This affiliation to different, more varied social groups will inevitably affect the ways they demonstrate their self-awareness and perspective taking compared to younger learners. However, based on the findings from a three-year research project on primary school pupils in the UK, Driscoll and Simpson argue that children begin to appreciate that they are members of a group outside of their immediate experience already in the early stage of schooling (Driscoll & Simpson, 2015, p. 165). Furthermore, despite the fact that the participants' awareness of diverse perspectives varied (Article II) and the teachers reported that they tended to have low expectations of their pupils' abilities to engage in reflection due to their age (Article III), the study's empirical data shows that the pupils expressed enjoyment in the encounter with others in their classes, relativised their conceptions about others in class (Article I), and showed a growing commitment to taking perspectives of others and decentring (Article II).

Another contribution of this thesis arises from the investigation of both pupil and teacher perspectives on the opportunities for ILL through the EPIC.

Including both pupil and teacher voices within one study is quite rare in the literature. The data from the pupils is supplemented by the data from the interviews with teachers, and thus the teachers' subjective perceptions represent another important lens through which the EPIC was illuminated. However, more research is needed to obtain more data on what aspects teachers emphasise when designing or selecting tools and activities aimed at ILL, how they conceptualise the main notions underlying ILL, such as culture, language, and IC, and what could be done to maximise opportunities for ILL through these tools and activities (see Section 6.5 for discussion of future research).

Finally, as for empirical contributions of the three studies included in the present thesis, all three articles provide specific insight into the overarching objective of the study and contribute to the novelty in terms of the research foci explored. Overall, the novelty of exploring both self-awareness and perspective taking as the main research foci of the study is an important contribution of the present thesis. As for Article I, while there has been a relatively consistent focus in the literature on the three main components of IC (knowledge, skills, attitudes), self-awareness is often neglected or not separated from the knowledge component. Moreover, self-awareness is often utilised as a means towards understanding the other, rather than as an aim in itself. Therefore, one of the contributions of Article I is increased knowledge about how self-awareness can be explored and whether and how its enhancement contributes to IC among EFL pupils in Norway. In the EPIC, the entries were designed to map self-awareness and engage pupils in various ways and activities aimed at raising self-awareness as an integral dimension of IC.

In Article II, the construct of PT was developed in more detail as compared to previous empirical research in the FL setting. This study shows that the Commitment Model of Perspective Taking (CMPT), developed by Glăveanu and de Saint Laurent (2018) could be used outside research of media discourse. This framework provided a point of departure for the investigation of PT (namely, how the pupils in the study considered different perspectives related to others in class, others in fiction, and others in the past). The study draws on different forms of commitment (commitment to similarity and commitment to difference), but also extends this model and applies it to the data by adding other forms, namely, perspective consciousness and perspective taking of two kinds: specific and general. The study thus contributes to an understanding that

the commitment to difference and similarity are often inherent parts of the construct of PT. Moreover, these commitments and other forms of PT afforded by the e-portfolio as a tool can be made more explicit in classroom interactions when individual pupils and teachers bring different knowledge, experiences, and stories to the classroom. Thus, the research focus of this article provides new insights into the notion of PT in FL research. It would also be beneficial to further expand it and explore other contexts or age groups by adding two other forms of commitment: commitment to the person and commitment to the situation, as well as all four types of PT (identification, repositioning, essentialism, and situationalism) (see Glăveanu & de Saint-Laurent, 2018).

Article III provides a different focus on the main aim of the study, as it examines the affordances of the e-portfolio through the teachers' lens. Overall, the conceptual and methodological value of the term *affordance* as used in this study is an important contribution towards an understanding of the actual use and perception of the learning tool (in this case, an e-portfolio) by the teachers who implemented it with their pupils. This study operationalised it within a specific domain of ILL, by looking at the e-portfolio through the lens of the teachers reporting on their perceptions of the use of this learning tool. This study thus investigates the designed tool from the lens of the perceived affordances which is beneficial to help researchers to investigate the demands and challenges faced by English language teachers in today's complex technology-mediated and inherently intercultural communicative landscapes (Lawrence, 2020, p. 123). In response to the lack of studies investigating innovative digital and interactive resources and tools purposefully designed for ILL, this study contributes to the field by adding the perspectives of the teachers.

6.3 Implications for the English classroom

This section addresses the pedagogical implications of this doctoral study for the English classroom. Specifically, it discusses how language teachers could apply the findings of the study to their teaching practices (a) when maximising the opportunities for ILL through the e-portfolio (the EPIC) as a learning tool, (b) when promoting self-awareness and perspective taking in the FL classroom, and (c) when designing and selecting their own custom-built tools for ILL.

As for the first area of implications, the EPIC as a tool has proved beneficial for this group of learners. Both the pupils (aged 14–15) and their teachers enjoyed the project and benefited in terms of a range of opportunities for ILL. This study has thus demonstrated how integrated e-portfolio-based instruction can also be implemented in secondary schools. However, the teachers reported on some shortcomings and the struggle to find time and appropriate resources. Therefore, to maximise the use of the e-portfolio, several important issues should be considered. Firstly, a stepwise implementation of the e-portfolio could improve its integration into the classroom. Pacing tasks carefully, avoiding repetition and spending more time on each EPIC entry would allow for deeper reflection from the pupils. Focusing on the quality rather than the quantity of tasks would enhance the EPIC implementation. It is also worth noting that this is an adaptable tool; it does not have to be used in its entirety, i.e., smaller clusters of tasks can be chosen (perhaps covering one tenet) depending on the learning aims of the class and the time available.

As for the second area of implications (promoting self-awareness and perspective taking in the FL classroom), the pupils commented on feelings of discomfort and uneasiness about such issues as religion, gender, and talking about the self (Article I). This finding supports a need to address this in the classroom by providing pupils with a meta-perspective on ILL and on the feelings that may arise in response to it. To mitigate these feelings, it seems crucial to provide a welcoming atmosphere of support and understanding by setting the scene and familiarising pupils with what happens next in the classroom. In such an environment, pupils feel that it is not threatening to become more aware of who they are. Overall, this finding seems to be in accord with the growing area of research (Méndez García, 2017; Porto & Zembylas, 2020) on frustration and discomfort as being fundamental to raising self-awareness and teaching and learning about difficult issues. Secondly, including stories in instructional practice, as well as encouraging peer support and collaboration, are among the techniques that can create the environment necessary for pupils to be more relaxed and become more comfortable with the awareness of the self (Oxford & Gkonou, 2018). Finally, teaching and learning

affective strategies⁴⁶ aiding to reduce feelings of anxiety is important in the FL classroom, as the link between language learning, affective strategies, and identity is often evident in the discussion of the “Multiple Self” (Oxford, 2017). Another point that needs to be considered is that becoming more self-aware of negative feelings about particular issues may confer benefits for intercultural transformation. Hence, showing one’s own discomfort with anything related to the self raises questions such as whether individuals are honest in their accounts or do not wish to share them with others (Méndez García, 2017). One of the strategies could be integrating ILL, language learning and multimodal representations (drawings, arts, music or drama) in the classroom as a way to overcome the feelings of frustration and to provide support in in-depth reflections about their inner worlds (e.g., Goering & Strayhorn, 2016; Porto & Zembylas, 2020).

When it comes to PT, the study emphasises the need to explicitly activate PT through classroom interactions and the importance of dialogue as constitutive for ILL. Previous studies argue that multiple perspectives and cultural representations of others can be co-constructed in classrooms by facilitating dialogues about images and picture books (Brown, 2022; Burri et al., 2022; Heggernes, 2019). Similarly, the findings of this thesis suggest that the potential use of the e-portfolio in ILL would be enhanced if tasks and activities were to be accompanied by classroom interactions and dialogues (Gil, 2016; Gil & Luis, 2016; Heggernes, 2019; Hoff, 2013). In the present study, when discussing the tasks and activities during the focus group interviews (Article II), the pupils revealed complexities regarding differences between different national cultures, the importance of recognising similarities, and the willingness to learn from each other as the important steps towards mutual understanding. The study thus emphasises the role of the teacher in mediating and creating spaces for discussion. Creating genuine interactions among the peers in the classroom is one of the most efficient yet challenging ways to foreground ILL in educational contexts (Gil, 2016). It requires a lot of skill from the teacher, especially in terms of how to facilitate a discussion, how to ask open questions,

⁴⁶ Affective intercultural strategies are viewed as conscious, learner-regulated thoughts and actions for reducing anxiety and increasing motivation when engaging with diversity inside and outside the classroom (Chamot & Harris, 2019).

and how not to take a stand and impose their beliefs on their pupils. Teachers' roles have to be reconsidered (Lázár, 2022). They need to engage as facilitators, displaying interest in the learners' contribution to knowledge development, as opposed to acting as instructors, attempting to lead the learners to construct a certain type of knowledge (Brown, 2021). By promoting active participation and cooperation, through moving from an authoritarian classroom atmosphere to a cooperative one, this type of learning ensures the collaborative construction of knowledge and promotes attitudes of openness in the classroom (Lázár, 2022).

Another issue related to the second area of implications is the importance of the selection of the activities aimed at PT. One of the findings of the present thesis (Article II) is that engaging pupils with comparisons of their own life stories and daily lives routines with those of others did not result in PT but showed some instances of Commitment to Difference and Commitment to Similarity. The study by Burri et al. (2022) also indicates that the 10–11-year-olds comparing the two stories from a picture book held a range of understandings and misunderstandings about cultures other than their own, given their age and therefore limited life experiences. The focus on differences prevailed among the children when they drew on familiar experiences and resources about their own cultural context (namely, Japanese). The findings thus highlight that resources like the book used in this study may lead to racial stereotyping due to the book's oversimplified portrayal of the cultures; the choice of texts that introduce multiple perspectives and voices may therefore influence the ways pupils consider others. It is therefore could be recommended that pupils learn how to investigate that other people are different, not simply accepting other people's differences or looking beyond differences but actively engaging with and reflecting about them in relation to one's own frame of references. This entails suspending taken-for-granted conceptions about one's own beliefs (self) and projecting themselves into a different perspective (other). In the EPIC, for example, the pupils were offered the opportunity to widen their perceptions of others in class (*Identity Tag Game, Seven Identities Game*), others in the past (e.g., *History Corner, The Other Side*), others in their families (e.g., *Interview Room*), and others in their country (*My cultural and national identity, If I were..., I'd be...*) through different kinds of multimodal texts. Drawing on

subtle differences and different levels of perspectives (time, generation, context, etc.) may lead to a deeper understanding of the value of perspective.

As for the third area of implications related to more general implications for EFL teaching when designing or selecting one's own tools for ILL, three main implications emerged from the findings. Firstly, there is a need to include opportunities for reflection in the tasks and tools used for promoting ILL. Secondly, there is a need for more guidance for the teachers in how to design appropriate and flexible intercultural tools. Thirdly, there is a need to incorporate such tools systematically and integrate them with language learning aims.

The first issue relates to maximising opportunities for reflection in the process of ILL. As argued in the literature (see Biebricher et al., 2019; Conway & Richards, 2018; Oranje, 2021), ILL is stimulated through noticing and reflecting. However, creating an opportunity does not mean that this opportunity is utilised. Providing the pupils with opportunities to reflect on their learning and following up on pupil reflections systematically are means of developing ILL and understanding. The results of this study, as reported by the teachers, indicate that reflection was the key to raising self-awareness, raising pupils' awareness of their own view of the world and the views of the other.

As for the second area of implications, related to the necessity of guidance for the teachers, both in terms of professional development and teacher education, teachers are inevitably the primary implementers of specific tools. Previous studies show that teachers usually have little knowledge about specific resources for encouraging their pupils' ILL (e.g., Rosnes & Rosland, 2018); they need a more complex understanding of culture and IC to competently handle the difficult aspects of ILL (Coulby, 2006). Even if teachers are able to grasp and problematise certain theoretical concepts such as culture or IC in their teaching, it may still be difficult for them to make the pedagogic transposition from theory to practice (Gil & Luis, 2016). Along similar lines, the teachers interviewed in the present thesis stated that they struggled to find appropriate tools and resources for their pupils (Article III), and they also mentioned their uncertainty and ambivalence related to how they could systematically incorporate IC and language learning to respond to the call established in the syllabus (see Section 4.3.2.2). As Sercu et al. (2005) argue, understanding

teachers' perceptions and the reasons why they embrace or reject teaching for ILL is crucial for teacher educators "who want to design (international) teacher education programmes which can clarify and exemplify to foreign language teachers how they can promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their classes" (p. 18). Thus, there is a call to draw more attention to the principles of ILL and IC in teacher education (both pre-service training and professional development). Teacher training can provide access to resources and tools to enable the practice of ILL (Lázár, 2022). Future teachers need more theoretical and practical knowledge of how to design innovative intercultural tools or teaching units. To help them to achieve this, courses and workshops in syllabus and material design aimed at intercultural language learning and teaching could be beneficial.

Furthermore, striving for a balance between language-focused and intercultural content when integrating ILL is an important concern for teachers, as reported in previous studies (Biebricher et al., 2019; Luk, 2012; Oranje, 2016). Article III in the present thesis reports on the teachers' concerns regarding the dominating focus of language learning content, and this seems to have influenced their ambivalence with regard to including ILL in their practices. A predominant focus on language and the struggle to allocate time for the implementation of intercultural activities in a lesson are often identified as central challenges by teachers. Previous studies indicate that teachers' uncertainties concerning how ILL should be situated in the mainstream curriculum are often connected to the peripheral, extra-curricular role of culture in their teaching (for example, as a "special treat" or "fun" activities) (Luk, 2012). Considering the interrelated nature of language and culture and the importance for the teachers to empower in their learners both parts of a large whole (Shaules, 2019b), it is necessary to add intercultural objectives in tandem with language objectives. For example, encouraging peer check and review (engaging students in peer-assessment of language in the EPIC entries) as well as sharing thoughts with each other in group- or pair-discussions might be a possible solution for how to overcome these challenges (Lo, 2010).

The last implication relates to the need to make explicit facilitation of IC across different subjects and over a longer period of time. The teachers in the present study highlighted that IC is a cross-curricular concern (Article III). As IC is a long-term and process-oriented goal, it can hardly be developed in a vacuum

and as an independent unit of a language course. It is therefore necessary to start early with the integration of IC into curricula across subjects. According to Byram (2021), the stimulus for self-analysis is likely to appear at a number of different points in the learning or experience, and this in turn suggests that intercultural reflections need to be collected over time, for example, as part of an e-portfolio within different school subjects. Hence, the findings of this study support the need for the incorporation of e-portfolios into the curriculum over a longer period. Because of its generic nature, IC can be made explicit and integrated into the instruction in many other subjects (i.e., history, religion, other language classrooms, social sciences, etc.) and in different contexts. The issue of transferability of IC across subjects can be a point of departure for policymakers and curricula developers. It is worth pointing out that, in the Norwegian curriculum, there is an attempt to do this through the interdisciplinary topic of Democracy and Citizenship, but the transition from the policy documents to the classrooms has not yet been fully made.

6.4 Limitations

The findings of this study should be considered in the light of its limitations. First, one of the major methodological limitations of the study is that the teachers participating in the study collaborated with each other during the project and thus could have developed shared reactions, perceptions, and behaviours. Moreover, all three teachers volunteered to participate in the project. Their experiences might not therefore be transferrable to teachers who are less engaged in the development of IC in their teaching practice. Along similar lines, the sample (both the pupils and teachers) could be considered as somewhat limited in terms of diversity. The pupils from the five classes who did not participate in the study could have had perspectives relevant to the research, but their views were not represented, as they or their guardians did not agree to sign consent forms. All these issues related to the sample have limited the extent to which the findings could be considered transferable to other contexts.

Third, the relatively short time span of the study could also be considered a limitation. A longer project could have provided a more continuous perspective on the results. Nevertheless, the data collection was conducted intensively; I

spent a great deal of time with the teachers and the pupils in order to learn about, learn from, and learn with the participants (Rallis & Rossman, 2009). Another limitation concerning the choice of methods of data collection is that the use of focus group interviews based on the intact classes (not mixed groups) could have influenced the results. Moreover, the focus group interviews might not be a setting that suited every pupil from the sample, so some voices may have remained silent. Furthermore, both the focus group discussions and the interviews with the teachers were conducted in English, which could have impacted the extent to which the participants talked about their experiences, potentially impacting the quality and quantity of the data provided (Mackey and Gass, 2015). However, the choice of language was determined by several factors explained in Section 4.8. Furthermore, video recordings were not collected during the focus group interviews; this would have supplemented the data with the pupils' non-verbal reactions. However, it is generally considered that camera recording is the most intrusive form of data collection in research (Borg, 2015, p. 281).

Another limitation of the study is that it does not include systematic observations and field notes. Observational data could have been compared to the data obtained from the EPIC texts and focus group interviews. While I took some notes while present during the instruction, they were not systematic. Field notes and participant observations are among the most common types of data collection instruments in qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2011). They could have given me some relevant information provided by teachers before or after their classes (for instance, regarding their suggestions for improvement of the entries or debriefing of the EPIC activities, their reasons for diverging from the planned content or sequence of in-class activities). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, both observations and interviews are “obtrusive” methods, whereas document analysis is “unobtrusive”. In this study, I have utilised interviews instead of observations to follow the consideration of involving fewer obtrusive methods and to be less present at the point of data collection. Another reason for not using field notes and observations was tied to practical issues; it was not always feasible to be present in all teaching sessions, as they sometimes ran in parallel.

Finally, another issue is related to the recognition that my participation during the instruction might have constituted one of the limitations of the study. In

educational research, the Hawthorne effect, i.e., the tendency for subjects to do better just because they know they are in a study (Slavin, 2007, p. 214), could be one of the possible limitations of the study. It is therefore possible that my presence in the classrooms may have affected both the compilation of the EPIC and the pupils' and teachers' behaviours and overall participation in the project. At the same time, the prolonged engagement tends to mitigate the negative impact of researcher presence. Furthermore, it should be considered that observations were not part of this study's methodology, that the instruction was also given by the teachers, and that I was not present in each class for the whole duration of the project. As for the teacher interviews, the teachers in this study knew that the focus of my attention was primarily ILL; this may also have affected and altered their behaviour and comments. I tried to minimise the teacher–researcher power imbalance by involving the teachers in choosing the materials, the sequence of the tasks, and the ways to work with the EPIC entries. Although I recognise that I could have chosen a different approach, i.e., require minimal time and effort from the teachers and minimise their participation in the intervention, I decided to involve the teachers as much as possible to gain close and trustful relationships with them. Overall, throughout the project, I found that the teachers and pupils appeared to be quite comfortable in my presence.

6.5 Considerations for future research

The present doctoral thesis raises certain questions that need to be addressed in further studies.

Firstly, the contribution of the EPIC to the enhancement of ILL could be explored across different contexts and age groups. A study on the use of the EPIC by two or more tandem groups within a telecollaborative approach would be relevant to develop a broader practical application of this approach. Moreover, a more longitudinal (perhaps a full year) study would be needed to provide more reliable insights into the pupils' learning processes. Therefore, future studies should consider this aspect and potentially prolong the duration of the intervention. As Walton et al. (2013) argue, further longitudinal research is needed to evaluate changes in the same students over time. Moreover, the present study shows that pupils' enhanced self-awareness is closely tied to

feelings of discomfort and tension (Article I). While this finding is evident in other studies on ILL and adolescents (e.g., Forsman, 2006), it would be interesting to explore whether and how such attitudes and emotions will manifest themselves in different contexts with different age groups.

Secondly, in terms of more longitudinal research, a series of focus group interviews at regular intervals during the intervention could provide more substantial accounts of pupils' experiences and would give an opportunity to trace their experiences throughout the intervention in future studies. Furthermore, more specific questions about the pupils' backgrounds would help future researchers gain deeper insights into how contextual factors and informal experiences with intercultural encounters influence pupils' behaviours and perceptions in the EPIC.

Thirdly, as mentioned above, including observational data and video recording of the focus group interviews and/or instruction would inevitably enrich the data of future studies. These instruments would allow for analysis of pupils' learning trajectories and analysis of individual pupils (a pupil could be considered as a case). In addition to this, including observational data and video recordings of the classroom discussions would expand our understanding of the teacher's role in mediating ILL in the classroom. Such aspects as teachers' non-verbal communication, teacher talking time, and teacher style of talking and creating a learning environment (Enyedi & Lázár, 2018) would be beneficial areas of research, as they hold the potential to identify the real practices of ILL when combined with the implementing e-portfolios into English lessons.

Further research would benefit from a more focused exploration of teachers' cognition and beliefs about IC, ILL, and the use of intercultural materials and tools. All of these issues are inherently interrelated, and the expectations set out in curricula documents largely impact teachers' beliefs concerning ILL and their current practices in the classroom. This in turn influences teachers' perspectives and motivations in relation to what pupils are supposed to learn and how ILL tools afford them the opportunity to achieve these goals. Thus, the beliefs and preconceptions of teachers, consciously or (most often) unconsciously, guide them in making decisions related to both the planning and the implementation of teaching activities (Lázár, 2022). The investigation of issues related to teacher beliefs requires more attention, which also requires

more time and effort from a researcher. Unfortunately, they were left beyond the scope of the present research project.

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate the correlations between intercultural aspects in the English language classroom with other school subjects, for example, history, religious education, literature, other foreign languages, etc. In this study, one of the teachers mentioned in the interview that IC is an important concept not only for the English classroom and should therefore be incorporated in other subjects. There is now a sizable body of research on cross-curricular work with IC. For instance, content-based language teaching and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in particular, are rapidly growing areas within the field of EFL (e.g., Porto & Yulita, 2016; Schat, 2022). CLIL-based intercultural education has been shown to be a promising area of research in which e-portfolios could find their place as a tool for implementing appropriate intercultural activities aimed at both culture and language across subjects and levels.

6.6 Conclusion

This doctoral study explores ILL opportunities that were afforded using the e-portfolio (the EPIC) as a tool for raising self-awareness and perspective taking among Norwegian lower secondary school pupils. This research, conducted during a time of growing migration and classroom diversity, focused on how the existing diversity in classrooms could be explored and how teachers could help their pupils navigate the multitudes of cultural backgrounds even within a small group. This study also opened a window into real language classrooms by implementing a series of instructional activities for incorporating ILL, where learning about the “other” can enhance an understanding of “me” and vice versa (see Byram, 1997, 2021; Kramsch, 1993).

The study argues for the importance of promoting self-awareness as fundamental to promoting IC and shows how this dimension can be woven into FL learning and teaching. The study indicates that promoting self-awareness in language learners through well-designed tasks can enhance their ability to reflect on their complex selves and those of others. English teachers can choose from various points of departure in their classrooms, such as family composition, hobbies, and personality, to promote self-awareness. The study

indicates that pupils may experience discomfort or ambivalence when reflecting on themselves and others. To address this, teachers can create a safe learning environment based on pupils' personal experiences and gradually incorporate intercultural topics.

As for the concept of perspective taking, the study shows that the pupils' engagement with storytelling, multiple perspectives of past events, and metaphorical representations related to different perspectives on the self and others raised the participants' awareness of diverse perspective, which in turn helped them to change the way they perceived themselves and others in the world (Moloney et al., 2020, p. 36). Hence, the importance of the awareness of diverse perspectives (or perspective consciousness) was emphasised in the study. Therefore, in the classroom, one possible opportunity to encourage perspective taking and minimise oversimplifications and stereotypes is to consider diverse perspectives from a variety of disciplinary, social, ideological, and historical vantage points (for example, in diachronic and synchronic aspects). The study thus highlights the importance of teachers critically evaluating the intercultural tasks they design and select. The findings show that teachers have a prominent role in the process of teaching aimed at promoting ILL.

As for the contributions of this study to the research field, the use of e-portfolios (the EPIC) provided a variety of opportunities for ILL in the English language classroom in Norway. This research project implemented a series of EPIC entries that were designed and selected specifically for lower secondary school pupils in Norway. One of the main contributions is therefore a tailor-made design of the EPIC. The teachers indicated that the activities were adaptable, variable, and flexible suggesting that the EPIC could be adapted to other contexts. The use of the EPIC indicated some challenges for the teachers in terms of the allocation of time and shortcomings related to differing levels of cognitive development of their pupils. While tailored to the Norwegian lower secondary school classroom, the findings of the study could be applied to other contexts and contribute to contemporary FL education oriented towards ILL. Therefore, similar research foci might be explored in future studies in different contexts to provide a more complete picture of adolescents' ILL.

To sum up, the results of this study suggest that to maximise the opportunities for ILL, teachers might need to bring their pupils' backgrounds and interests into the classroom (Article I); select the tasks and resources for perspective taking and perspective consciousness and provide more space for peer discussions and classroom interactions (Article II); and deliberately plan and continuously and systematically integrate ILL and language learning aims (Article III). Overall, a positive way forward to provide opportunities for ILL by using e-portfolios with adolescents is to make their learning experiences more meaningful and have a systematic approach to what this tool will target and how to build it into the syllabus. The study therefore has implications for practice, research, and teacher education. It suggests that to make e-portfolios an effective tool for ILL, the teacher as a facilitator in these practices must be trained to design and select materials and tools that best suit the profile of their classes.

In conclusion, the study offers a gateway to pursuing intercultural competence in the language classroom and argues for the importance of expanding opportunities for systematically incorporating intercultural tools in secondary school settings. The study extended the research in Norway and internationally, while focusing on self-awareness and perspective taking as integral dimensions of IC. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first study to investigate these research foci among lower secondary school pupils in mainstream classes in Norway. The present thesis contributes to the existing body of research by revealing what opportunities the intercultural e-portfolio can offer for these dimensions through the lens of pupils and teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – The overview of the EPIC entries included in the intervention

About me

- Adapted from: Brander et al. (2016)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity
- Time on completing the task/entry: 15 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses
- Week of intervention: 1
- *Description:* Pupils describe themselves and their families in terms of places they have been, countries they have visited.
- *Main learning aims:*
 EPIC aim: self-awareness
 LK06 aims: use digital tools and formal requirements for information processing, text production and communication; understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics

EPIC entry:

The towns, regions and countries in my life

I was born in (town, region, country):

I live in (town, region, country):

I often spend my holidays in (town, region, country):

I have been abroad, in (town, region, country):

My family

My family is made up of individuals	Yes	No	I don't know	I will investigate
Living in different regions of our country				
Living in other countries				
Speaking two, three languages				

The ID T-shirt

- Adapted from: SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre (2008, pp. 16–18)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity
- Time on completing the task/entry: 20 minutes
- Data collected: images of T-shirts made by the pupils and pupils' individual written responses
- Week of intervention: 1
- *Description*: Pupils design a T-shirt that visually shows their personalities; pupils list three things that they like and three things that they dislike.
- *Main learning aims*:

EPIC aim: self-awareness

LK06 aims: select different digital resources and other aids and use them in an independent manner in own language learning; understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics

EPIC entry:

Who am I?

Think about things that are especially important to you in how you think about yourself and how you like others to see you. Think about the important elements of your identity. Ask yourself: 'What elements make me the person I am today?'

Write 3 things which are the most important to you here:

Make a list:

Things I like:
▪
▪
▪
Things I dislike:
▪
▪
▪



Many young people wear T-shirts to express who they are. Design a T-shirt for yourself. This T-shirt will represent YOUR IDENTITY. You can make the T-shirt as fancy as you want. You can draw and paste your T-shirt here:

Answer the questions: 1) If you were a colour, what would you be? 2) What does this colour(s) mean to you? 3) What do the symbols/pictures on my T-shirt mean?

Onion of identities

- Adapted from: Brander et al. (2016, p. 30); SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre (2008, p. 20–21)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity
- Time on completing the task/entry: 20 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses, audio recordings.
- Week of intervention: 2
- *Description:* Pupils answer the question: 'Who am I?' and construct a model of their self as an Onion by 'placing elements which make them who they are' to five layers of an Onion. The core layer is formed by self-descriptions placed in the middle of a model of onion. The less important 'identities' are placed on the outer layer of it.
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aim: self-awareness
LK06 aims: create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression; read, understand and evaluate different types of texts of varying length about different topics

EPIC entry:

Who am I? What am I? One way of looking at yourself could be to imagine yourself as an onion (even if you don't like to eat them).

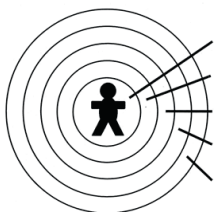
Like an onion, people are shaped by many layers: national culture, regional culture, gender, religion, family, etc.) Each layer corresponds to a different part of your identity. Often, we may catch ourselves thinking about someone as only layer, for example, a French person or a woman. When we think of or see only one layer of a person, we are not seeing that person for the complex individual they are. We want to be recognised as being complex individuals shaped by a number of layers, and we

need to do the same for others. **Watch** this short video on YouTube on Shrek talking about 'Ogres are like onions': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= bMcXVe8zls>

Or you can read it from here:

- Shrek explains at a certain moment in the film the concept of identity by using the metaphor of the onion with multiple layers.
- Shrek: For your information, there's a lot more to ogres than people think.
- Donkey: Example?
- Shrek: Example? Okay, er Ogres are like onions.
- Donkey: They stink?
- Shrek: Yes. No.
- Donkey: Oh, they make you cry.
- Shrek: No.
- Donkey: Oh, you leave'em out in the sun, they get all brown, start sproutin' little white hairs.
- Shrek: No. Layers. Onions have layers. Ogres have layers. Onions have layers. You get it? We both have layers.
- Donkey: Oh, you both have layers. Oh. You know, not everybody like onions.

After watching the video and thinking about your identities, write an example of a model of yourself (in the table) as **being an onion** and list the different layers which are important for you: the most important one inside (1-3), the less important ones outside (4-5).



1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Answer the questions:

- 1) How did it feel when you think about yourself in this way? Did you like it?
- 2) Which parts of the activity were more challenging (difficult) and why?
- 3) What did you learn from this task? Did you discover new things about yourself?

Identity Tag Game

- Adapted from: Berardo and Deardorff (2012)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity, group and whole-class discussion
- Time on completing the task/entry: 20-25 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 3
- *Description:* Pupils reflect on what are the most important things that make up who they are; to walk around the room and read the papers of the others, holding their paper in front of them so others can read it.
- Once they have written their names and the most important things for them, they stand up, and holding their paper in front of them so others can read it, walk around the room and read the papers of the others. They should feel free to discuss with each other what they see on others' papers. In the EPIC they answer reflection questions on the activity.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aim: self-awareness and awareness of others
 - LK06 aims: communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics; express and justify own opinions about different topics
- Instructions for the teachers:

This activity helps participants explore their self-awareness while getting to know each other better. Hand out blank paper and markers, ensuring that each person has one blank piece of paper (white copy paper works well) and a marker. If you don't have markers, you can use crayons.

Ask participants to write their name (what they prefer to be called) in large letters in the middle of the paper using landscape orientation.

Then tell participants you have one simple question you want them to write the answer to on the paper: Who are you? Ask them to write their identities in small letters around their name. Be sure to tell them that these should be identities they feel comfortable sharing with others.

Managing the Activity:

Once they have written their name and identities, ask them to stand up, and holding their paper in front of them so others can read it, walk around the room and read the papers of the others. They should feel free to discuss with each

other what they see on others' identity papers. For example, if someone wrote "athlete," then the other person could ask, "What sport do you play?" Encourage participants to try to see as many other participants' papers as possible, so caution them about spending too long talking with any one person. After about 15 minutes (depending on group size), begin to bring the group back together for the debriefing.

EPIC entry:

Look at this list:

- the roles you play in life (a daughter/a son, a friend, a school student;
- the parts of your identity you may be able to choose, or hobby: fan of a certain type of music, member of a political party, style of clothes;
- your abilities, talents, or disabilities, hobbies;
- where you were born, or where you now live;
- your gender;
- your religion;
- your race or ethnicity;
- socio-economic status;
- and, perhaps strangely,
- what you are not or don't want to be: not a woman, not French etc.

Then choose 3 elements of the list above and give 3 examples on each of them (what do they mean for you). You can write 1-2 sentences on each or just give examples.

Answer the questions. 1) How did it feel to define yourself in this way? What is it like to try to describe yourself in words and phrases? 2) Which part of the activity was more difficult and why? 3) What did you learn about yourself? 4) What did you learn about other people in your class?

Seven Identities Game

- Inspired by the researcher's supervisor and a member of the institution who practiced it with students.
- Activity type: in-class activity, group and whole-class discussion

- Time on completing the task/entry: 20-30 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses
- Week of intervention: 3
- *Description:* Pupils make a list of top seven core 'elements' of their identity and then they narrow it down to one last element they consider the most important.
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aims: self-awareness and awareness of others
LK06 aims: communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; understand and use a general vocabulary related to different topics; express and justify own opinions about different topics
- Instructions for the teachers:
Pupils are given 7 blank pieces of paper (post-it notes). Ask participants to write 1 element of their identity on each piece of paper. For example, sister, girl, child, pupil, sportsman, teacher, Norwegian etc... So they will get 7 pieces of paper with 7 elements of their identities on them. Then ask them to throw away (narrow down) each element which is least important to them (one by one), by crumpling it up and putting each piece of paper in the middle of the table. Then they should look at their last card. What identity has left? They may reveal it or not (may say it to their neighbour). A possible resume: "As we have seen, a person's identity cannot be summed up in just one label. Others identify us, and we may not like the label they give us. Let's remember that when we identify others with only one label".

EPIC entry:

Answer the questions: 1) How did you feel when you were asked to narrow down yourself to (throw away one by one) one identity element? 2) Which card was it the most difficult to throw away? Why? 3) What was your last element of identity that remained? 4) What do you think this activity may be useful for?

My cultural and national identity

- Inspired by: Brander et al. (2016, p. 31)
- Activity type: individual activity, homework
- Time on completing the task/entry: n/a

- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses, PowerPoint slides, video and audio recordings
- Week of intervention: 3
- *Description:* Pupils reflect on the way people make associations and stereotypes about one's country and they relate them to their own self and their personality. Firstly, the participants name two characteristics which a foreigner might associate with the country you live in. Then, they reflect on whether these characteristics are a part of who they are. Pupils are asked to make videos, PowerPoints or paste photos in the EPIC in order to answer the question: How is your nation (country) represented to others?
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aims: self-awareness, awareness of others
LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway; use digital tools and formal requirements for information processing, text production and communication; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics

EPIC entry:

Name two simple (or silly!) characteristics which a foreigner might associate with the country you live in, for example, Switzerland = watches and chocolate, Russia = endless winters and fur hats, Britain = tea and football.

Your answer (write 'Country' =). Questions to you: a) Are these two things about your country an important part of your own (personal) identity? b) Why? Or why not? Explain your answer.

How is your nation (country) represented to others?

Paste images, postcards, photos and create a short video in order to answer this question here: 1) Why did you choose the example you did (in the task 2) (what do images, video or photos you've chosen mean)? 2) What did you learn from this task? 3) Did you discover new things about your culture and yourself?

Sunglasses story

- Adapted from: Berardo and Deardorff (2012, p. 153)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity, group and whole-class discussion

- Time on completing the task/entry: 30 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses
- Week of intervention: 4
- *Description:* Pupils reflect on a metaphorical story that helps them realise that one sees the world through one's own unique lens. The story tells about two groups of people who are born with a differently coloured pair of glasses (yellow and blue). When the groups meet, they put on each other's sunglasses, and realise that both see through green lenses. Pupils come to an understanding that when trying to understand others, it is like wearing a pair of sunglasses, and it is important to understand and see the world from others' perspectives.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aims: Perspective taking and perspective consciousness
 - LK06 aims: create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; express and justify own opinions about different topics

EPIC entry:

Read this story (or the teacher reads it aloud for you):

Imagine two groups of people who are born with sunglasses.

These two groups of people live on either side of a river, and on this side of the river (point to the group on your left) are the yellow sunglasses people. You all were born with yellow sunglasses. And you know there is another group of people living on the other side of the river, but you've never met them and you really don't know anything about them. So one day, you decide to send a delegation across the river to meet these other folks. So, you go across the river and you're pleasantly surprised to find that these folks on the other side of the river seem a lot like you. Why? They're even born with sunglasses like you. As you talk longer with them, though, you realise that something is a little different about these folks. And then you take a closer look at their sunglasses, and you ask them if you can put on a pair of their sunglasses. Now those are the blue sunglasses people, so what colour do the yellow sunglasses people see? (pause a moment).

They see . . . green.

Answer the questions: 1) What is this story about? 2) What did you feel when you read it? 3) What this story made you think of?

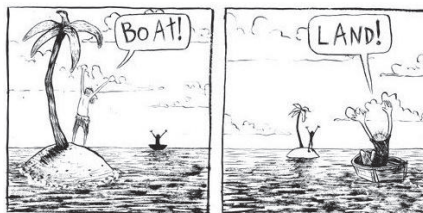
Comic strips

- Adapted from: Online Cultural Training Resource for Study Abroad¹
- Activity type: individual in-class activity
- Time on completing the task/entry: 20 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses, drawings.
- Week of intervention: 4
- *Description:* Pupils create comic strips and learn to recognise how seemingly ordinary activities can have different meanings depending on whether one is an actor or an observer.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aims: perspective taking and perspective consciousness.
 - LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway; create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression; demonstrate the ability to distinguish positively and negatively loaded expressions referring to individuals and groups

EPIC entry:

We all believe that we observe reality, things as they are, but what actually happens is that the mind interprets what the eyes see and gives it meaning.

If you consider that the mind of a person from one culture is going to be different in many ways from the mind of a person from another culture, then you will understand that often two people look upon the same reality, the same example of behaviour, and see two entirely different things.



In the first part of this activity, read the description of the five examples of behaviour given below and write down your thought or interpretation of that behaviour in

¹ <https://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/>

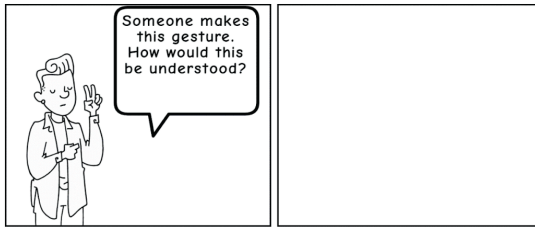
terms of your own cultural values and beliefs. The first one has been done for you. You can add speech/thought bubbles in Word document or use <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/> in order to create comic strips.

Answer the questions: 1) What have you learned from this task? 2) In what situations would this knowledge might be useful?



This comic was created at www.MakeBeliefsComix.com. Go there and make one now!

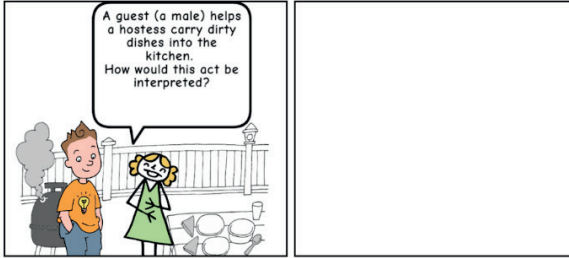
Someone makes this gesture () at you.



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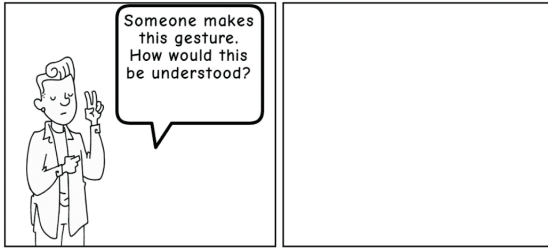
In this second part of the activity, imagine how these same behaviours would be understood or interpreted by someone from a culture different from your own. The particular cultural situations is described in each case. Read each behaviour and the description of the culture, and then write in the space provided how you think a person from such a culture would interpret (would think of) that behaviour. You can add speech/thought bubbles to the comics.



This comic was created at www.MakeBeliefsComix.com. Go there

How would this act be interpreted...

by someone in whose culture this gesture is offensive.



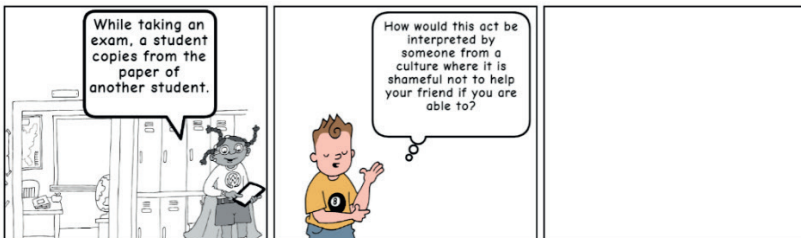
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Multicultural societies

- Adapted from: Bromseth & Wigdahl (2007b, p. 100)
- Activity type: in-class writing assignment
- Time on completing the task/entry: 2-hour writing
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 5
- *Description:* pupils write an article that debates a topic on living in multicultural cities, giving reasons to support alternative points of view and one's own.
- *Main learning aims:*
- EPIC aims: awareness of others; perspective taking, perspective consciousness
- LK06 aims: communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway

EPIC entry:

In multicultural societies people of different races, religions and cultures live side by side. Some people think this enriches the society; others feel it is difficult to cope with. In what ways does this enrich the society and in what ways does it make it difficult to cope with? What do you think? Write an article that debates the topic by giving reasons to support both sides of an argument. However, try to state your opinion and the point of view YOU agree with as well. Remember sources.

Fractured Fairy Tale

- Inspired by: Dolan (2014, p.72)
- Activity type: in-class writing assignment.
- Time on completing the task/entry: 2-hour writing
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 5
- *Description:* Pupils are asked to retell a popular story, changing a point of view, plot or ideas.
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aims: Perspective taking and perspective consciousness

- LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on different types of English literature from English-speaking countries; create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression

EPIC entry:

Fractured fairy tales tell the same story as the original fairy tale, only from somebody else's point of view. It is a story that uses fairy tales you know and changes the characters, setting and points of view. For example, The Three Little Pigs is retold as The True Story of the Three Little Pigs. This is the story of The Three Little Pigs, as told by the wolf.

You can read the whole story here:

https://www.sps186.org/downloads/basic/610716/The_True_Story_of_the_Three_Little_Pigs1.pdf

Or listen to it here:

Retell another popular story in a similar style, changing the point of view. Think about what new thoughts, ideas, and information will be included if a different character was telling this story.

Music Hall

- Adapted from: Bromseth & Wigdahl (2007a, p. 80)
- Activity type: in-class writing assignment.
- Time on completing the task/entry: 2-hour writing
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 5
- *Description:* pupils are asked to write a short blog entry and answer the questions related to the song 'America' from the musical West Side Story.
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aims: awareness of others, perspective taking, perspective consciousness
LK06 aims: explain features of history and geography in Great Britain and the USA; create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway

EPIC entry:

Watch the song on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_e2igZexpMs

Or read lyrics here: Textbook New Flight, p.80

This song depicts perspectives of immigrants in America at that time.

Write a short blog entry about the song. Answer the following questions:

What are the opinions on the life in America of girls and boys? Why do you think they have different opinions on the same issue? Would you agree with girls or boys' voices in this song? You can do some search on the Internet on the issue of the life of immigrants in the USA.

Interview room

- Adapted from: Huber-Kriegler et al. (2003)
- Activity type: homework assignment
- Time on completing the task/entry: n/a
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 6
- *Description:* pupils interview a person with a background different from their own about things they do in their everyday lives and compare obtained information with their own daily routines.
- *Main learning aims:*
EPIC aims: Awareness of others, self-awareness, perspective taking and perspective consciousness.
LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway

EPIC entry:

Find somebody in your school, family, surroundings or a Facebook friend who comes from another country. Ask about the things below. Fill in the information in the table, then fill in the information about you and your background.

I am interviewing: _____ From: _____

1.What age do you start to go to school?		
2. What time does school start?		
3. Do students wear a uniform in school?		
4.Do students get homework every day?		
5.What is your favourite meal?		
6.What is the biggest celebration in your country?		
7.What do you do for hobbies after school?		
8.What do your friends do after school?		
9.What sports are popular in your country?		
10.What TV programmes do pupils watch?		
11.What are the most popular bands or singers?		
12. Make up 3 more questions to them:		

Answer the questions: 1) Did you find any similarities or differences? Was there anything in common? 2) What piece of information was the most surprising for you? 3) What did you learn?

This is how we do it

- Inspired by: Lamothe (2017)
- Activity type: homework assignment
- Time on completing the task/entry: n/a
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses, drawings.
- Week of intervention: 6
- *Description:* Pupils complete series of tasks as they read the book. They explore lives and daily rituals of seven kids and link and compare them with their own lives.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aims: Awareness of others, perspective taking, perspective consciousness
 - LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics

EPIC entry:

Look at the book "This is how we do it: One day in the lives of seven kids from around the world" by Matt Lamothe. The book is added to Google Classroom. Here is the link to a short video about the book:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csqKemjRuJs&feature=youtu.be>

This book follows seven real kids from around the world. They are from Italy, Japan, Iran, India, Peru, Uganda, and Russia. While Romeo participates in rock-throwing contests after school in Italy, Oleg plays hockey with his school team in Russia.

Choose one kid from the book and answer the following questions about yourself and them. Answer the following questions:

A. What foods and meal do you eat for breakfast?

What I eat:

What eats:

What we both eat:

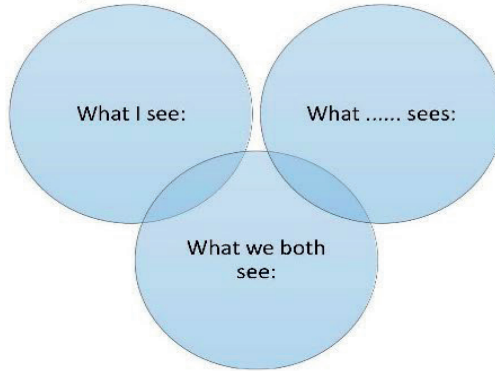
What I wear:

What wears:

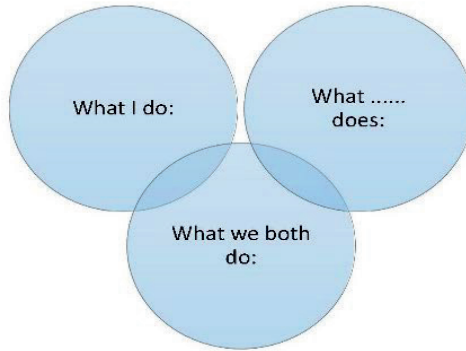
What we both wear:

B. What do you wear to school?

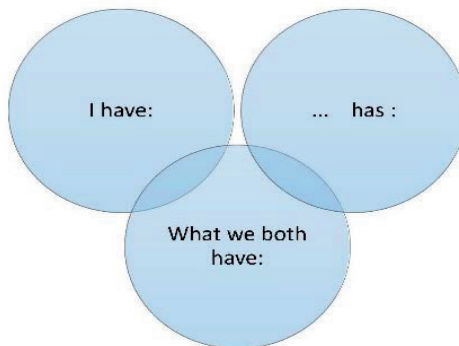
C. What do you see on your way to school?



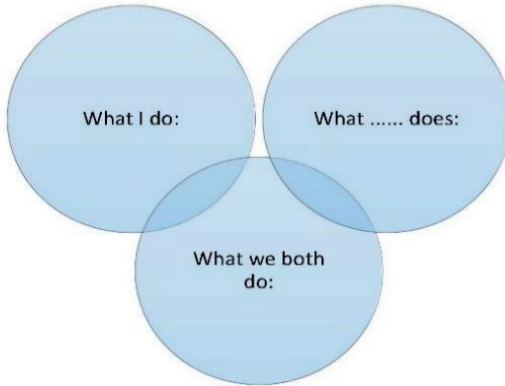
D. What do you help out with (what home duties do you have)?



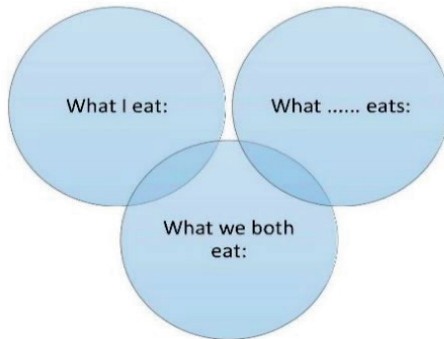
E. What family members do you have?



F. What do you do in the evening?



G. What do you eat for dinner?



1. What does this person from the book share with you (what do you have in common)? Name 1-2 things.
2. What piece of information was the most surprising for you after you read the book?
3. Would you like to meet either of these kids? Why/Why not?

If I were..., I'd be... (Myself, my language and my culture)

- Adapted from: Rigamonti and Scott-Monkhouse (2010)
- Activity type: individual in-class activity, group and whole-class discussion
- Time on completing the task/entry: 40 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses
- Week of intervention: 6
- *Description:* Pupils completed metaphors thinking about themselves (self-awareness) (If I were..., I'd be...). The activity is divided into three stages, each with 12 stem sentences to be completed by working, first, individually, then, in pairs. In the second and third stages the pupils went through exactly the same steps but replaced the same metaphors with 'If Norwegians were..., they'd be...' and 'If the British/Americans/... were..., they'd be...' to reflect on their perception of their language/culture and the target cultures and languages.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aims: self-awareness, awareness of others, perspective taking and perspective consciousness
 - LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics; explain features of history and geography in Great Britain and the USA

EPIC entry:

Part 1.

Complete the sentences thinking about yourself (e.g. If I were an invention, I'd be a mobile phone).

If I were ...	, I'd be ...
a work of art (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc.)	
a piece of music or song	
a literary work (novel, poem, etc.) or movie	
an invention or tool	
a scent/smell	
a food or drink	
a pastime (game, hobby, sport, etc.)	
an animal	
a natural element (weather condition, landscape, flower, etc.)	
an item of clothing	
a moment in time (season, part of day, hour, etc.)	
a proverb or way of saying/idiomatic expression	

Then choose the 5 metaphors which you feel represent YOU best and think of why you have made such a choice (e.g. If I were a work of art I'd be a photograph **because** I cherish memories). **Highlight these metaphors** in your table.

Explain in pairs your 5 sentences and choices to your neighbours. Ask him/her about his/her choices, ask about reasons for them.

Part 2.

Now complete the same sentences but complete them by replacing the sentence with '**if Norwegians/my native culture were, they'd be....**') to reflect your perception of your own home culture and language.

Highlight in your portfolios the 5 metaphors which you think are most representative ones.

If Norwegians were ...	, they'd be ...
a work of art (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc.)	
a piece of music or song	

a literary work (novel, poem, etc.) or movie	
an invention or tool	
a scent/smell	
a food or drink	
a pastime (game, hobby, sport, etc.)	
an animal	
a natural element (weather condition, landscape, flower, etc.)	
an item of clothing	
a moment in time (season, part of day, hour, etc.)	
a proverb or way of saying/idiomatic expression	

Part 3.

In this part, you go through the same procedure, this time thinking about English language and culture you learn.

Complete the same sentences by replacing with 'If the British were..., they'd be' OR 'If Americans were ..., they'd be...'

Highlight in your portfolios the 5 metaphors which you think are most representative ones.

If were ...	, they'd be ...
a work of art (painting, sculpture, photograph, etc.)	
a piece of music or song	
a literary work (novel, poem, etc.) or movie	
an invention or tool	
a scent/smell	
a food or drink	
a pastime (game, hobby, sport, etc.)	
an animal	
a natural element (weather condition, landscape, flower, etc.)	
an item of clothing	
a moment in time (season, part of day, hour, etc.)	
a proverb or way of saying/idiomatic expression	

You can now discuss your choices in pairs.

Part 4. Answer the following questions.

- 1) What did you find most difficult in this activity? 2) Have you discovered anything new about yourself or other people in your class? 3) How did it feel when you were asked to think about your culture in this way: 'If Norwegians were ..., they'd be...'? 4) How did it feel when you were asked to think about foreign culture in this way: 'If British/Americans were ..., they'd be...'? 5) What do you think this activity may be useful for?

History corner

- Adapted from: Bromseth & Wigdahl (2007a, p.159-162)
- Activity type: in-class writing activity.
- Time on completing the task/entry: 30 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 7
- *Description:* pupils complete series of tasks as they explore the story of Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement.
- *Main learning aims:*
 - EPIC aims: perspective taking, perspective consciousness
 - LK06 aims: explain features of history and geography in Great Britain and the USA; create, communicate and converse about own texts inspired by English literature, films and cultural forms of expression; communicate and converse about contemporary and academic topics

EPIC entry:

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, an African American seamstress, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, breaking segregation laws. Many believe Rosa Parks' act was the event that sparked the Civil Rights movement.

Read the whole story in your textbook New Flight 2 (pp. 159 – 162).

Here are links to some images for you to look at:

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/search?q=rosa%20parks>

Among others you can find a REAL Rosa Parks bus from Henry Ford museum:

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/rosa-parks-bus/VwFLaPXV9jOSFg>

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/president-barack-obama-sits-on-the-famed-rosa-parks-bus-at-the-henry-ford-museum-following-an-event-in-dearborn-michigan-april-18-2012/QwEjoO4qE5GKoQ>

Task 1. On the basis of the information given, would you be able to see the same event which happened on December 1, 1955, from the other side? How would the story have been different if it had been written from another point of view, say, a bus driver, a passenger or a policeman who arrested her?

It had been a long day. Hours and hours of doing work behind my desk. I just wanted to go home! I had just made it to the bus stop in time to hear the screech of brakes. Judging from how full the bus looked from the windows, it might be hard to get a seat. As the door opened, I slowly climbed the stairs and nodded to the bus driver. I began to walk down the aisle and noticed a seat occupied about halfway back by a young African American woman. I stopped in front of her, giving her room to stand up and head towards the back of the bus. For some reason, however, she didn't move! The bus driver called back to remind her of the Jim Crow law but it was like she didn't hear him. Before I knew it, the police had been called to arrest her and she was removed from the bus.

It had been a long day. I had just spent hours behind my sewing machine and I just wanted to go home and relax. I had just gotten on the bus and took a vacant seat about halfway back. Oh, how nice it felt to get off my feet for a change! I looked out the window as the bus lurched to another stop. All of a sudden, I became aware of a white businessman standing in front of me, waiting for me to move. I'm not sure what came over me, but I just knew that I couldn't move. Why didn't I deserve a seat as much as he did? There are some laws that I just don't feel are fair at all. The bus driver yelled back for me to move. When I refused to get up, he threatened to call the police. I didn't budge. When the police showed up, they put me in handcuffs and led me away. I just looked at him and asked, "Why do you push us around?"

It had been a long day. I think everyone was tired and just wanted to get home. As I was looking around the bus, I noticed that it was getting really crowded. Probably meant I would be bumped to the back before too long. I actually had taken one of the very last seats next to a young lady about halfway back. As the bus lurched to a stop at the next street, a few white businessmen climbed aboard and made their way down the aisle. They paused in front of our seat. As expected, I got up out of my seat and took a place in the back of the bus, leaving a spot for one of them. I couldn't believe my eyes at what happened next. That young lady I was sitting next to didn't move! She just sat there, staring straight ahead. The bus driver called back and reminded her of the rules for blacks giving up their seats for white passengers but it was like she didn't even hear him! I knew she would get arrested but part of me wanted to go and hug her. I admired her spunky attitude!

It had been a long day. A buddy of mine had called in sick this morning so I had been in this seat all day. I was just about finished with the route when I pulled up to the last stop. I glanced in the mirror to the rows behind me; most of them were occupied. A few people got on as the bus came to a stop, including a white man, obviously on his way home from work. As he walked down the crowded aisle, he paused at the seat currently occupied by a young black woman. For some reason, she didn't get up like she was supposed to. I called back to remind her of the rule but it was like she couldn't hear me! I had no choice; the law is the law. I called the police and they arrested and took her away.

It had been a long day. I had just returned home from a day of leading services in my small, Baptist church in Montgomery. The members of my congregation, along with all of our brothers and sisters, are really feeling the sting of the unfairness of the so-called "Jim Crow" laws. As I was sitting down to ponder what I could do to help, my phone rang. My service was being requested to help organize a boycott for the city bus system. It seems as though a young woman was just arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. I hung up the phone and immediately began to make arrangements. Maybe this will be just what we need to start making a change in our world!

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5
Who is speaking?					
What character traits best match this person?					
What is their perspective on the events?					

Read the following stories and try to identify who is speaking.

Task 2. Choose two of the stories. Compare and contrast details of the people who took part in the story. What do they have in common? What does tell them apart?

Answer the questions. 1. What did you learn from this task? 2) Was it easy/difficult for you to explore different points of view of the same event? 3) Find another story, which you can look at from different perspectives (it might be a historical event, fairy tale, popular story, movie etc.). What points of view are there? From what perspective(s) are you looking at this story?

The Other Side

- Inspired by the book by Jacqueline Woodson (2001); adapted from Rader (2018, p. 131–136)
- Activity type: in-class writing activity
- Time on completing the task/entry: 30 minutes
- Data collected: pupils' individual written responses.
- Week of intervention: 8
- *Description:* Pupils answer a series of questions on their perceptions of the book by analysing the cover, illustrations and quotes.
- *Main learning aims:*
- EPIC aims: Perspective taking and perspective consciousness
- LK06 aims: discuss and elaborate on the way people live and how they socialise in Great Britain, USA and other English-speaking countries and Norway; explain features of history and geography in Great Britain and the USA; discuss and elaborate on different types of English literature from English-speaking countries

EPIC entry:

Step 1. Look at the cover. Answer the following questions:

What do you notice about the book cover? What do you think the story is about? What do you think will happen in the story? Do you think the characters will become friends in the story?

Step 2. Reading the book

Text can be found here:

https://clarke216.wikispaces.com/file/view/The_Other_Side.pdf

Illustrations and audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgKteFSLPtE>

Step 3. In the end of the story, Annie says "Someday, somebody's going to come along and knock this old fence down."

Answer the following questions: 1) What does the fence in the story represent? 2) When, do you think, does the story might take place? 3) Why do you think the author chose to tell the story from the perspective of a young black girl? 4) Is the girls' point of view the same as their mother's point of view? How do you know?

Appendix 2 – Informed consent letter, teachers

Infoskriv til lærere

Informasjonsskriv og forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

Kjære lærer,

Jeg heter Anastasia Khanukaeva. Jeg er PhD stipendiat i lesevitenskap ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Jeg inviterer deg til å delta i et forskningsprosjekt om interkulturell læring og interkulturelle kompetanser på skole. Fokuset er å undersøke hvordan eportfolios kan bli brukt til å utvikle elevers interkulturell kompetanse i engelskfaget.

Det har blitt større fokus på å fremme elevers interkulturelle kompetanser gjennom engelskfaget. Elever må lære seg å kommunisere hensiktsmessig og passende i en gitt situasjon i forhold til mennesker med andre kulturelle forutsetninger. En måte å lære dem dette på er å ta i bruk eportfolios, der jeg inviterer elevene til å samle virkelighetsnære situasjoner, tekster, bilder og reflektere rundt språkbruk, holdninger og kulturell kunnskap omkring disse gjenstander. Formålet med prosjektet er å belyse hvordan denne tilnærming kan fremme/utvikle interkulturell kompetanse på skole.

Alle aktiviteter som foregår i klasserommet vil bli analysert for å forske på temaet oppgaven skrives i. Dette innebærer:

- Spørreskjemaer til elever
- Eportfolio tekster/notater/besvarelser
- Intervjuene med lærere og elevene


Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Din identitet vil på ingen måte bli avslørt.

Det vil bli tatt notater og lydopptak av gjennomføring av intervjuene. Lydfilene vil bare brukes til prosjektet, og vil lagres på en passordbeskyttet datamaskin. Etter at forskningen er avsluttet vil alt materiale slettes. Prosjektet er planlagt ferdig innen 2021. Men alle aktiviteter, spørreskjemaer og intervjuer skal bli gjennomført i løpet av våren 2018.

Alle aktiviteter og undervisning i denne prosjektet vil være knyttet til læreplanmålene for engelsk på ungdomsskole nivå. All undervisning og portfolio oppgaver som er relatert til forskningsprosjektet vil være direkte knyttet til undervisning i engelsk og vil ikke påvirke undervisning i andre fag.

Universitetet i Stavanger er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Prosjektet er meldt til Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD).

Prosjektet er frivillig, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ikke vil innvirke på forholdet til skolen eller elever.

Ta gjerne kontakt med meg pr. e-post (anastasia.khanukaeva@uis.no) eller ved å ringe på nr.  om du har spørsmål. På forhånd takk for samarbeidet.

Ved å underskrive samtykker du til å delta i forskningsprosjektet.

Signert lærer: _____ Dato: _____

Med vennlig hilsen,

Anastasia Khanukaeva

Appendix 3 – Informed consent letter, participants and their guardians

Infoskriv til elever og foresatte

Informasjonsskriv og forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

Kjære elev og foreldre/foresatte,

Jeg heter Anastasia Khanukaeva. Jeg er PhD stipendiat i lesevitenskap ved Universitetet i Stavanger. Jeg inviterer deg til å delta i et forskningsprosjekt om interkulturell læring og interkulturelle kompetanser på skole.

Det har blitt større fokus på å fremme elevers interkulturelle kompetanser gjennom engelskfaget. Elevene må lære seg å kommunisere hensiktsmessig og passende i en gitt situasjon i forhold til mennesker med andre kulturelle forutsetninger. En måte å lære dem dette på er å ta i bruk eportfolios, der jeg inviterer elevene til å samle virkelighetsnære tekster, bilder og reflektere rundt språkbruk, holdninger og kulturell kunnskap omkring disse gjenstander. Formålet med prosjektet er å belyse hvordan denne tilnærming kan fremme/utvikle interkulturell kompetanse på skole.

Alle aktiviteter som foregår i klasserommet vil bli analysert for å forske på temaet oppgaven skrives i.

Dette innebærer: spørreskjemaet til elever; eportfolio tekster/notater/besvarelser; intervjuene med lærere og elevene.

Opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Din og barnets identitet vil på ingen måte bli avslørt.

Det vil bli tatt notater og lydopptak av gjennomføring av intervjuene. Lydfilene vil bare brukes til prosjektet, og vil lagres på en passordbeskyttet datamaskin. Etter at forskningen er avsluttet vil alt materiale slettes. Prosjektet er planlagt ferdig innen 2021. Men alle aktiviteter, spørreskjemaer og intervjuer skal bli gjennomført i løpet av våren 2018.

Alle aktiviteter og undervisning i denne prosjektet vil være knyttet til læreplanmålene for engelsk på ungdomsskole nivå. All undervisning og portfolio oppgaver som er relatert til forskningsprosjektet vil være direkte knyttet til undervisning i engelsk og vil ikke påvirke undervisning i andre fag.

Universitetet i Stavanger er behandlingsansvarlig institusjon. Prosjektet er meldt til Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD).

Prosjektet er frivillig, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ikke vil innvirke på forholdet til skolen eller lærer.

Ta gjerne kontakt med meg pr. e-post (████████████████████) eller ved å ringe på tlf.: ██████████ om du har spørsmål. På forhånd takk for samarbeidet.

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet, og er villig til å la eleven delta.

Ja

Nei

Signert forelder/foresatt: _____ Dato: _____

Med vennlig hilsen,

Anastasia Khanukaeva

Appendix 4 – Information letter to the principal and teachers

Request for participation in a research project

Dear Teacher/Principal

This is a request for you to participate in a research study that intends to examine how and to what extent intercultural competence (IC) in a lower secondary school can be promoted through the use of eportfolios.

Background and purpose

My name is Anastasia Khanukaeva, and I am a PhD student in the Literacy Studies program at the University of Stavanger.

I am conducting a study which aims to examine an impact and the affordances of the electronic portfolio (eportfolio) for promoting student intercultural competence (IC) development in English as a Foreign language subject (EFL) through a case study approach. The main aim of this study is to provide insights for exploring the ways for building up intercultural competence (IC) through reporting multiple perspectives on different aspects of IC, namely, attitudes, skills and knowledge through the use of eportfolios.

What does the study entail?

Data will be collected through the students' eportfolios, interviews (or focus group interviews) with students and the teacher, surveys (pre- and post-project questionnaires). Pre- and post-project questionnaires will be administered in order to obtain the students' background and form the basis for adjusting eportfolio assignments, constructing focus groups and designing interview questions.

For the proposed study, IC refers to the ability to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to behaviour and communication that are effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006). Overall, Byram's framework of IC (1997) forms the theoretical basis of this study and also will be used to analyse the students' development of IC. For the purposes of the study, IC has been conceptualized as consisting of five *savoirs*, namely, knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness and two sets of skills, i.e. skill of discovery and interaction, and skill of interpreting and relating.

The participants (pupils) of the study will be requested to maintain ePortfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) throughout approximately one semester (up to 3-4 months). Preferably, I plan to conduct the study autumn semester 2017, but if it is not feasible, spring semester 2018 could be also relevant. The research is proposed to be carried out in one class at the lower secondary level in one of the Norwegian schools (9th grade or 10th grade). Consequently, the participants will consist of one teacher and one class of about 25-30 pupils. The students in one class will be presented with an English language and culture topic integrated into their EFL course (e.g., a topic on one of the English-speaking countries' culture and history or indigenous people).

In this study, eportfolios can be defined as personalized, Web-based collections of work, responses to work and reflections that are used to demonstrate key skills, attitudes and accomplishments. The EPIC is seen as an electronic environment that offers cultural and intercultural resources for L2 learners. It will include several different sections (or Rooms): Biography (Diary), Library, Classroom, Music Room (Lounge), Banquet Hall, Cinema Corner, Gallery, Interview Room, Playroom, etc. Students will describe and reflect on tasks added by the teacher and/or the researcher in each of these 'rooms', they will be able to add their own resources available for them and offer ideas on how various resources and materials could be relevant for their experiences and reflections on the target culture, their home culture and awareness of self. For example, the 'Classroom' section will be devoted to reflection on assignments related to the specific focus of the intercultural

competence, such as raising awareness of self and other, reflecting attitudes of openness and curiosity, developing skills of interpreting and relating, dealing with cultural stereotypes and cultural differences.

Potential benefits and discomforts

The discomforts and risks from this study are minimal and are no more than would take place in normal classroom environment and are considered minimal. The potential benefits of this study would be to design EFL teaching and learning instruction that is more beneficial to the student so that the material learned is designed to be both more interculturally oriented and student centered.

This study will attempt to show how interculturally focused approach to learning can improve student's knowledge, skills, attitudes of a foreign culture under English language instruction. Moreover, the participation in this study will give a teacher a new perspective of how to promote appropriate and effective engagement with cultural differences in your students.

Ethical issues are considered so that Parent Consent forms will be distributed to all participants and their parents/caregivers. Prior to the data collection phase, the present research project will be registered with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

My supervisors are **Geir Skeie**, Professor of Religious Education, Department of Cultural Studies and Languages, University of Stavanger,

and **Milica Savic**, co-supervisor, Associate Professor of English linguistics, Department of Education and Sports Science, University of Stavanger.

If you consider to participate in this study, please contact me as soon as possible (desirably within 22 August) in order to set up first meeting and begin to discuss all the details.

Further information on the study will be sent to you when and if you agree to participate upon your request.

You can contact me any time via email anastasia.khanukaeva@stov.no or phone [REDACTED].

Thank you,

Sincerely

Anastasia Khanukaeva

PhD candidate

Department of Cultural Studies and Languages

University of Stavanger

Appendix 5 – Focus group interview groups

Group	Participants			
	<i>Code</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Born in Norway</i>	<i>Number of parents born outside of Norway</i>
FG1	P02	female	yes	None
	P04	male	yes	None
	P07	male	yes	None
	P08	male	yes	None
	P11	female	yes	None
	P13	female	no	Both
FG2	P21	female	yes	None
	P22	female	yes	None
	P24	female	no	One
	P25	female	yes	None
	P27	female	no	One
	P30	female	yes	None
FG3	P31	male	yes	None
	P33	female	yes	One
	P34	female	yes	None
	P35	male	yes	None
	P36	female	yes	None
	P37	female	yes	None
FG4	P38	female	no	None
	P39	female	yes	None
	P41	female	yes	None
	P42	female	yes	None
	P45	female	yes	None
	P46	female	yes	None
FG5	P48	male	yes	None
	P49	female	yes	None
	P50	male	yes	None
	P51	male	yes	None
	P52	male	yes	One
	P53	male	yes	None
FG5	P54	female	no	Both
	P55	female	yes	None
	P56	female	yes	None
Total	33			

Appendix 6 – Introduction to focus group interviews

Note: Translated from Norwegian.

Thank you for being willing to participate in the project!

The purpose of the interview is to gain insights into how you experienced the EPIC project, into your perception of some activities and entries and to gain an insight into what you think about the various images that I will show you.

The procedures:

I will ask a question, and everyone can answer. I will show you some images, which I want you to discuss.

The interview will be audio-recorded. The recordings will not be shared with others, and pseudonyms will be used in publication.

- Rules:

Contribute to the discussion. It is desirable that everyone participates. I might ask you directly if you have been quite a while.

There are no right and wrong answers. Everyone's opinion is equally valuable to me. Therefore, don't be afraid to contribute new ideas and thoughts, or to disagree with each other!

- Confidentiality:

What is being said in this room, stays in this room, please do not share with others.

Show each other respect. Try to avoid interruptions. Avoid negative comments or body language.

- Language:

English will be the main language for the interview, but Norwegian can be used if necessary.

When the recordings start, it would be nice if you say: "My name is" at the beginning of the recording, so that I can identify your voices at a later point.

Appendix 7 – Guide for the focus group interviews

Part 1. Awareness of Self and Metaphorical (Imagery) representation of ‘Self’

(1) We all sometimes think of who we are. How do you see yourself? What is important for you? Did you learn anything about yourself? If so, what? (2) The pupils are provided with the list of different aspects. Think about yourself (Prompts A, see Appendix 8). Which one is the most important to you? Is it easy for you to choose one element of your identity? (3) The pupils are shown the image depicting an onion. Do you remember this activity from the EPIC? What does it mean to you? (4) Can you suggest any other metaphors depicting who you are? (If students can't suggest any, the researcher shows some options (images of a tree, a book, a hand, etc.)) (Prompts A, see Appendix 8).

Part 2. Awareness (Self and Others)

(1) Have you learned anything about other pupils in your class during this semester? If so, what? If not, why? (2) Do you remember the activity where you were asked to interview your friend from another country? ‘Interview Room’ and the activity ‘This Is How We Do It’. Was there anything particular from these activities that you remember? Anything that made you think about yourself and the other person’s culture? What did you learn from these activities?

Part 3. Perspective taking and Perspective consciousness

Pupils are asked to recall the following EPIC entries, namely Sunglasses Story; Fractured Fairy Tale; If I were..., I'd Be...; History Corner, and The Other Side (Prompts B, Appendix 8).

(1) What do you remember about these activities? (2) What have you learned? (3) We have discussed how we can consider the perspectives of others (e.g., Sunglasses Story; Fractured Fairy Tales; History Corner). In what situations in your real life would you use the knowledge from these activities? Can you suggest any examples from your experience? (4) Do you remember anything you have done in class where you have felt that you had a good opportunity to reflect about the perspectives of other people? What were you feeling? (5) Pupils are shown two images from the book “The Other Side” depicting the main characters. (a) What do these pictures make you think of? (b) What does the fence represent? (c) From what perspective do we see this event?

(d) Why is it important to consider different perspectives? (e) Can you make up a short dialogue between the people? (f) Could you make up annotations for the images?


Part 4. Summing up the EPIC project

(1) Let's list the activities you remember we did during this semester. If you had to pick only one of them that was most interesting/enjoying to you, what would it be?

(2) Tell me about ONE positive experience you've had during this semester in your English class. Do you remember any lesson that you particularly enjoyed? What made it enjoyable? (3) Tell me about ONE negative experience you've had during this semester in your English class. Tell me about a lesson that you didn't like.

Anything else you would like to add? Thank you for your help!

Appendix 8 – Prompts for focus group interviews



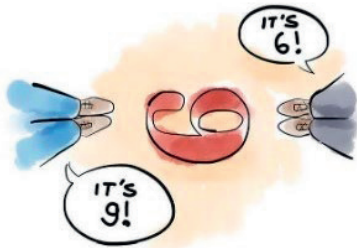
Prompts A

• the roles you play in life (a daughter/a son, a friend, a school student); family
• hobby, sports or style of clothes; things you choose – idols, style of music etc.
• your abilities, talents, or disabilities;
• where you were born, or where you now live;
• your gender;
• your religion;
• your race or ethnicity;
• socio-economic status;
• what you are not or don't want to be: not a woman, not French etc.

The ID T-Shirt
Seven identities game



Prompts B



Images and illustrations from the picture books by Woodson (2001) *The Other Side*, Lamothe (2017) *This is how we do it*, and Scieszka (1996) *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!*

Appendix 9 – Background questionnaire (version in English)

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is about your personal background, your experience with learning English language and culture, and your language use.

It is important that you answer these questions on your own, because I am interested in your background, experience and language use.

There are no right or wrong answers! Try to be honest.

This questionnaire will not affect your grade.

It should not take you longer than 15 minutes :-)

Instructions:

For the multiple choice questions, please choose one answer for each question, if nothing else is specified.

If there are no alternatives, please write your own answer on the lines following the question.

If you don't understand a certain question, ask me or your teacher.

Thank you so much for helping me!

1. Are you:

- (1) MALE
(2) FEMALE

2. What is your age:

3. Were you born in Norway?

- (1) YES
(2) NO

4. Was your mother born in Norway?

- (1) YES
(2) NO

5. Was your father born in Norway?

- (1) YES
(2) NO

6. Your mother tongue(s)?

- (1) English
- (2) Norwegian
- (3) Other _____

7. Do you have contact with people who have background from other countries?

Please select ONE response in each row.

	YES	NO
In your family	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>
At school	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>
In your neighbourhood	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>
In your circle of friends	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>

8. How often do you travel abroad?

- (1) I have never travelled abroad
- (2) I have travelled 1-2 times in my life
- (3) I travel abroad every second year
- (4) I travel abroad once per year
- (5) I travel abroad more than once per year

9. Have you travelled to English speaking countries in the past 3 years?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

10. What English speaking countries have you been to?

- (1) the USA
- (2) the UK
- (3) Australia
- (4) Canada
- (5) Any other, please specify _____

11. Have you lived in an English speaking country for a period longer than 2 months (in the past 3 years)?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

12. When did you first begin to learn English?

- (1) before kindergarden
- (2) kindergarden
- (3) 1-4 grade
- (4) 5-7 grade
- (5) 8-9 grade

13. Did you begin to speak English before age 6?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO
- (3) I DON'T KNOW

14. Did you begin to speak Norwegian before age 6?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO
- (3) I DON'T KNOW

15. What language(s) do you mostly speak at home?

16. What language(s) do your parents/caregivers mostly use when they communicate with each other?

17. How many languages, including the language(s) you speak at home, do you and your parents speak well enough to communicate with other people?

Please select ONE response in each row.

	One	Two	Three or more	I do not know
YOU	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
YOUR MOTHER	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
YOUR FATHER	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

18. In which language(s) do you usually think? (For example, if you are planning something or trying to solve a math problem).

- (1) Norwegian
- (2) English
- (3) Mother tongue (if your mother tongue is not English or Norwegian)
- (4) Other _____

19. Which statement is true for you? (you may choose several options)

- (1) I speak Norwegian with my family (grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings).
- (2) I speak English with my family (grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings).
- (4) I speak other language(s) with my family. What language(s)? _____

20. Which statement is true for you? (you may choose several options)

- (1) I speak Norwegian with my friends and classmates at school.
- (2) I speak English with my friends and classmates at school.
- (4) I speak other language(s) with my friends and classmates at school. What language(s)? _____

21. How often do you do the following in ENGLISH?

	Every day	Several times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	Never
Watch TV	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Play video games	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to music or audio books	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Read (on the Internet, books, newspapers)	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Write shorter texts (sms, Twitter, etc.)	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Write longer texts (emails, essays, blogs etc.)	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>

22. On a scale from 1 to 5, rate your abilities in ENGLISH

(1 =poor; 2= satisfactory; 3=OK; 4= very good; 5= fluent)

	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>	(6) <input type="checkbox"/>

23. On a scale from 1 to 5, rate your abilities in NORWEGIAN

(1 =poor; 2= satisfactory; 3=OK; 4= very good; 5= fluent)

	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

24. In general, which language do you prefer to use? (circle one)

- (1) English
- (2) Norwegian
- (3) It depends on whom I talk to
- (4) My mother tongue (other than English or Norwegian) _____

25. How would you describe English as a school subject?

You may choose several options.

- (1) Exciting
- (2) Confusing
- (3) Difficult
- (4) Fun
- (5) Useful
- (7) Boring
- (6) Motivational
- (8) Other words you can think of? Write here _____

26. Do you ever think about what it would be like to live in a foreign culture?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO
- (3) I DON'T KNOW

27. Do you ever reflect upon how people in a foreign culture regard you and your culture?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO
- (3) I DON'T KNOW

28. Do you discuss any aspects of your own culture or cultural background in English class?

- (1) YES
- (2) NO

29. Do you agree with the following statements?

Please select ONE response in each row.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>
I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>
Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>
When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to 'put myself in his shoes' for a while.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>

30. What is true for you?

Please select ONE response in each row.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I look for information in a variety of sources.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
I explain my thoughts and actions also considering outside perspectives.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
I express my point of view in connection with both conflicting and complementary opinions.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
I use my imagination to offer different perspectives.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
I show awareness of the fact that other people might think, behave and feel differently.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>
I actively explore the reasons behind different practices and reactions.	(1) <input type="checkbox"/>	(2) <input type="checkbox"/>	(3) <input type="checkbox"/>	(4) <input type="checkbox"/>	(5) <input type="checkbox"/>

31. Have you ever heard of the word 'intercultural competence'?

- (1) YES
(2) NO

32. If Yes, where? (At school, at home, the Internet etc.)

33. Do you have any comments related to the questionnaire or anything else you have thought of when you answered the questions?

Answer No, if you don't have any.

Password

THANK YOU!

Appendix 10 – Survey for teachers

This short survey is purely for research purposes, and all information you provide will be held in confidence. Thank you for your kind assistance.

Section 1. Demographic data:

1. What is your age?
2. Are you native/non-native in Norway?
3. Other countries you lived so far (for longer than a year)? For how long?
4. What languages do you speak?

Section 2. Teaching experience and qualifications:

1. What teaching qualification(s) do you have?
2. What is your highest degree? (Bachelor, Master, PhD?)
3. What subject(s) do you teach at this school?
4. What level(s) (age level) do you teach at this school?
5. How long have you been teaching English?
6. How long have you been teaching English at this school?
7. Did you take any Professional Development courses after studies? If yes, on what?

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Appendix 11 – Semi-structured interview guide with teachers

[The following questions are the basis for the interviews. Naturally, follow-up questions are utilized as well, but the following guide provides the core of the interviews] The purpose for this interview is to help me to gather information for my PhD study. I appreciate you sharing your experience with me. Your name and name of the school will be kept anonymous. The researcher will take notes and audio-record the interview for practical purposes. Let's start by talking about your experience in teaching English.

Part A. Teaching English and thoughts about intercultural teaching in the language classroom

- 1) How many hours of English classes per week do pupils in Year 9 usually have?
- 2) What is culture? What is the place of culture in English language teaching? Do you think that cultural knowledge is a part of language learning? If so, why? Follow up: What kind of cultural information should students learn as they learn English?
- 3) Are there any specific methods/strategies/activities you use and find effective in teaching culture? Why do you think they are effective (if there are any, and if they are)? What kind of methods work better for ILL?
- 4) Do you use textbooks? If so, what do you use? What other materials do you use for instruction? What is their main purpose for you?
- 5) Do you use digital tools and technology (e.g., videos, PowerPoint, and the Internet, etc.) when you teach intercultural topics? If so, how do you use technology? What is their main purpose?
- 6) Have you heard or read about the term IC before the study? If yes, in what contexts? How would you describe it? Do you find the concept of IC necessary? Follow up: What does IC mean for you in your teaching context? What does ILL mean for you in your teaching context?
- 7) In your opinion, what is the best age (school level) for pupils to start intercultural learning at school? Why?
- 8) In your experience, were the students in your class(es) conscious/aware enough of their own cultural background before the project?

Part B. Taking part in the EPIC project

- 1) What has motivated you to take part in the project?
- 2) Did you participate in other projects related to integrating intercultural language learning tools as part of English teaching?

- 3) Suppose that you were in charge and could do whatever you wanted to improve this project. What kind of change(s) would you make?
- 4) Tell me about a lesson(s) during this project that went well.
- 5) Tell me about a lesson(s) during this project that didn't work.
- 6) How would you evaluate the pupils' behaviour during lessons when they were asked to complete their EPIC tasks? What have you noticed?
- 7) In your view, did the pupils find the project interesting/engaging? Did you find the project interesting/engaging?
- 8) What do you think were valuable elements of this project in terms of any aspect of teaching culture?
- 9) What do you think was difficult or unnecessary in this project?
- 10) Can you name three things which went particularly well. How, in your view, did the pupils benefit from the EPIC? Could you name a few things which need improvement?
- 11) What potential learning outcomes within the English subject this project might have had?
- 12) Did your pupils give any feedback to you about their participation in the EPIC?
- 13) How do you perceive your experience in this PhD project overall?

Part C. Future teaching practice

- 1) Would you use any activities/ideas from the project again in other classes/other levels/future Year 9 pupils?
- 2) Would you use the EPIC with your future 9th graders? What activities would you use in your future teaching?
- 3) Would you recommend using this tool and e-portfolios to your colleagues?
- 4) Are there any other issues you'd like to add?

Thank you for your help!

Appendix 12 – Transcription codes

Adapted from Halkier (2010).

[]: overlaps in speech

(.): incomprehensible speech

...: pauses less than 2 seconds, trailed off speech

(1.2): pauses more than one second

{ }: material has been deleted from the excerpt

Appendix 13 – NSD approval



Anastasia Khanukaeva
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 31.10.2017

Vår ref: 56184 / 3 / STM

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 31

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 25.09.2017 for prosjektet:

56184	<i>An approach for developing intercultural competence in a Norwegian lower secondary school: Case study of the use of eportfolios.</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Anastasia Khanukaeva</i>

Vurdering

Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er meldepliktig og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av personopplysningsloven § 31. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling

Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:

- opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
- vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
- eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Vi forutsetter at du ikke innhenter sensitive personopplysninger.

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet

Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke [endringer](#) du må melde, samt endringskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet

Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i [Meldingsarkivet](#).

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Ved prosjektslutt 01.07.2021 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Siri Tenden Myklebust

Kontaktperson: Siri Tenden Myklebust tlf: [REDACTED] / [REDACTED]

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 56184

Vi legger til grunn at skolen godkjenner prosjektet.

Utvalget informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er i all hovedsak godt utformet, men vi ber om at følgende endres før utvalget kontaktes:

- Riktig årstall for avslutning av prosjektet (2021) må påføres skrivet
- Vi har skiftet navn og heter nå NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata

Av hensyn til frivilligheten bør du understreke at deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet ikke vil innvirke på forholdet til skolen eller lærer. Se: http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvernombud/hjelp/forskningstema/barnehage_skole.html

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

SurveyXact er databehandler for prosjektet. Universitetet i Stavanger skal inngå skriftlig avtale med SurveyXact om hvordan personopplysninger skal behandles, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se Datatilsynets veileder: <http://www.datatilsynet.no/Sikkerhet-internkontroll/Databehandleravtale/>.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 01.07.2021. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette digitale lydopptak

Vi gjør oppmerksom på at også databehandler må slette personopplysninger tilknyttet prosjektet i sine systemer. Dette inkluderer eventuelle logger og koblinger mellom IP-/epostadresser og besvarelser.

Appendix 14 – Presentation for pupils



EPIC project **EP**ortfolios of **I**ntercultural **C**ompetence

Anastasia Khanukaeva
PhD student, UiS
Fakultet for utdanningsvitenskap og humaniora



Intercultural = interkulturell

- 'Inter' (between) and 'Culture'



Different cultures (subcultures)



Different cultures in the world



Diverse people from many different cultures in Norway



Forskningsprosjekt:

- Eportfolio oppgaver (i Google Classroom)
 - Intervju med lærere og elevene
 - Spørreskjemaer til elever (i begynnelsen)
-
- Du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke
 - Deltakelse i prosjektet vil ikke innvirke på forholdet på skole eller lærer.
-
- You will get 2 or max 3 tasks per week. On Sunday or Monday we will post it on your Google Classroom page.
 - All assignments will be done in English (if not, ask about it your teacher or me)

My email if you have any questions:

THANK YOU!

Articles

Article I: Khanukaeva, A. (2020). In pursuit of intercultural competence: Exploring self-awareness of EFL pupils in a lower-secondary school in Norway. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 3(3), 118-140.

Article II: Hanukaev, A. (2022). Considering perspectives of others: A case study of intercultural learning among English language learners in Norway. *Training, Language and Culture*, 6(1), 33-48.

Article III: Hanukaev, A. (2023). The affordances of an intercultural e-portfolio: A case study on perspectives of English teachers in Norway. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, 5(1), 30–58.

Article I – In pursuit of intercultural competence: Exploring self-awareness of EFL pupils in a lower-secondary school in Norway

Intercultural Communication Education, 3(3), 118–140



Castledown

Intercultural Communication Education, 3 (3), 118–140 (2020)
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In pursuit of intercultural competence: Exploring self-awareness of EFL pupils in a lower-secondary school in Norway



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Abstract

This paper focuses on self-awareness as an integral component of intercultural competence (IC) in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context. For the purposes of this study, an EPortfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) was developed by the researcher and employed during an intervention as a series of tasks and reflection prompts through various forms of media (written texts, drawings etc.). Triangulated qualitative data (in the form of EPIC entries and focus group interviews) were gathered from 56 participants, aged 14–15. The findings indicate that supporting pupils in raising their self-awareness may lead to deeper reflection on the Self as being multiple, which in turn may lead to the recognition of “multiple selves” of others (Rivers & Houghton, 2013, p. 2). The study contributes to the pool of research studying IC and grants insights into how an eportfolio approach might be integrated into EFL secondary teaching by encouraging learners to enrich their understanding of the Self through their reflections on EPIC tasks and classroom activities.

Keywords: intercultural competence, self-awareness, EFL education, eportfolio, case study

Introduction

Due to intensive international exchanges and shifts within business and education, pupils in Norway have increased opportunities to interact and form relationships with peers from diverse social and cultural contexts. English as a first foreign language (FL), taught from the first year in primary school, is a particularly important context for the development of these relationships (Rindal & Brevik, 2019). This has come to be recognized in the revised National Curriculum in Norway (LK20), which places an emphasis on acknowledging diversity and promoting intercultural values in the classroom (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

This paper reports on findings from an intervention-based case study that focuses on the development of self-awareness as an integral component of intercultural competence (IC) in a Norwegian lower

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within this paper.

secondary EFL classroom. The intervention aimed to stimulate pupils' reflective processes about the Self and Others through a number of intercultural activities and eportfolio entries. This study employed eportfolio as a medium to collect the data and a digital platform for IC instruction. Improving learners' digital skills across all subjects is a significant part of the educational context in Norway, as also stated in the English subject curriculum. Indeed, in secondary school English classes, digital devices and the Internet are continuously integrated into classroom practices. The e-portfolio is thus uniquely suited for 21st century learning, an age when learning takes place anywhere and anytime, both inside and outside formal education (Jenson & Treuer, 2014).

For this study, IC is viewed as “an integral whole of cognitive, affective and behavioural factors that influence the understanding of, and interaction with, diversity in a broad sense, and which can be developed through education and/or experience” (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143). As can be seen in this definition, interaction, understanding, and diversity are the core underlying notions for the conceptualization of IC and its components. “Intercultural” does not exist without complex interrelations between the Self and the Other, and it is often understood as “a reflexive awareness of Self and Other” (Holliday, 2018, p. 6), in which the focus should be on self among others (ibid., p.4).

In the context of EFL, learners do not meet cultures, but they are “complex subjects who ‘do’ identity and culture with each other” (Holmes & Dervin, 2016, p. 9). Thus, it is beneficial to facilitate pupils' awareness of their own Self and explore how this awareness can lead to a better understanding of others in an increasingly multicultural world (Dervin, 2016; Schwarzenhal *et al.*, 2017). Although a considerable body of research reveals a link between self-awareness and IC (e.g., Fantini, 2009), less is known about how to foster pupils' self-awareness and to enhance their understanding of, and interaction with diversity (Borghetti, 2011). The more we learn about the learners' experiences, the better equipped we will be to address their needs with appropriate teaching methods. Thus, this study explores the following research question:

In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the eportfolio of intercultural competence (EPIC)?

The theoretical framework and design of the study which highlight diversity and self-awareness as a constituent of IC are grounded in the concept of “culture” as “internal heterogeneity, complexity, change, struggle, and individual agency” (Zotzmann, 2015, p. 193). Culture as “multiplicity” (as opposed to the meaning of “difference” or “oneness”) (Dervin, 2016, p. 28) emphasizes that behind every individual lie complex experiences, stories, and origins which include gender, social class, race, etc. (Dervin, 2016, p. 33). Importantly, this perspective reflects an understanding of culture as the “multiplicity of voices reflecting a whole array of conflicting and competing discourses” (Crawford & McLaren, 2003, p. 131). The use of eportfolio as a tool to envision learners' “voices” and “choices” (Barrett, 2007) can help to promote this understanding of culture in the English classroom.

Literature review

Theoretical underpinnings

The common tendency in the literature on IC is to focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes (e.g., Byram, 1997; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), whereas awareness, and especially self-awareness is not always included in the frameworks of IC. If included, it is not detached from the knowledge component (see Barrett, 2018; Byram, 1997). As argued in this paper, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness are interrelated and indispensable for IC, since the first three components enhance awareness, “while enhanced awareness, in turn, stimulates development of the other three” (Fantini, 2009, p. 199). Awareness is here regarded as “in and of the self, and it is always about the self in relation to someone

or something else” (Fantini, 2000, p. 29). Self-awareness refers to a perspective of oneself regarding beliefs, performance, behaviours, and evaluation. As argued, self-awareness entails sensitivity to how one behaves in relation to others and consciousness that one’s own behaviour may be strange and/or difficult for others to understand or accept (Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009, p. 32). Overall, the levels of awareness and perceptiveness are important indicators for someone’s overall capacity to be open to other cultures (Spencer-Oatey & Stadler, 2009). Self-awareness is at the heart of IC and, according to Kupka *et al.* (2007), it has a regulating effect on other components of IC. It is a significant part of the process of activating other aspects of IC because it helps an individual push forward and articulate an understanding of others through constant mirroring and reflecting on what he/she sees in the Self.

A distinction needs to be made between cultural awareness (CA) and intercultural awareness (ICA), which will be important to the issues raised below. The concept of ICA emphasises a conceptual shift from a specific focus on the home culture and the target culture (CA) to an awareness of the greater complexity of cultures (Fenner, 2017). ICA implies both a “window” on the other culture/cultures and a “mirror” where we discover ourselves in the process of discovering oneself and others (Huber-Kriegler *et al.*, 2003, p. 8).

Empirical research on self-awareness

As widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Fantini, 2009; Kupka *et al.*, 2007), self-awareness within IC is a necessary prerequisite for an enhanced understanding of the Self and Others. This section presents key research with respect to self-awareness in the EFL context worldwide as well as in the Nordic and Norwegian settings.

A study by Rigamonti and Scott-Monkhouse (2016) focused on raising self-awareness among a diverse group of adult learners, Austrians learning Italian and Italian EFL learners, through in-class activities. The findings showed that raising awareness of oneself as well as the differences and similarities existing between individuals in the class prompted reflections on sensitivity to differences, appreciation and respect of diversity, openness to novelty, and flexibility (Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016).

Focusing on “writing the self,” a study by Holmes and O’Neil (2010) obtained the data through students’ self-reflections on their intercultural encounters in order to show that discovery of the Self is closely connected to the discovery of the cultural Other. The university students taking an intercultural communication course in New Zealand were each paired with a student from another culture and utilized a specifically designed model (the PEER model) which consisted of the following steps: a) Prepare, b) Engage, c) Evaluate, d) Reflect in their meetings. By seeing themselves through others and autoethnographic writing, the participants reflected on Self and Other, cultural and religious relativity, and their ability to accept difference (Holmes & O’Neil, 2010).

Houghton (2011; 2013) has shown that identification of within-self diversity is a key mechanism for developing IC in FL classrooms. Data collected through questionnaires, interviews, student work and diaries from Japanese student participants have demonstrated that the identity development of learners occurred through five sequential phases which involve Analysis of Self; Analysis of Other; Critical Analysis; Evaluation; and Identity-Development (Houghton, 2013, p. 2). Houghton (2011, p. 476) emphasizes the importance of self-awareness (or “analysis of Self” in her terms) in intercultural education and stresses the need to understand individuals as having complex and dynamic views of the self.

As for the Norwegian context, research has been done on exploring awareness of the Self and the Other

through the use of literature in an EFL classroom in lower (Fenner, 2001) and upper (Hoff, 2013) secondary EFL classrooms. Both studies found that fiction can be a beneficial medium for EFL learners in their process of understanding Other as well as the development of their Self. There is a considerable number of studies investigating the construction of self (in particular, the ethnic domain) among immigrant youths in Norway (e.g., Rysst, 2016; Solbue, Helleve & Smith, 2017; Steen-Olsen, 2013) as opposed to a rather limited pool of research on young secondary EFL learners in Norway (e.g., Krulatz *et al.*, 2018; Lippe, 2011).

Overall, the reviewed studies (Holmes & O'Neil 2019; Houghton, 2011, Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse; 2016) have shown that undergraduate students benefit from various forms of interventions aimed at self-awareness. The present study broadens horizons of empirical research by investigating younger learners' voices in real English classrooms in relation to the Self. This study adds to the limited understanding of how this group of participants chooses to express themselves. Furthermore, previous research (e.g., Méndez García, 2017; Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016; Stadler, 2014) has pointed to the importance of a detailed analysis of learners' self- and other-perception, and perception in general. This study adds to what is known about what role perception plays in pupils' self-awareness and how they perceive and relate to others. Finally, the current study seeks to contribute to further understanding of how substituting "the nation as the primary unit of analysis" (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) with an alternative concept of (multiple) Self allows this group of learners to experience the variety of facets of diversity.

Eportfolios

Previous studies examined portfolio (or eportfolio) as a tool for IC development as it is based on personal reflection, self-evaluation, and self-perception of the learner, qualities considered as essential components in intercultural development (Abrams *et al.*, 2006; Byram *et al.*, 2002; Pearson, 2004). As a means for fostering and promoting IC, portfolios have been used to some extent in the Nordic context in, for example, pre-service teacher education (see Dervin & Hahl, 2015). Lund (2008) reviewed the Language Portfolio (as part of Language Opens Doors project) as being a key resource for teaching. One part of the Portfolio encouraged undergraduate students to make notes of their intercultural observations and to reflect on them. While research demonstrates the potential of using portfolios for the development of IC, there is less evidence of the potential this tool may have for young learners' enrichment of self-awareness as an integral part of IC.

An eportfolio is a digitized collection of artefacts which combines different forms of media when documenting intercultural learning and experiences. The use of eportfolios as a collection of multimodal texts, tasks, and learners' reflections can supplement the textbooks, which still are dominant in the English classroom in Norway (Gilje *et al.*, 2016). By including alternative formats and digital platforms, we can invite language learners to critically reflect on, for example, what they see on the images in their textbooks (Brown & Habegger-Conti, 2017). Eportfolio is thus a valuable learning tool which is flexible and can be designed to accommodate the level and interests of different learners. This study employs an eportfolio intervention in which self-awareness as part of IC is intensified in an under-researched setting, namely, lower secondary school in Norway.

Methodology

Setting and participants

An exploratory case study design was used in order to develop an in-depth description and analysis of a case (Creswell, 2013), namely, five lower secondary classes. A convenience sample of fifty-six pupils

(20 males and 36 females, mean age 14.22) participated in the intervention. They were sampled from all five Year 9 classes (second year of lower secondary school) at a secondary school situated in an urban area on the west coast of Norway. Three teachers (one female and two males) were involved in the study. Their experience of teaching English varied from 2 to 18 years. The majority of the pupils (87%) said that they spoke Norwegian as their first language. Other native languages spoken in the pupils' homes were English, Danish, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese. The vast majority of the pupils (96%) reported that they had first begun to learn English either in their first year of schooling or in the pre-school. Approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Authority (NSD), as well as informed consent from the participants' legal guardians, were obtained prior to the data collection.

The participants had regularly used iPads, G-Suite for Education, and the Google Classroom management tool, where teachers could share homework and lesson plans with the pupils. Therefore, the EPIC was integrated into the instruction via the Google Classroom tool, to make communication between the teachers, participants and the researcher more effective.

Intervention and data collection procedures

Prior to the intervention, which lasted eight weeks, the eportfolio of intercultural competence (EPIC), was developed by the researcher and collaboratively co-created with the teachers. The EPIC was designed in accordance with the selected construct of IC (self-awareness) and introduced gradually to the pupils in the form of eportfolio entries. There was no single frame of reference or a template for the EPIC structure and content. The researcher adapted a number of learning tasks from different sources (e.g., Branders *et al.*, 2016; Berardo & Deardorff, 2012). Self-awareness was promoted by utilizing three central metaphors: Mirror (the Self), Window (Self and Other), and Coloured glasses (Awareness of different 'lenses' through which we see things). The overview of the EPIC as used in this study is given in Appendix 1.

In total, the EPIC included 17 multimodal entries. For the purpose of the current study, the focus is narrowed down to three EPIC entries (T1, T2, and T3). For a detailed description of these three EPIC entries, see Appendix 3. In sum, the EPIC followed three main steps (see Table 1).

English was chosen as the main language in the EPIC entries and interviews in order to address IC through EFL and to support the competence aims of the English subject in Year 9. The expected English level of the pupils was around A2/B1 (Council of Europe, 2018) but individual variations were observed within the group which is why they were given an option to use either English or Norwegian in the focus group interviews when they felt that would help them to express themselves better. The choice of language may have influenced how they expressed the Self in the EPIC; however, it was considered it would not immensely influence the results since the pupils could use Norwegian when necessary. Several pupils did so during the interviews.

Overall, the data collection included several stages. The first stage concentrated on the implementation of the EPIC. Twice per week all the classes were given a new EPIC entry or in-class activity, which was uploaded to the platform by either the researcher or teachers. After eight weeks of instruction, five focus group interviews with 33 pupils were conducted. Based on the discussion with the teachers and practical considerations, it was decided to conduct one focus group interview per class and invite approximately six pupils per group. In two classes, the number of pupils who participated in the project as a whole was seven per class; therefore, it was decided that all of the pupils would take part in the focus groups. As for the other three classes, it was decided to invite those who submitted a substantial number of the EPIC entries and represented both Norwegian and non-Norwegian population as well as both genders. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the participants' understanding

concerning the following key topics: (a) self-awareness and awareness of “many selves” by applying imagery and metaphor approaches; (b) awareness of the Self and the Other. A semi-structured interview guide was used, consisting mainly of open-ended questions (see Appendix 4). The interviews were audio recorded at the school premises during regular school hours. All interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Table 1 Steps, descriptions and aims of the EPIC entries.

Step	Learning aims	The EPIC entries	Metaphorical description
1 Self Self-awareness	Facilitate reflection and self-awareness; Raise awareness of multiple selves	<i>Onion of identities (T1)</i> <i>Seven identities game (T2)</i>	<i>Mirror</i> One first looks in the mirror of the self and one's own culture
2 Self and Other Awareness of others	Reflect on one's own self in relation to those of others; Reflect on issues related to labelling other people with only one identity	<i>Seven identities game (T2)</i>	<i>Window</i> One looks out of the window at other people
3 Self and Other Awareness of how we see things; intercultural awareness	Reflect upon the notion of “lenses” or “glasses” and diverse perspectives and how we each see the world through “our diverse lenses”	<i>Sunglasses story (T3)</i>	<i>Coloured glasses</i> One looks through one's own diverse lenses and considers how the other does the same

Datasets

The following two datasets were collected: a) pupil texts; b) the focus group interview data. The first dataset (the pupil texts) consisted of 169 entries in total. The exact number of entries in relation to the three EPIC tasks is shown in Table 2. In reflection entries, pupils were given up to 4 open-ended questions. The main purpose of reflection entries was to prompt the pupils to describe their experiences and perceptions on EPIC entries. In T1, called ‘Onion of identities’, the pupils constructed a model of their Self as an Onion by placing elements which make them who they are to five layers of the model. T2, which is a classroom activity called ‘Seven Identities Game’, presupposed that the pupils do the activity in class and write their responses in the reflection entries only. In T3, the Sunglasses story was provided, and pupils were given three questions to answer about the story, they are considered as EPIC entries (see also Appendix 2 for details about the entries).

Table 2 Number of texts collected in all three EPIC tasks.

	T1	T2	T3	Total
EPIC entry	37	-	50	87
Reflection entry	31	51	-	82
Total	68	51	50	169

As for the focus group interviews, this paper includes only the parts of discussions which focus on the

self-awareness component in the pupils' answers. Thus, this study draws on 53 minutes of audio recordings.

All data were anonymized and transferred to the qualitative analysis software NVIVO. The pupils' names were replaced with codes (e.g., *P01b*, where *b* indicates the task code). All files had been stored on a password-protected computer. The interview data and the pupils' text samples were coded systematically using the same software.

Data analysis

The data analysis methods were guided by the research question. As a general reference, Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations for the six main steps of thematic analysis were utilized. Since the analysis used an initial concept of self-awareness and was guided by an explorative research question, the approach to data analysis was both deductive and inductive. Overall, the process of coding involved two cycles, open (or initial) coding, and axial coding (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The first stage (open coding) consisted in identifying patterns which might act as the codes and categories in order to answer the research question ("In what ways do the pupils demonstrate self-awareness through the EPIC?"). The second stage (axial coding) entailed a set of procedures to put data back together in different ways after open coding by making connections between categories.

First, the EPIC entries were examined for evidence of the pupils' self-awareness. For example, to capture the core aspects of participants' self-awareness, I created codes according to what the participants wrote in their performance entries (for example, family, friends, hobbies). The topics listed by pupils in T1 and T2 were categorized according to commonality, for instance, "brave," "shy," or "sensitive" were grouped under the "Psychological attributes" theme.

As for the reflection entries, I first examined the data for patterns to generate initial codes for all emergent instances of self-awareness or any other themes linked to self-awareness. Some text units (of various length) were tagged for more than one code. Codes which shared some characteristic were grouped into categories. An example of themes, categories, and codes developed can be seen in Table 3. In the transcripts of the interviews, emerging codes, categories and themes were identified following the same procedures as for the reflection entries described above.

Table 3 *Example of themes, categories, and codes of reflection entries.*

Theme	Category	Code	Example quote
Awareness	Of self	Recognition of multiple selves	"I deem every part of my identity an important piece of me and I'd like to put all on the 'most important' layer" (P02b)
		Deepening self-awareness	"I felt more complex, and i got to know myself better" (P21b)

During the second cycle of coding, the data was reviewed, and some of the codes were relabelled and revised. Due to the multiplicity of datasets and difference in the design of the guiding prompts for the tasks, the codes for different datasets were kept separate.

Findings

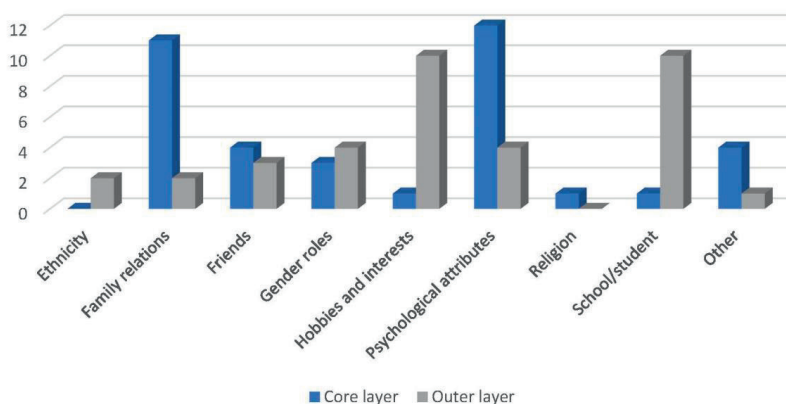
The findings will be presented based on the three datasets: the pupils' EPIC entries, reflections, and the focus group interviews.

EPIC entries

During the qualitative analysis of the participants' three EPIC entries included in the present article (Union of identities - T1; Seven identities game - T2; Sunglasses Story - T3) three major perspectives related to self-awareness were identified: (1) understanding the core aspects of the self (T1); (2) exploring the process of reflection on "many selves" (T2); and (3) reflecting on how we see things differently through our diverse "lens" (T3).

When answering the question of "Who am I?" in T1, the pupils located the most important aspects of selves in five layers of their model of "onion." The recurring aspects of "the Self" which formed two "layers" of the model of onion (the innermost, i.e., "core," and the outermost, i.e., "outer") were quantified and displayed in Figure 3. The three layers in the middle were disregarded for this analysis.

Figure 1 Number of aspects of self, related to core layer and outer layers in T1.



As seen from Figure 1 above, two of the most frequently mentioned aspects for the "core layer" domain were "Psychological attributes" (such as "being nice," "caring," "kind and helpful" etc.) and "Family relations," for example, "family" and "daughter." For the latter one, 11 items were found in the core layer domain, whereas there were only two in the outer layer domain. The two most frequent aspects in the outer layer domain were "School/student" and "Hobbies and interests" (e.g., "handball," "gaming," "dog owner").

These results very much correlate to what is found for the most recurring themes in T2 (Seven Identities Game). In this in-class activity, the pupils reflected upon and discussed with others in class whether it was difficult for them to choose one element of their "identity." The pupils were provided with reflection prompts consisting of four questions (see Appendix 3). The analysis of the responses to question 3 ("What was your last element of identity that remained?") shows for the majority of the pupils (59%) the most valuable element for their identity was family and family relations. The following aspects were also mentioned: "friends" (11%), "interests and preferences" (11%), "ethnicity" (6.5%) and "religion" (6.5%), "others" (6%). The following extract provides an illustration of a pupil's reflection through this exercise: "Handball player. I think this activity may be useful for me in many years, and I think I would be a different person without being a handball player" (P28c).

In the comparison matrix displaying summarized results from T1 and T2 (see Table 4), the core themes representing the importance of the family for their sense of self is evident (27 items under the "last

identity element”).

Table 4 *A comparison matrix showing numbers of responses of the categories found in T1 and T2.*

Task	T1 - Onion of identities		T2 - Seven identities game
	Core layer	Outer layer	Last identity element
Family relations	11	2	27
Friends (being a friend or valuing friends)	4	3	4
Psychological attributes	12	4	2
Gender	3	4	1
School/student	1	10	0
Ethnicity	0	2	3
Religion	1	0	3
Hobbies and interests	1	10	6
Physical description	0	0	1
Other (languages, place etc.)	4	1	0
Total	37	36	47

Note: As for T1, one pupil's EPIC entry for T1 was missing one “outer” layer response. As for T2, 50 entries were submitted in total, but 3 out of 50 were missing responses for this particular question.

In order to correlate the summarized results from the two tasks, all the responses from T1 and T2 (including responses from all five “layers” in the Onion Model) were grouped in accordance to broader categories, namely, “Personality,” “Roles,” “Ethnicity,” “Religion,” and “Gender” (Table 5). The two most frequent categories are related to “Personality” (i.e., psychological attributes, hobbies, physical description) and “Roles” (including family, friends, school), whereas the less frequent ones are “Ethnicity,” “Religion,” and “Gender.”

Table 5 *Number of items related to the aspects of self in two tasks.*

Category	Personality	Roles	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion
	“Gaming,” “Dog owner,” “Handball player,” “To be successful”	“Sister,” “I am a good friend,” “Student”	“Girl,” “Male,” “Boy”	“Norwegian,” “Lithuanian”	“Atheist,” “Christian”
T1	93	65	10	6	5
T2	9	31	1	3	3
Total	102	96	11	9	8

Many reflections deriving from the Sunglasses story (T3) were linked to both self-awareness and awareness of similarities and differences among people, which is an important aspect of intercultural

awareness (Carter, 2008). This story was aimed to support awareness of how we see ourselves and how others see us (i.e., not just knowing oneself and understanding one's "home" culture, but more importantly, how this influences one's behaviour, values and ways of looking at the world (Pusch, 2009)). The key themes are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6 *An overview of themes and categories emerged in T3.*

Theme	Category	Code	Example quote
Awareness	Of Self	Mutual understanding	1. "It made me think about how we can understand each other better" (P24f)
		Importance to consider other's perspective	2. "I often realize that I need to give things a second look and try to understand to actually understand someone's point of view" (P22f)
	Of Self and Others	How we see others	3. "It is about how we see other peoples. We are the same, but we think different of others" (P23f)
	Of Others	Similarities and/or differences between people	4. "...but one day they meet and find out that they have a lot in common" (P41f)
		Making connections	5. "I recognized the story, because that's what humans do" (P23f)
		Curiosity about others	6. "It made me think of people on the other side of the world and that I want to know them" (P14f)

Note: Grammatical and vocabulary mistakes in the pupils' texts are remained unchanged. Spelling mistakes are corrected in order to aid in reading the data.

Through reading this story, the majority of the pupils reflected on our tendency to see the world and people around through our own pair of lenses. In discussing the main topic of the story, one pupil (P30) showed evidence of having transformed her understanding from reflection on the story itself to the reflection on how she tended to "look at others":

This story is about how different people see things in different ways. I felt confused after I read the story, because I didn't understand it. The story made me think of how I look at others (P30f)

Interestingly, the quote above and Example 3 in Table 6 mirror to a large extent a response made by a student participating in another study described above by Holmes & O'Neill (2010): "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are" (p. 175). The pupil's (P30) insight accords with Stadler (2014) in the sense that self-awareness and perception of self and others are closely linked. The pupil's (P30) awareness was supported when she reflected on her own experiences and behaviours since awareness. Even though the girl said that she did not understand the story, it enabled her to consider her way of "looking at others," which seems to be a building block of both CA and ICA (e.g., Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016).

Another pupil emphasized that "people is not very different just because we have another skin color or come from another place" (P51f). When writing about the story, one pupil seemed to gain some insights into how "scared people are... scared of difference" (P39f). It seems that this awareness of how we see things differently led the participants to recognize that most people tend to look at people from other cultures as different from the Self. A pupil (P31) stated:

I felt like the people on the other side of the earth [sic] may be a lot more like us than we think. They can really look different on the outside but on the inside it may be something else. (P31f)

Even though P31 still refers to “the other” versus “us” and “we” in his reflection entry, he recognizes that at the core people share a lot more than it looks on the outside and “it may be something else,” which has caught his attention and is revealed linguistically here by the expression such as “really.” According to Dervin (2016, p.37), in order to create practices that respect individuality, we need to accept that those who might look, sound, and behave differently might share many commonalities with us.

Other pupils summarized the story in the following way: “I recognized the story, because that’s what humans do” (P23f) and “The story made me think of humanity. How different humans can be but also alike” (P31f). These two comments indicate making connections between the meaning of the story and prior knowledge. The pupils display awareness of the Self, first, by stating a personal perception of the meaning of the story, and second, by making connections that this behaviour is viewed as typical.

Reflection entries

When looking for patterns and recurring themes (T1 and T2 combined) in the reflection entries, one major theme (Awareness) and three central categories emerged (see Table 7).

Under the category of Awareness of Self, most responses (16 responses) were about how pupils thought in more depth about themselves and what enabled them to do so. Many participants remarked that they were able to understand more of who they really were. One student commented: “I felt more complex, and i got to know myself better” (P21c). An example of a quote showing a pupil’s awareness of multiple selves is the following: “I learned that I have more sides to my identity that I knew. I discovered how much different things meant to me, and a deeper part of myself” (P21b).

Many pupils gained insights about the perception of their characteristics, both negative (Example 4) and positive (Example 5). Another pupil wrote: “I learned that I am a very closed person and that i don’t like to be so open about myself” (P26c). Commenting on both increased self-awareness and a particular psychological attribute, which is displeasure about talking openly about oneself, this pupil became more cognizant or aware of one’s own performance, beliefs, and behaviour.

As for comments about Awareness of Others which stem from T2, 11 students mentioned that the task on Seven identities enabled them to learn about their peers’ families and personal interests and hobbies, whereas six students learned that they have a lot in common with others by stating that, for example, “people are not that different from me” (P15c). However, two pupils noted that this task showed them that “we all are different” (P46c) and “that everybody has a personality and likes different stuff” (P32c). Three students recognised similarities among pupils in a class by, for example, pointing to personal characteristics: [...] most of the class is just as closed up as me” (P23c). The pupils’ quotes illustrate that they reflected on their classmates’ heterogeneity as well as similarities. They seemed to realize that all of them are diverse; more importantly, the pupils displayed their appreciation of how many integral diverse parts they and their classmates “are made of.”

Despite recognizing improved awareness of the Self, a few pupils mentioned some challenges when reflecting on this issue (as shown in Table 7, under the category “Of challenges”), in particular, discomfort regarding reducing one’s self to one aspect (“I personally I would not rank them at all,

Table 7 *Recurring themes and categories in the EPIC reflection entries.*

Theme	Category	Code	Example quote
Awareness	Of self	Recognition of multiple selves	1. "I deem every part of my identity an important piece of me and I'd like to put all on the 'most important' layer" (P02b)
		Deepening self-awareness	2. "I felt more complex, and i got to know myself better" (P21b)
		Family value	3. "Family was the hardest one to take away because i love them and they are the reason why i live" (P08c)
		Perception of one's characteristics	4. "That I am a more closed up person than I thought" (P23c) 5. "I am very talentfull [sic], i can get good at things really fast if i try, or don't try at all" (P09c)
	Of others	Deeper understanding	6. "I get to know them more as a person [...] but you get to know each other on a different way" (P27c)
		Recognition of diversities	7. "...learn that every's onion is different" (P04b)
		Recognition of similarities	8. "That the most of the class is just as closed up as me" (P23c)
	Of challenges	Addressing a particular topic	9. "I was not prepared for those kinds of questions" (P53b) 10. "I don't like to talk about feelings" (P25b)
		Reducing one's self to one aspect	11. "...they [aspects of the Self] all are a really big part of my personality" (P27c)
		Describing oneself	12. "It was hard and weird to define myself in a couple of words and phrases. That is, there are some characteristics that are hard to admit are a part of you" (P01c)

because they make my entire personality I guess" (P23b). Such remarks show that discomfoting feelings are part of the process of becoming more self-aware, in particular, when individuals undergo a shift in their awareness of one's complexity (see Holmes & O'Neill, 2010; Houghton, 2011).

Focus group interviews

In what follows, the analysis of the pupils' self-awareness demonstrated in focus group interviews following the instruction is presented. Table 8 shows distribution of the coded statements related to the theme of what the pupils considered as important part of who they were or how they saw themselves.

One of the most frequent themes that emerged from this dataset is referred to as "Choice." The pupils highlighted the importance of choice in relation to their self and identity (e.g., "*things you choose to do*" (P11, FG1), "*because that is something you choose. So it's not something you were born with,*" "*you have lots of choices*" (P42, FG4). Quotes displaying the recognition of the complex and hybrid nature of the self were: "*so many things can describe what you are*" (P53, FG5); "*you are everything, not just one thing*" (P54, FG5). These comments add to the findings from the pupils' reflection entries on "Recognition of multiple selves" (see Table 7).

Table 8 Comparison matrix showing categories within the Self-awareness theme in five group interviews.

Theme	Focus group interviews				
	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5
Personality (Psychological attributes, Hobbies, Clothes)	✓	-	-	✓	-
Sense of self, self-perception	✓	-	-	-	-
Roles (Family, Friends, Social roles)	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Ethnicity	-	✓	-	-	-
Religion	-	-	-	✓	-
Gender	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Choice	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Recognition of multiple selves	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: ✓ - indicates a specific topic as discussed by the group.

In addition, the pupils' responses during the focus group interviews mediated by visual representations (or imageries) of the Self are presented. Articulating their reflections on visual prompts helped them to enter into dialogue about the Self, and to expand their views on themselves. The participants had been asked if there were any other visual representations or associations of self (apart from 'the onion' model given to them in T1) they could think of (see Table 9). Three out of the categories emerging from the pupils' responses reflect the categories identified in the EPIC tasks (namely, categories A, B, and C).

Table 9 Categories derived from group interviews.

Category	Example quote	Imagery
A. Recognition of multiple selves	"There are many layers"	<i>onion</i>
B. Awareness of how we see things	"The way you see, changes the way you are"	<i>coloured glasses</i>
C. Recognition of diversities and similarities	"We all have our own, like, patterns. You know they all like similar. But everyone has like different patterns"	<i>hand</i>
D. Life-long process of developing self-awareness	"You start of completely oblivious and you only see the cover"	<i>book</i>
	"The longer time your life goes on, the more branches grow out and the more friends you get"	<i>tree</i>

Representation of the Self as "coloured glasses" was identified in FG1 and FG2. It should be noted here that the imagery of glasses given to the students in the Sunglasses story could have influenced their choice. The pupils, however, elaborated on this image quite differently. A pupil from FG1 expanded the idea of how we can use coloured glasses as a way to hide ourselves: "It [glasses] [sic] does not really show who you are" (FG1, P07).

The following example provides an illustration of a pupil's understanding of how the way people see things influences their behaviour and perception in general:

I like the glasses idea because... uhm... like the way you see things change the way you are, right? I mean, if you, if you only see bad things, you are going to turn it to bad person, right? (FG2, P27)

This understanding is enhanced by the use of the analogy of the Self as “lenses” or “glasses.” P27 constructed her awareness of the Self by engaging with how her perception of things and other people is constructed. Here, the link between the perspective of oneself (self-awareness) and the way we perceive things is made visible (e.g., Stadler, 2014).

The next quote from FG2 provides an insight into how a pupil constructs her self-awareness and awareness of others. The pupil responds to the question about why she thought it was important to consider who she was:

Yeah, I think it is important to remember your own identity, and also acknowledge that other people might not have the same priorities as you... [sic] (P25)

In the comment above, she made a point that it was essential to acknowledge that other people might not have the same “priorities,” i.e. interests, values. The girl’s understanding resulted from her in-depth reflection of oneself throughout the project. This quote exemplifies a discovery of “within-group diversity” through an awareness of the Self (see Houghton (2011). The pupil’s comment accords in a way with the view expressed by Houghton (ibid.) that highlighting the existence of in-group diversity may diminish the perceiver’s ability to make sweeping generalizations about groups more generally (p. 470).

Discussion

The main purpose of this paper was to describe the ways that the lower secondary school pupils demonstrated their self-awareness through the EPIC. The first finding is that the pupils tended to discuss the self by exploring their values related to their families, friends and hobbies. This theme is dominant, and, overall, the attachment to family and family values is evident across the pupil text data gathered from the EPIC tasks. These results very much correlate with earlier findings from a study in Norwegian lower secondary schools among pupils of different ethnic backgrounds by Krulatz *et al.* (2018), who identified family and friends as important markers of their participants’ identities. The findings thus indicate that family plays a significant role in their perspective on the Self.

Second, the analysis revealed that pupils are likely to describe themselves more in terms of their family composition and circle of friends, psychological traits, interests and hobbies, than with regard to ethnic, gender or national characteristics. This is shown in the analysis from T1 and T2 and group interviews. The findings indicated that the pupils reflected on what made them who they were in terms of their personal preferences, interests and choices. In accordance with earlier research on children in Norwegian primary schools and kindergartens, “ethnic” is not an important “label” to the participants (Lund, 1998, as cited in Wikan, 2002, p. 85). The study by Lund (1998) was conducted in a different time and context; today the make-up and numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse pupils have arguably changed. It is therefore interesting that the correlations to the present study are still evident. The findings presented above indicate that the pupils’ ethnic, racial, religious or gender “selves” are given limited attention in their portfolios (as expressed by a pupil, commenting on his religion: “I was not prepared for those kinds of question” (P53)). The reason why the pupil responded in such a way might be that religious characteristics can be a contested concept for this age group (e.g., Holmes & O’Neill, 2010). Another interpretation regarding small frequencies of comments on ethnic, religious or national backgrounds might be that at this developmental stage school pupils are not inclined to

think about themselves in terms of “ticking a box” of ethnic or religious labels. This finding might indicate their openness to diverse ways of reflecting on what makes them who they are. Consequently, an alternative view on the Self through reflecting on many selves and not only through “the nation as the primary unit of analysis” (Rivers & Houghton, 2013) may actually be better suited to this age group and fostering their IC. This finding, in turn, may point to some practical implications for FL teaching, since a lack of coverage of these issues in pupils’ classrooms may cause so-called taken-for-granted assumptions among pupils when they face intercultural encounters. Lippe (2011) found that the way young Norwegian pupils talk about religion and diversity might be to a large extent influenced by dominant discourses in Norwegian society which they meet, e.g., through the media (p. 138). Therefore, because of the complexities of engaging with the issues of ethnicity, race, religion etc., coming out of the material, it seems that these issues have to be explicitly addressed in EFL classrooms.

Another important insight stemming from the participants’ reflections was that they became cognizant of their own classmates, particularly their families, interests and hobbies, thus realizing that it is not only in other countries life and people’s interests can be explored but also in their own circles of friends. While being members of one particular group (ninth grade classes in Norway), the pupils acknowledged internal diversities among group members, and heterogeneous cultures become visible, which seems to be a sign of enhanced ICA. It seems important to demystify the culturally homogeneous classroom and make the students realise this heterogeneity (Matos, 2011). In the same vein, the pupils also recognized some similarities, which are of paramount importance for their intercultural experiences (Abdallah-Preteille, 2012). Dervin (2016, p. 36) asserts that if we examine the other through the lens of similarities, too, we might start finding things, ideas, and thoughts that we share, which seems to be a promising way to support understanding others.

Furthermore, a few pupils were able to reflect upon the complex nature of the self which is, correspondingly, tied to the awareness of the diversities within other people. Consequently, this awareness may lead to ICA as it presupposes the process of becoming initially more aware of one’s own culture and subsequently of different cultures through comparison and emphasis of both similarities and differences (Carter, 2008). For instance, during FG2, one pupil (P25) commented that by being aware of one’s own complexities she was able to make connections between herself and the diverse priorities of others. This comment may indicate a higher level of awareness of the Self which in turn may serve as “a fundamental building block” (Kupka et. al., 2007, p. 23) of awareness of others and hence intercultural awareness. As convincingly argued by Dervin (2017), if a person is ready to accept one’s own diversities, one can start noticing and accepting them in the other as well (p. 90). Another important highlight in the findings from pupil texts was that considering multiple “priorities” of the Self and other people and reducing them to a limited number may cause discomfort and feelings of confusion. The pupils engaged with critical reflection processes and moved away from their “comfort zone” (Giorgis, 2018, p. 26), since gaining self-awareness is not always straightforward and positive (Holmes & O’Neill, 2010, p.176) and discomfoting feelings are fundamental to transformation (Zembylas, 2015).

The focus group interviews and the Sunglasses story (T3) seemed to have created a favourable environment for the participants to reflect on how people perceive things differently, and how this may influence the way we see other people and other people see us (Giorgis, 2018). As shown by Bresciani (2014) and Stadler (2014), self-awareness, self-perception and other-perception are closely interconnected. In the EPIC, the imageries of windows and mirrors as well as coloured glasses seemed to provide a springboard for a discussion about self-perception and perception of others which might be further investigated in future studies.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine self-awareness as an integral part of IC through the use of the EPIC. The findings indicate that the lower secondary school pupils' performance and reflection on the tasks prompted them to display many insightful comments related to self-awareness. The pupils gained a deeper self-awareness, often related to a greater understanding of one's own self by a) noticing the complexity of their own self, or "within-self diversity" (Houghton, 2011); b) acknowledging how people see things differently; c) recognizing how diverse and, at the same time, similar they are with the other pupils in class; d) reflecting on feelings of discomfort and disorientation when become more conscious of themselves. The participants' concerns about their ethnic, national, gender etc. backgrounds were rarely displayed in their EPIC entries and focus group discussions. This can be explained that adolescents very often experience "a more pronounced openness to diverse cultural beliefs and behaviours" (Jensen, 2003, p.191). Despite the views that school, friends, and social media play an increasingly more important role for this age group (e.g., Jensen, 2003), the findings from this study showed that personal characteristics, interests and family composition remain important for the pupils' identities. This finding might also suggest further research within and beyond the formal school context and influences of family and other external factors on their awareness of self. As stated by Davidson (2019, p. 96), teachers also need to remain conscious of the cultural backgrounds of their students; moreover, involving families in activities might inspire other ways for teachers to support self-awareness of their students.

Furthermore, future research might examine how other student groups in more longitudinal intervention studies respond to this type of tasks and reflection entries. In addition, the EPIC could be extended or modified for use in future studies by including additional portfolio entries, such as writing creative stories or experiences with intercultural encounters (Guerrero Moya *et al.*, 2016; López, 2014).

As for the limitations, since the study employed the principles of case study and a relatively small sample, the findings are not generalizable. In addition, video recordings of focus group interviews or systematic field notes would have added more in-depth data about the teachers' and pupils' talk during the project and these could provide the researcher with deeper understandings of the pupils' self-awareness.

Summing up, the present study offered a qualitative exploration of how the lower secondary school EFL learners demonstrated their self-awareness. This project has shown one possible way of integrating this component of IC into the EFL classroom practices. Previous studies have found that enhancing awareness of others might lead to the awareness of self (Holmes & O'Neill, 2010). This particular study went the other direction (from the Self to the Other) and provided some empirical evidence that, first, self-awareness can be explicitly addressed in EFL settings and, second, by building self-awareness, understanding of others and thereby IC could be supported. Thus, the study adds to the current pool of research focusing on self-awareness as a building block of IC and how it can be explored among EFL lower secondary school pupils mediated by the eportfolio approach.

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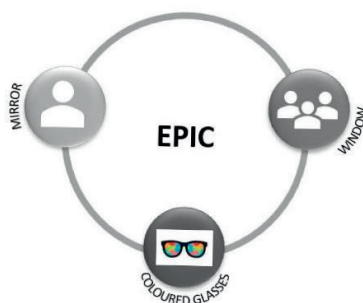
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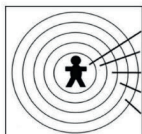
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Appendix 1 – The overview of the EPIC



Appendix 2 – Description of EPIC entries

**T1**

Pupils answer 'Who am I?' and construct a model of their Self as an Onion by placing their 'selves' to five layers of their identities. The core layer is formed by self-descriptions of pupils placed in the middle of a model of onion. The less important 'identities' are placed on the outer layer of it.

Adapted from Branders et al. (2016)

T2

Pupils made a list of top seven core 'elements' of their identity and then they narrowed it down to one last element they consider the most important for them.

Adapted version from Berardo and Deardorff (2012, p. 151) and inspired by the researcher's supervisor

**T3**

A metaphorical story prompted the participants to reflect upon the notion of different 'lenses' or 'glasses' and different cultural perspectives and how we each see the world through 'our culturally conditioned lens'. Students explored that when trying to understand others, it is like wearing a pair of sunglasses, and it is important to understand and see the world from others' perspectives

Inspired by Berardo and Deardorff (2012, p.153)

Appendix 3 – The EPIC entries

T1 – Onion of identities

Who am I? What am I?

One way of looking at yourself could be to imagine yourself as an onion (even if you don't like to eat them). Like an onion, people are shaped by **many layers**: national culture, regional culture, gender, religion, family, etc.) Each layer corresponds to a different part of your identity.

Often, we may catch ourselves thinking about someone as only layer, for example, a French person or a woman. When we think of or see only one layer of a person, we are not seeing that person for the complex individual he or she is. We want to be recognised as being complex individuals shaped by a number of layers, and we need to do the same for others.

Watch this short video on YouTube on Shrek talking about 'Ogres are like onions': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bMcXVv8zIs

Or you can read it from here:

Shrek explains at a certain moment in the film the concept of identity by using the metaphor of the onion with multiple layers.

- Shrek: For your information, there's a lot more to ogres than people think.
- Donkey: Example?
- Shrek: Example? Okay, er Ogres are like onions.

- Donkey: They stink?
- Shrek: Yes. No.
- Donkey: Oh, they make you cry.
- Shrek: No.
- Donkey: Oh, you leave'em out in the sun, they get all brown, start sproutin' little white hairs.
- Shrek: No. Layers. Onions have layers. Ogres have layers. Onions have layers. You get it? We both have layers.
- Donkey: Oh, you both have layers. Oh. You know, not everybody like onions.

After watching the video and thinking about your identities, write an example of a model of your Self (in the table) as **being an onion** and list the different layers which are important for you: the most important one inside (1-3), the less important ones outside (4-5).

T2 – Seven Identities Game

Answer the following questions in your portfolios in Google Classroom.

You can type in/audio/video record your answers (you can find Voice Memos on your iPad or go online and record via:

<https://voice-memos.appspot.com/>. Instructions on how to use it: <https://support.apple.com/en-vn/HT206775>).

Then you save it on your iPad and add to this document on Google Classroom.

1. How did you feel when you were asked to narrow down yourself to (throw away one by one) one identity element?
2. Which card was it the most difficult to throw away? Why?
3. What was your last element of identity that remained?
4. What do you think this activity may be useful for?

- Write your answers here:
- Or just paste your audio or video file:

T3 – Sunglasses story

Read this story (or the teacher reads it aloud for you):

Imagine two groups of people who are born with sunglasses.

These two groups of people live on either side of a river, and on this side of the river (point to the group on your left) are the yellow sunglasses people.

You all were born with yellow sunglasses. And you know there is another group of people living on the other side of the river, but you've never met them and you really don't know anything about them.

So one day, you decide to send a delegation across the river to meet these other folks. So, you go across the river and you're pleasantly surprised to find that these folks on the other side of the river seem a lot like you.

Why? They're even born with sunglasses like you. As you talk longer with them, though, you realize that something is a little different about these folks.

And then you take a closer look at their sunglasses and you ask them if you can put on a pair of their sunglasses.

Now those are the blue sunglasses people, so what colour do the yellow sunglasses people see?
(pause a moment).

They see . . . *green*.

Answer the questions:

- *What is this story about?*
- *What did you feel when you read it?*
- *What this story made you think of?*

Appendix 4 – Guide for semi-structured focus group interviews with students

Background questions (used as an icebreaker):

To start this focus group, I want you to have a quick round of telling me your name.

A. Awareness of Self and Metaphorical (Imagery) representation of ‘Self’

- 1) We all sometimes think of who we are.
What is your identity for you? How do you see yourself? What is important for you? What have you learned about yourself during this project?
- 2) The pupils are provided with the list of different aspects.

Think about yourself.

- the roles you play in life (a daughter/a son, a friend, a school student); family
- hobby, sports or style of clothes; things you choose – idols, style of music etc.
- your abilities, talents, or disabilities;
- where you were born, or where you now live;
- your gender;
- your religion;
- your race or ethnicity;
- socio-economic status;
- and, what you are not or don't want to be: not a woman, not French etc.

If I ask you to choose one aspect from this list, what would you choose? Which one is the most important to you? Is it easy for you to choose one element of your identity?

e.g., what about a person who speaks two languages in his family?

- 3) The pupils are shown an image depicting an onion. Do you remember this model from your portfolio, which we used as a visual representation of who you are? What does it mean to you?
- 4) Can you suggest any other metaphors depicting who you are?
(If participants can't suggest any, show them some options (images of a tree, a book, a hand, etc.))

B. Awareness (Self and Others)

Key question:

- 1) Have you learned anything about other pupils in your class during this semester? If so, what? If not, why?

Article II – Considering perspectives of others: A case study of intercultural learning among English language learners in Norway

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Original Research

Considering perspectives of others: A case study of intercultural learning among English language learners in Norway

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The concept of perspective is embedded within the studies of culture and language, especially with regard to an intercultural orientation within EFL teaching and learning. However, researchers have rarely explored how perspective taking can be facilitated among language learners and what types of tasks can facilitate this process. This paper describes a case study in which English as a foreign language (EFL) learners (aged 14-15) engaged in focus group interviews conducted at the end of an E-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) project. By foregrounding perspective taking within intercultural awareness, the paper explores connections between types of tasks implemented and the ways participants considered perspectives of others in their focus group interviews. The findings thus have implications for language teaching as the results highlight the need to support the pupils through adapted activities with a greater focus on the awareness of diversity of perspectives, storytelling, reading picture books, and reflection on narrative accounts of past events. In addition, an understanding of the differences and comparing ways of living of people from diverse cultures should be coupled with support from the teacher, allowing the learners to decentre from their perspectives.

KEYWORDS: *perspective taking, perspective consciousness, intercultural awareness, EFL, e-portfolio, language learning, intercultural learning*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language teaching increasingly focuses on the interplay between languages and cultures as sites of interaction and learning. An intercultural orientation within language teaching seeks learners' transformation through a constant referencing of the language being learned with their own language(s) and culture(s) with the aim of encouraging students to decentre from their linguistic and cultural world to consider their own situatedness from the perspective of another (Scarino, 2010, p. 324). The intercultural orientation to teaching languages revolves around an overarching educational

goal, i.e., intercultural competence which generally requires that cognitive, affective and behavioural processes are at work and sustain an individual's understanding of diversity and interaction within intercultural encounters (Borghetti, 2011).

One way to 'decentre' (Scarino, 2010, p. 324) is to gain insights about alternative or unfamiliar perspectives. This can be done through the process which is referred to here as 'perspective taking' (PT). Perspective taking is the '*projection of oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference*' (Kearney, 2015, p. 170), which might lead to the acknowledgement that other

'Intercultural awareness implies the ability to take on the perspective(s) of a conversational partner and of their cultural background (whether they be national, regional, ethnic, or social), and thus, to be able to understand and take into consideration the interlocutors' perspectives simultaneously'

ways of understanding the world do exist and are worth considering or at least recognising (Thein et al., 2007, p. 55). Therefore, gaining new perspectives of other people is tied to the insight that one's own culture can appear to be 'odd' to an outsider (Broady, 2004, p. 69; Pshenichnyuk, 2021). Thus, PT is linked to the recognition of the diversity of perspectives, or 'perspective consciousness' (Tseng, 2002). Perspective consciousness is viewed in this study as the recognition of 'the malleability', or the diversity of perspective (Hanvey, 1982, p. 162).

Existing research suggests that perspective taking means that students not only need knowledge, but also skills (e.g., of identification, interpretation) that allow them to recognise perspectives (Kearney, 2012). Consequently, PT is closely tied with the concept of cultural awareness, which emphasises not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing, and understanding difference and sameness (Broady, 2004). As stated by Broady (2004), central to this is the willingness to explore the ways in which normality is experienced differently by different people. Tomlinson (2019) uses the concept of intercultural awareness (ICA) to refer to similar conceptions. The term 'intercultural' has gradually replaced the term 'cultural' in foreign language and teaching, therefore, in this study, CA and ICA are not assumed to be mutually exclusive as these processes are to a large extent intertwined and often complementary in praxis (see Borghetti & Lertola, 2014, p. 425). In this paper, intercultural awareness has been used as a theoretical and methodological starting point. Intercultural awareness implies the ability to take on the perspective(s) of a conversational partner and of their cultural background (whether they be national, regional, ethnic, or social), and thus, to be able to understand and take into consideration the interlocutors' perspectives simultaneously.

There has been a growing interest in investigating the benefits of trying out diverse perspectives (see Dypedahl, 2020; Kearney, 2012; Thein et al., 2007;

Kopnina & Magirovskaya, 2019). However, despite this attention to PT, researchers have rarely explored what triggers this process and how the process of PT is induced among language learners. In order to address this, the present study explores manifestations of PT that emerge in focus group interviews in response to an e-portfolio-based intervention project specifically designed to facilitate PT. The following research question guided the analysis: how do the pupils consider the perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries in focus group interviews?

The current English curriculum in Norway calls for developing an intercultural understanding of different ways of living, ways of thinking and communication patterns. Thus, by recognising the relationship between PT and intercultural understanding in the EFL context, this study contributes to further understanding of how pupils can be supported in their building of awareness of 'different ways of living' through their practices at school.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A common understanding is that perspective is 'what frames and defines our vision of reality and the meaning we give to it' (Giorgis, 2018, p. 34). PT thus starts from the premise that people inhabit a perspectival world, shaped by communication and shared histories (Glăveanu & De Saint-Laurent, 2018). Consequently, to take the perspective of someone whose position we never get to experience is a challenge. Hence, the lack of PT can become a stumbling block in all kinds of interactions, as the tendency of people to impose their frames onto others leads to increased misunderstanding (Friedman, 2014).

PT rarely occurs automatically; it should be facilitated and explicitly activated (Muradova, 2021). The potential for practising PT has been explored within different educational contexts and frameworks (see Hoyt, 2016; Kearney, 2015). Within the intercultural context, much work has been published to operationalise this concept in the classrooms with adults or university students. For example, Hoyt (2016) employed image-based activities with fifty students across three semesters at an American university. She examined the data through the lens of Byram's (1997) five domains of intercultural competence (IC) and used it as a framework to identify change in the development of students' IC. Both quantitative and qualitative data taken from ethnographic interviews and journal entries point to knowledge and skills associated with PT. However, Hoyt mostly related

her findings to the participants' self-reported perceptions as indicated in pre- and post-questionnaires not particularly highlighting the link to the ethnographic interview project itself.

A number of studies have exploited Kramsch's (1993, 2006) theoretical framework and the notions of *third place* and *symbolic competence*. *Third place* refers to a context or a way of teaching and learning primarily based on the notion of culture as an interpersonal process to understand otherness. The concept of *symbolic competence* is viewed as the ability to shape the very context in which language is learned and used (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2008, p. 664), which potentially leads to distancing from both the home and the target culture. In a study building on previous research into symbolic competence, Étienne and Vanbaelen (2017) introduced a Semiotic Gap Activity to French students in order to examine how they constructed meanings when watching a scene in a film. Based on answers from a post-viewing questionnaire and the instructor's notes, the findings showed the students' awareness of their own perspective and perspectives of others was enhanced. The participants moderated their own perspectives, deliberately taking the position of an observer (i.e., trying to see oneself as others do) (Étienne & Vanbaelen, 2017, p. 74).

A study by Kearney (2012) integrated both symbolic competence and critical literacy postulates (Lewison et al., 2002). Fourteen university-level learners of French were engaged in PT activities through texts of various cultural narratives related to WWII in France. The study focused on the learners' reflections on historical narratives, which provided a productive avenue for creating links with the students' personal lives or larger social questions (e.g., social inequality). The students displayed their willingness not simply to interpret others' meanings but to create meanings on their own (Kearney, 2012). Kearney (2015) calls for more studies showing how various pedagogical approaches can facilitate growth of personal meaning-making potentials among learners.

Other people's perspectives can be presented to learners by utilising literature in a foreign language class (see Vovou, 2019). PT, particularly as reconstructed in narrative, is one way of de-familiarising what we know, and, hence, providing new understandings. In a study of the use of multicultural literature with white EFL students, Thein et al. (2007) prompted eleventh- and twelfth-grade students from an urban high school to take on alternative perspectives by, for example, writing

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a letter to the class in the voice of one of the characters of a novel or constructing different versions of the same events based on differences in beliefs, experience, and age. The participants were able to see that our beliefs and perspectives arise from the historical, social, and cultural worlds in which we grow up and live (Thein et al., 2007, p. 57).

Despite a growing interest in studying taking the perspectives of others within (and outside of) the field of intercultural foreign language education, this topic has received only limited scholarly attention in the Norwegian educational context. Heggernes (2019) looked at how EFL learners at a lower secondary school engage with reading picture books through a dialogic approach aimed to enhance intercultural learning and PT skills. In another study, Normand and Savić (2018) focus on the use of process drama in EFL teacher education, aimed at increasing future teachers' ability to decentre and see multiple perspectives as a result of deeper reflection about their own and other people's feelings and perspectives.

There are numerous attempts to conceptualise and categorise ways of *taking* the perspectives of others. One categorisation is based on four types of commitment (or focus). Glăveanu and De Saint-Laurent (2018), who analysed online discussions in terms of the perspectives of refugees, propose Commitment to Similarity, Commitment to Difference, Commitment to Persons, and Commitment to Situations. In the present study, two main types of focus are adapted to the data, namely, Commitment to Difference and Commitment to Similarity. The former designates taking perspectives from the outside, building on existing representations of others without the possibility of position exchange because of a clear separation between self and other. The latter refers to perspectives taken from an inside position, a type of identification facilitated by imaginative efforts to approximate the other's experience of the world (Glăveanu et al., 2018, p. 446).

To sum up, while previous research has investigated the role of PT in relation to ICA, it is not certain how language learners perceive these experiences. Most of the studies cited above foreground either Byram's (1997) model of IC or Kramsch's (1993) theoretical framework. The present study responds to the need to provide an empirically driven approach by designing a classroom intervention which foregrounds PT within intercultural awareness and provides an in-depth insight into how PT unfolds when engaging with specifically designed e-portfolio entries with a focus on the language learners' group discussions about these entries. Additionally, this study adds the Norwegian setting into the growing field of intercultural studies.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. The study

The present research is an exploratory case study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) based on a pedagogical intervention involving the implementation of e-portfolio entries within the English language instruction pro-

gramme. During the eight-week study, three EFL teachers implemented the e-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) in their five EFL classrooms in a lower secondary school on the west coast of Norway. The pedagogical foundations of the EPIC project are grounded in constructivism, which suggests that gaining knowledge is a continuous interactional process in which the learners acquire knowledge in their own subjective ways and by means of tacit, meaning-making processes (Taber, 2011). Practices related to intercultural teaching and learning within this approach relate to a shift from teaching a static culture as isolated facts to developing in learners a capacity to engage with the perspectives of others always in relation to their own (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p. 43). The purpose behind the EPIC was thus to promote self-awareness, awareness of others, and perspective taking. Specifically, the present study explores the participants' reflections prompted by seven EPIC entries in focus group interviews following the project. Figure 1 gives an overview of the timeline and the main data collection instruments of the study.

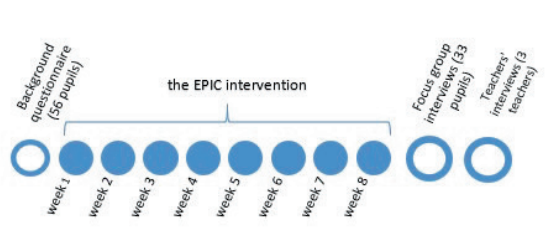


Figure 1. The study timeline

The pupils spent two 1.5-hour class periods per week over an eight-week period on the project. All the participants used iPads and G-Suite (free online Google Classroom application). The latter was used to distribute the EPIC entries.

3.2. The participants and context of the study

A convenience sample consisting of 33 EFL learners (23 girls and 10 boys) participated in focus group interviews. Based on the discussion with the teachers and due to time constraints, it was decided to conduct five focus group interviews (one group per class). The groups consisted of 6-7 pupils. Four participants out of 33 were born outside of Norway. As reported by the teachers, the expected English proficiency level of the participants was ranged between A2 and B2 (CEFR,

2018). That is why the pupils were given an option to use either English or Norwegian in the focus group discussions when they felt Norwegian would help them to express themselves better.

3.3. Focus group interviews

This study draws on data collected from five focus group interviews with 33 pupils who had consented to participate. The focus group interview as the main method for eliciting information was chosen to access more varied interpretations of the phenomena under study and identify links between the EPIC and the way the participants considered perspectives of others. In addition, focus groups were considered less threatening for young participants than individual interviews (Eder & Fingerson, 2002, p. 183). Finally, the interactions in

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groups closely mirror classroom interaction, which may increase their willingness to communicate and share their viewpoints.

Seven EPIC entries (*Sunglasses Story*, *Fractured Fairy Tales*, *If I Were... I'd Be...*, *Interview Room*, *This Is How We Do It*, *History Corner*, and *The Other Side*), all specifically designed to enhance PT, served as prompts for discussion during the focus group interviews (see Appendix for more details). The interviews were semi-structured, the exact formulations of questions varied (for the interview guide, see Appendix). Based on their relevance to promoting perspective taking, two main parts of the focus group interviews were included in the data set: Self and Others, and Perspective Taking. In total, 209 minutes of audio recordings were transcribed, of which 85.5 minutes, covering the two parts described above (41.5 minutes related to Self and Others and 44 minutes related to Perspective Taking), comprise the data for the current study.

3.4. Ethical considerations and the role of the researcher

Data gathering adhered to strict ethical procedures and written consent was collected from the three teachers, pupils, and parents, since not all the participants were over the age of 15. The researcher anonymised the data by changing each participant's real name to a pseudonym. In addition, as the interviews were recorded, the researcher tried to lead the discussion over to a different topic when instances of revealing personal information occurred, which may have led to inconsistencies across the interviews. Furthermore, as the focus of the study is on how individuals interpreted their experiences and understandings with respect to perspective taking, this research was guided by the principles of interpretivism, namely, social inquiry that derives knowledge from the interpretation of lived experiences

of individuals. Correspondingly, the researcher recognises the subjectivity of her interpretations. The researcher alternated the roles of an informed outsider and participant observer (Woodin, 2016) as, on the one hand, she was not a member of teaching staff and, on the other hand, she had observed the instruction and therefore talked to the pupils during the EPIC project. In the analysis, the researcher acknowledges this dual role as well as the unequal power relations between the adult and minor (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.5. Data analysis

Focus group interviews were analysed following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), by using a qualitative data analysis software, NVivo 12 Pro (version 12.6.0.959). NVivo was utilised in order to search for patterns, generate initial codes and sort the codes and categories into potential themes. In the software, interviews were transcribed, cases created for each participant and for each group. Code labels were displayed in various colours which delineate which portion of data is assigned a particular code. However, the software 'does not actually code the data' (Saldaña, 2016); therefore, the researcher is still the driving force behind the analysis. Overall, the analysis process was guided by the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation; coding; generating initial themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and writing up. All the instances where a pupil both (a) considers the perspectives of others and (b) reflects on the EPIC entries were coded. The codes related to utterances where the participants projected themselves into another or unfamiliar frame of reference were grouped under the sub-theme Specific PT (e.g., one of the codes was 'activating PT'). The utterances where pupils took a general, or an outsider, perspective of the situation and did not actively take or consider perspectives of others were grouped under the General PT theme. The codes under General PT included 'awareness of stereotypes', 'meaning-making', and 'conflict resolution'. Codes related to the enhanced awareness of the diversity of perspectives were grouped under the theme of Perspective Consciousness (PC). All coded instances referring to 'awareness of differences' and 'awareness of similarities' were labelled as Commitment to Similarity and Commitment to Difference themes. Table 1 shows a detailed overview of the final themes, their description and example quotes. The information in the example quotes included the pupil's name, group (FGI) and the EPIC entry.

Table 1
Final themes and example quotes

THEME	SUB-THEME	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE QUOTE
Perspective Taking	Specific Perspective Taking (Specific PT)	Projection of oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference (Kearney, 2015, p. 170), hence, taking a situation-specific perspective	<i>'I guess I don't think I would have called the police'</i> (Seline, Group 4, History Corner)
	General Perspective Taking (General PT)	A pupil takes a general, or an outsider, perspective of the situation	<i>'You can't only hear one point of view, because that's not all true'</i> (Christina, Group 5, History Corner)
Perspective Consciousness		Recognition that one has a view of the world that is not universally shared and that others have views of the world that can be different from one's own (Tseng, 2002), i.e., the awareness of the diversity of perspective	<i>'Even though somebody thinks that she did the right thing, somebody thinks that she did the wrong thing, there were many ways to see it'</i> (Ella, Group 2, History Corner)
Commitment to Difference		Recognition of the opposition between self and other (Glăveanu & De Saint-Laurent, 2018)	<i>'The music is different, food is different, um, and yeah, pretty much everything is different'</i> (Frida, Group 1, Interview Room)
Commitment to Similarity		Recognition of the likeness between the self and other (Glăveanu & De Saint-Laurent, 2018)	<i>'That colour doesn't matter, I guess. People are completely just like you'</i> (Arne, Group 5, The Other Side)

At the end of the coding process, all the themes were grouped in accordance with the EPIC entries they refer to. The following sections will describe the occurrences and frequencies of the themes found divided into two subsections: (a) a sub-section on PT and PC themes; (b) a sub-section on Commitment to Similarity and Commitment to Difference themes.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Perspective taking/Perspective consciousness

The analysis of all five focus group interviews yielded 46 instances (Table 2). The most recurrent theme across all groups was PC (n=17), followed by General PT (n=6), Commitment to Similarity (CSim) (n=10) and Commitment to Difference (CDif) (n=10). Specific PT is represented by 3 instances.

Most pupils considered the perspectives of others through PC (n= 17). Table 3 shows that the numbers of identified manifestations of PT (General PT and Specific

PT) and PC across the EPIC entries are varied, and most opportunities for perspective taking are concentrated under the entry History Corner (n=14). As for This Is How We Do It and The Other Side, the entries based on reading picture books, no manifestations of PC or PT were identified.

When reflecting on the Sunglasses Story, the participants were prompted to reflect on a metaphorical story described by Berardo and Deardorff (2012) (see Appendix for a short summary). Siri recognises a personal prism through which she tends to see things: *'And yeah, you get kind of the perspective of the world from both points of view. Yeah. And I think that is really important because I usually tend to only see... see things from my own point of view especially in arguments. And I really want to stand my ground, but I have to remember that the story is not the same for everyone'* (Siri, Group 2). Siri's emotional expression is boosted as she uses a personal pronoun *I*, and intensifiers such as *really*. Even

Table 2
Frequencies within the dataset

GROUP	THEME					TOTAL
	PT		PC	CDIF	CSIM	
	SPECIFIC PT	GENERAL PT				
1	1	1	3	2	3	10
2	0	3	6	3	5	17
3	0	0	3	3	0	6
4	1	1	2	0	0	4
5	1	1	3	2	2	9
TOTAL	3	6	17	10	10	46

Table 3
A quantitative overview of the PT and PC themes across all the EPIC entries and focus group interviews

THEME	SUNGLASSES STORY	FRACTURED FAIRY TALE	INTERVIEW ROOM	THIS IS HOW WE DO IT	IF I WERE... I'D BE...	HISTORY CORNER	THE OTHER SIDE	TOTAL
SPT	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	3
GPT	–	2	1	–	–	3	–	6
PC	3	2	1	–	3	8	–	17
TOTAL	3	4	2	0	3	14	0	26

without an active projection of herself into an unfamiliar frame of reference, Siri makes her personal involvement with the prompt explicit and adds self-evaluation to what she has just learned.

When reflecting on the Fractured Fairy Tale entry, the pupils demonstrated a recognition of multiple perspectives and the existence of two sides of the story. This entry, included in the project in the form of a written assignment, asks the pupils to write a fairy tale or any other popular story from somebody else's perspective by changing the traditional plot, characters, etc. Hilde, for instance, reflects in the following way: 'A story always has two sides' (Hilde, Group 3). The two coded instances based on this entry are related to PC, whereas the other two relate to General PT.

The entry If I Were... I'd Be... is one of the tasks which provided the pupils with the opportunities to reflect on PC and ways they perceive their own culture and language through the lens of personal filters and

metaphors (see Appendix). A few of the pupils displayed the increased awareness of stereotypes and bias. For example, Sonja concludes that people tend to think stereotypically, which in turn may lead to oversimplification of another culture. She says: 'We just see things based on stereotypes, and therefore it might not be as accurate. It's only the things we see. Like when we think of America, we think of McDonalds, all the guns and Donald Trump and stuff, but America is much more than that' (Sonja, Group 2).

Rosa Parks' story (History Corner) resonated with many pupils as there were a few comments when the pupils gained deeper insights regarding multiple perspectives on the same event. In the e-portfolio, they were provided with different accounts of the famous incident that happened to Rosa Parks on a bus in 1955, when she refused to give up her seat to a white man. They were asked to identify each of the voices and describe their personalities as they read the narratives of

the bus driver, a white passenger, an African American passenger, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. During the focus group interview, they were asked to reflect on the merits of PT. Arne summarises his opinion about the entry in the following way: *'Because now blacks and whites are equal in rights. But back in there that was different, so I would probably think differently'* (Arne, Group 5). *'I think in a way all that Rosa Parks did is right because she has just as much worth as the white man. Back in the day it was legal the white people should sit in front and the black in the back'* (Arne, Group 5). Arne emphasises the difficult decision-making processes caused by what was legal 'back in that day', hence, acknowledging the importance of context when decentering from a single perspective on the same event. Christina says: *'Because you can't only hear one point of view. And, because that's not all true'* (Christina, Group 5). For learners in Norway, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was quite distant in time and space and introducing various viewpoints (even imaginary ones) proved beneficial for the pupils.

The analysis identifies three instances of the Specific PT theme, all related to the History Corner entry. The task enabled the pupils not only to expand their aware-

ness of the multiplicity of perspectives, but also project their own perspectives towards the possible stances of others. For example, Christina argues: *'I think I would do as the bus driver did in this story when he called the police. Because I would follow the law so it wouldn't be much trouble'* (Christina, Group 5). Christina gives the reasons for why they acted in a particular way. Seline, on the contrary, when identifying with the other's actions, says: *'I'm not sure... I guess I don't think I would have called the police but maybe he felt like he had to'* (Seline, Group 4). Seline adopts the bus driver's perspective and considers what she would do if placed in his situation and expresses her disagreement with his actions. The ways in which these instances revealed the signs of Specific PT thus vary from the capacity to relate to the context bus driver lived in (Christina's comment) to trying to be sensitive to his feelings and actions even though disagreeing with them (Seline's comment).

The third coded instance was drawn from a conversation about the learning outcomes of the History Corner in Group 1. The researcher draws attention of the participants to the variety of viewpoints of those partaking in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The rest of the dialogue is provided in Excerpt 1 below (Figure 2).

- 1 Christian: *The rules say that she was supposed to stand in the back, but I think it's wrong*
 2 *because...even though she's black it doesn't mean she's different and the bus*
 3 *driver calling the cops it was his job, and he was supposed to do it but (1.1)*
 4 *like... I think the rules were wrong not the people.*
 5 Frida: *If he was born then... I don't think that he would think the same. So... it was*
 6 *maybe normal at that time.*
 7 Christian: *Yeah, at that time it was normal.*
 8 Frida: *There were stories from that time. Maybe we don't know but in our time from*
 9 *our perspective, it is different.*
 10 Christian: *If this has happened now?*
 11 R.: *Yeah.*
 12 Christian: *Then I think the black woman was right that she could sit where she wanted.*

Figure 2. Excerpt 1, Group 1

Christian points out that 'the rules' of that time were wrong, 'not the people' (line 4). Then Frida questions Christian's point of view and doubts that he would think the same if he was born 'then' (lines 5-6). Thus, Frida's comment shows how decentering one perspective can serve as a tool for meaning making when she de-familiarises what she knows, hence, gaining deeper insights (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995). Frida adds an argument which reflects her perspective (lines 8-9). In his last contribution, Christian re-frames what had been said and attempts to construct a perspective from 'our time' (i.e., from his perspective) (lines 10, 12).

Summing up, the data above suggests that the PT skills of pupils were activated when reflecting on the EPIC entries (in particular, History Corner, Fractured Fairy Tale, Sunglasses Story, and If I Were... I'd Be...). Excerpt 1 illustrates the pupils' projection into an unfamiliar frame of reference from either contrasting *now* and *then* (Christian) or becoming aware that other perspectives do exist, and they may be different in many ways depending on the context (Frida). More importantly, the pupils managed to recognise that their view of the world may be not universally shared, even within the focus group (Tseng, 2002, p.12).

Table 4

A quantitative overview of the CDif and CSim themes across all the prompts and focus group interviews

THEME	SUNGLAS SES STORY	FRACTUR ED FAIRY TALE	INTERVIE W ROOM	THIS IS HOW WE DO IT	IF I WERE... I'D BE...	HISTORY CORNER	THE OTHER SIDE	TOTAL
CDIF	1	–	4	5	–	–	–	10
CSIM	1	–	3	1	–	1	4	10
TOTAL	2	0	7	6	0	1	4	20

4.2. Commitment to similarity/difference

When it comes to the themes of Commitment to Similarity (CSim) and Commitment to Difference (CDif), they were identified in five EPIC entries out of seven (Table 4). Even though the themes are not evenly distributed across the groups, they reveal some common tendencies.

In This Is How We Do It, inspired by a picture book by Lamothe (2019), the pupils are asked to discuss images representing days in the lives of seven children coming from seven different backgrounds (see Appendix for more details). In the focus group interview, the researcher asked open-ended questions about whether the participants found any differences and similarities between their daily routines and those of the kids from the book and what they had learned from the entry. The following example shows CDif as related to this entry: *'I choose her [showing one of the kids from the image depicting the main characters from the book This Is How We Do It, see Appendix], we didn't have a lot in common. So... Maybe it's because I live in Norway and she lives in Uganda'* (Christina, Group 5).

Christina concludes that her daily routines do not have a lot in common with those of a girl from Uganda, hence, reinforcing the differences based on the fact that they live in different countries. This entry tended to navigate her towards knowing the Other, rather than a willingness to engage with and consider the perspectives of the Other. The former usually implies stereotyping and falls within cultural knowledge, which is likely to be reduced (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004, p. 7). In total, five out of ten instances of CDif are drawn from this entry, all of which are characterised by the danger of reinforcing stereotypes through activity design when emphasising one cultural dimension (a national one).

As for the Commitment to Similarity theme, ten instances signified the participants' focus on and appreciation of similarities between people. For example, The

Other Side, History Corner, and Sunglasses Story entries seem to enable the pupils to reflect on the issue of similarity related to how they viewed the issue of race, in particular skin colour. The Other Side is a picture book by Jacqueline Woodson (2011) which invites the pupils to read a story about the friendship between a black girl and a white girl. The entry is used as a resource to introduce learners in the acceptance of the Others and the existence of the diversity emphasising values of respect and tolerance. Tina, for instance, highlights that skin colour does not have any particular importance for kids, who, unlike adults, value people regardless their skin colour: *'It [picture of a fence] shows that kids are just kids, and they not really get involved or like know about adult issues. So they just see like humans, they don't see race'* (Tina, Group 2).

Two of ten coded instances relate to the ways the pupils display a more complex understanding of the interplay between difference and similarity existing in the world. A few pupils demonstrated that things are not only black and white and often the others cannot be characterised by either difference, or similarity. The following excerpt (see Figure 3) illustrating the above statement is taken from Group 2's discussion about the EPIC entry Interview Room. In this entry, the pupils were asked to interview a person from a different background and compare his or her daily routines and interests with their own. In the interaction below, the researcher prompts the pupils to reflect on their experiences. This episode begins when Nicole comments on the importance to learn from and about others and not to have prejudiced representations about another national group (lines 1-6).

By representing two cultures (Norwegian and Brazilian) as reduced to national groups, Nicole first fails to deconstruct stereotypes and value cultural diversity within these groups (lines 13-14). The researcher's impromptu questions on the perceptions of similarities

- 1 Nicole: *I think it's useful to know that not everybody like, not every culture is the same...
2 because some people are like closed-minded, they only like their own culture,
3 like they think stereotypically about other people, like if you are from there you
4 only do this and only do this, right? But when you get to ask people from that...
5 came from another culture, about their culture, you learn more about people
6 around you and then just, yeah.*
- 7 R.: *Hm...yes*
- 8 Sonja: *I agree. Because when you talk to someone who is actually from that country and
9 are part of that culture, you get a less stereotypical point of view and, yeah, you
10 get more accurate description of what a normal (.) for example, Brazil.*
- 11 R.: *Yeah, and have you found any similarities or differences if you think about it? {}
12 What have you noticed?*
- 13 Nicole: *Uhm... I think like the Brazilian culture and Norwegian culture are quite
14 different. There are some bad things about the Brazilian culture, but also in
15 Norwegian, of course, but... ehm I've noticed that there were actually... like not
16 a lot of differences, but enough differences to...for it to be significant.*
- 17 Eva: *Yeah, I did that task and I found that even though we eat different food and go to
18 different schools, and live in different countries, we share a lot of the same
19 interests and like... we both like to hang out with our friends, we both are
20 interested in our futures, yeah.*
- 21 Tina: *I think I would definitely think about the similarities because that's where you
22 find common ground and... like can develop relationship, like friend relationship.*
- 23 Sonja: *I believe that both are pretty important because you should not get too caught up
24 in the differences and distance yourself too much from the culture, but you also
25 have to remember that there are differences, and you have to respect those
26 differences. And... yeah, I think that it's a little bit of both together.*
- 27 Nicole: *Yes, I agree with Sonja with that... that you have to respect cultures. For
28 example, when you travel, it's kind of important to know like (1.2) uhm... that in
29 some other countries there are things that are bad there that aren't bad in
30 Norway... so you have to like before you travel sometimes you have to learn a bit
31 about, about the culture so you don't disrespect people without knowing.*

Figure 3. Excerpt 2, Group 2

and differences between one's own and the target person's background might have influenced this (lines 11-12) as the discussion moves towards the compare and contrast ability. Recognising similarities and differences might be challenging, but it may also stimulate learners' perspectives and cultural awareness (Broady, 2004; Tomlinson, 2019). Eva builds on Nicole's comments that the cultures (Norwegian and Brazilian) were quite different, but she also displays an enhanced awareness of complexities when she argues that on the surface people may look different but when it comes to interests or the 'futures' [sic] (lines 17-20), they seem to share a lot. Tina agrees with Eva by recognising the importance of building mutual understanding through recognising similarities (lines 21-22). In her next turn, Sonja emphasises that differences might cause distances between self and other (line 24). At the end of this extract, Nicole rounds off the conversation by saying that respect and willingness to learn from each other are

two interrelated things. In this conversation, one can see that the pupils' fixed beliefs about others based on national differences appear to be significant as there is still a lot of implicit essentialising. However, discussing them with peers offers opportunities for the pupils to learn from each other and decentre from their perspectives and opinions. Through this excerpt it is possible to see how the group of pupils modify their perspectives through group discussions with the researcher and peers.

Summing up, most of the coded instances related to CDif and CSim are attributed to the two entries, namely, Interview Room and This Is How We Do It both of which deal with comparing and contrasting daily routines of one's own and those of another person from a different cultural group. However, the data shows that even though there is an emphasis on national cultures in the pupils' comments, the pupils' discussions are characterised by a dialogical perspective on

difference (as opposed to seeing difference as a problem) (Xu, 2013) (Excerpt 2). Undoubtedly, the way the researcher guided conversations may have influenced the ways the pupils responded. Consequently, the teacher's role in a classroom does have an influence on how the learners discuss and consider the perspectives of others.

In conclusion, several patterns emerge from the data which seem to provide insights into how the pupils considered perspectives of others when reflecting on the EPIC entries. When reflecting on the entries dealing with interviewing other people, comparing the routines and ways of living of people from different cultures (namely, Interview Room, This Is How We Do It), the pupils' focus on differences or similarities is mostly grounded in an emphasis on national cultures. However, even in such cases, other pupils challenged such opinions through dialogue. For example, in Excerpt 2, Nicole reflects upon her own monolithic views on culture, which in turn forms the foundation for more open dialogue with others. On the other hand, reflections on such entries as Fractured Fairy Tale, History Corner, Sunglasses Story trigger perspective consciousness and perspective taking among the pupils. Even though the opportunities for PT were less frequent as compared to PC, the pupils in their focus group interviews decentre from one's own perspective and relativise the notion of difference.

5. DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of the data reveals several major ways in which the pupils considered perspectives of others. First, perspective consciousness is the most recurrent theme within the dataset. History Corner, Sunglasses Story, If I Were... I'd Be..., and Fractured Fairy Tales are among the EPIC entries which have given the pupils opportunities to discuss the issues related to the diversity of perspectives. Three of the EPIC entries (History Corner, Sunglasses Story, and Fractured Fairy Tales) highlight the complexity of narrative realities and provide the foundations for recognising a multiplicity of perspectives. Many studies have proposed the importance of storytelling, or narrative experiences, as an important tool for encouraging the process of perspective taking and intercultural awareness in general (Andenoro et al., 2012; Sell, 2017). The entries implemented in the EPIC provided the pupils with the opportunities to get 'a deepened sense of perspective' (Andenoro et al., 2012, p. 106) through telling and retelling the same story.

Secondly, the three instances of Specific PT (when the pupils constructed the perspectives of others) show that discussing a historical event can and should be presented from a number of different – and often conflicting – voices (Dypedahl, 2020). On the one hand, tasks involving accounts of well-known past events can enable learners to realise how people's perspectives may change depending on the context. The current data echoes the findings from Kearney (2015) and Thein et al. (2007), who indicated that narratives and fiction texts which represent unfamiliar and 'distant' voices (Kearney, 2012, p. 59) can make it possible for students to revise their perspectives and explore how our perspectives arise from the worlds we live in. On the other hand, by showing different reports of historical events and news items, classroom work can contribute to decentring discourse by problematising fundamental concepts like democracy and human rights. While nationality, ethnicity and skin colour may have an impact on how people react to a particular event, there are other markers of identity which influence it (Hoff, 2020). As Hoff (2020) argues, the rationale behind people's responses is varied and may be highly personal. Thus, including a range of diverse responses to and reflections on historical events and discussing them from the current standpoint can potentially provide a platform for intercultural learning.

Finally, as illustrated in Excerpt 2 and shown across the database, inconsistencies and controversies in the pupils' manifestations of PT suggest that the process of considering perspectives of others in the EFL classroom setting is complex and nuanced. Some of the pupils displayed both perspective consciousness coupled with instances of intercultural awareness and formulated stereotyping based on static beliefs (as in Excerpt 2). For instance, Nicole's comments indicate her monolithic view on culture combined with the suspension of previous beliefs and willingness to deconstruct stereotypes. These findings accord with the study conducted by Étienne and Vanbaelen (2017), which showed a mix of ethnocentrism and emerging ethnorelativism among their participants, as they saw differences that they still tended to essentialise instead of exploring and taking into account the foreign context in itself. However, occasionally, the participants from the study revealed more nuanced interpretations, moving towards more fluid interpretations and positionings. In the current study, Sonja and Eva pinpoint that approaching otherness could happen through appreciating and respecting both difference and sameness. Such pupils' comments

'The data presented above highlights the insights of lower secondary school pupils regarding the perspectives of others through the lens of an intercultural orientation to language learning. It has been shown that realisations of PT in the classroom are complex and varied, and the ways the pupils considered the perspectives of others are often contingent on the type of the entry they discuss. Thus, decisions FL teachers make about planning and designing classroom activities are crucial to success'

serve as an illustration of an argument expressed by Sell (2017) that intercultural understanding is a balancing act between searching for similarities and realising differences. Overall, considering the perspectives of others in the EFL classroom can be organised around activities purposefully designed around PT, moreover, they can be facilitated by classroom dialogues mediated by the teacher.

6. CONCLUSION

The data presented above highlights the insights of lower secondary school pupils regarding the perspectives of others through the lens of an intercultural orientation to language learning (Borghetti, 2011; Scarino, 2010). It has been shown that realisations of PT in the classroom are complex and varied, and the ways the pupils considered the perspectives of others are often contingent on the type of the entry they discuss. Thus, decisions FL teachers make about planning and designing classroom activities are crucial to success.

As for the limitations, the tendency of this age group to respect authority (Alter, 2015) could have influenced the results of the study. It should be acknowledged that children and young adults might mainly orientate their answers toward what they think is expected from them (Alter, 2015). Hence their focus group interview comments can show some signs of social desirability (see Dervin, 2010). Due to space limitations, this paper only focuses on the focus group interviews; however, it would be beneficial to look at the pupils' texts in the EPIC and analyse them in terms of changes in perspectives over time. In addition, not all pupils participated equally in the focus group interviews, and it is not feasible to generalise the findings. In addition, the

participants' comments might also be dependent on other factors, such as experience, knowledge gained, individual's motivation, etc. Therefore, the process of considering the perspectives of others should be examined more thoroughly, and closer attention should be given to any factors that constitute learners' context and background.

The findings suggest some practical implications for teaching. The results indicate that storytelling (as in *Fractured Fairy Tales*), fictional or imaginative texts based on historical events (as in *History Corner*) and metaphorical representations of the notion of perspective (as in the *Sunglasses Story* and *If I Were... I'd Be...*) promote the awareness of diversity of perspectives among the pupils. Correspondingly, the teachers can suggest similar activities, in which the emphasis is put on a decentred perspective (Ware & Kramsch, 2005) and recognition of the multiplicity of perspective (PC) during their classroom interactions or engagements with texts.

It has been shown that the entries based on interviewing people from other cultural backgrounds, engaging with comparing and contrasting can be also beneficial for creating opportunities for PT. However, finding the right balance between similarities and differences is a way to avoid oversimplifications and stereotypes. Thus, the learners' attention should be drawn to the perception of cultural differences as practised by individuals, and, more importantly, to the awareness that *'the self and the other do not necessarily stand in a confronting or dichotomic relation, but in a relation of complementarity'* (Xu, 2013, p. 394).

As the *History Corner* entry has also shown, the importance of context when drawing the meaning from a text seems to be crucial. As shown in the findings, the recognition of a variety of perspectives might be a steppingstone towards perspective taking, therefore, it might be useful for teachers to elaborate on how one's perspective can change (e.g., over time) or how different perspectives vary (e.g., across contexts, generations, gender, or social roles). Therefore, the teacher who by the careful selection or adaptation of activities may influence whether a more ethnocentric or ethnorelative way of thinking will be reinforced in a class plays a role here. Summing up, this study shows that the role of the teacher is crucial in order to challenge learners' views on the issues of considering the perspectives of others in language classrooms. Creating a scaffold for learners to gain new perspectives is a way to improve foreign language teaching.

Appendix A

Table 5

The overview of the EPIC entries

NAME (SOURCE)	DESCRIPTION
Sunglasses Story (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 153)	Pupils read and reflect on a metaphorical story which helps them to realise that we all see the world through our own unique lens. The story tells about two groups of people who are born with a differently coloured pair of glasses (yellow and blue). When the groups meet, they put on each other's sunglasses, and realise that both see green lenses.
Fractured Fairy Tale (Dolan, 2014, p. 72)	Pupils are asked to retell a popular story, changing the point of view, the plot or ideas.
Interview Room (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003)	Pupils interview a person with a background different from their own about things they do in their everyday lives and compare the information obtained with their own daily routines.
This Is How We Do It (Lamothe, 2019)	Pupils complete a series of tasks as they read the book. They explore lives and daily rituals of seven kids and link them with their own lives. An end page with a night sky scattered with stars is accompanied by the words, 'This is my night sky,' hinting that though these kids may lead very different lives, they all see the same sky above them.
If I Were... I'd Be... (Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2016)	Pupils complete 12 stem sentences by choosing 12 metaphors thinking about themselves, their culture, and the target culture (all sentences starting with 'If I were... I'd be...'). In the second and third stages the pupils go through the same steps but replace the same metaphors with 'If Norwegians were..., they'd be...' and 'If the British/Americans/... were..., they'd be...' to reflect on themselves, their language/culture and the target cultures and languages, as well as stereotypes shaping them.
History Corner (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007, p. 159-162)	Pupils complete a series of tasks as they explore the story of Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights movement. They engage in tasks aimed at perspective-taking as a resource for expanding the meaning-making potential of a historical event.
The Other Side (Woodson, 2001)	Pupils answer a series of questions on their perceptions of the children's book <i>The Other Side</i> by Woodson (2001).

Appendix B

Interview guide for focus group interviews

SELF AND OTHERS

Do you remember the activity where you were asked to interview your friend from another country? 'Interview Room' and the activity 'This Is How We Do It'. Was there anything particular from these activities that you remember? Anything that made you think about yourself and the other person's culture? What did you learn from these activities?

PERSPECTIVE TAKING

The pupils are asked to recall the following EPIC entries/activities, namely Sunglasses Story; Fractured Fairy Tale; If I were..., I'd Be...; History Corner, and The Other Side: (1) How did these entries in the EPIC

make you feel? Did you like them? What did you learn? (2) We have discussed how we can use a change of perspective to see ourselves in a new light (e.g., Sunglasses Story; Fractured Fairy Tales; History Corner). What have you learned? (3) In what situations in your real life would you use the knowledge from these activities? Can you suggest any examples? (4) Pupils are shown two images made by E. B. Lewis depicting the main characters from *The Other Side* book and are asked the following key questions. (1) Who are the people in these pictures? (2) What can you tell me about that picture? (3) What does the fence represent? (4) From what perspective/viewpoint do we see this event? (5) Why is it important to consider different perspectives? (6) Can you make up a short dialogue between the people in the photo? (7) Could you make up titles for the images?

Appendix C: Transcription conventions

- []: overlaps in speech
(.): incomprehensible speech

- ...: pauses less than 1 second, trailed off speech
(1.2): pauses more than one second
{ }: material has been deleted from the excerpt

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Article III – The affordances of an intercultural e-portfolio: A case study on perspectives of English teachers in Norway

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The affordances of an intercultural e-portfolio

A case study on perspectives of English teachers in Norway

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This paper explores teachers' perceptions of the affordances of an e-portfolio of intercultural competence (EPIC). The EPIC was implemented during an 8-week intervention carried out in a Norwegian lower secondary school. Data were collected from various sources (e.g. learners' texts, focus group interviews), but this paper draws on the data from three individual teacher interviews conducted in the spring semester 2018. This study extends our understanding of the way an e-portfolio can be integrated into the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom as a tool for promoting intercultural competence. The findings underscore the affordances of the e-portfolio to track the learners' reflections on their own complex selves and others; moreover, the use of the e-portfolio enabled the teachers to create flexible and varied learning spaces, which in turn provided opportunities for intercultural language learning. Pedagogical implications are provided on how foreign language (FL) teachers might support intercultural competence development through the use of the e-portfolio.

Keywords: e-portfolio, affordance, intercultural learning, foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

Cultural knowledge, and culture in general, has become viewed as increasingly fluid. Spencer-Oatey and Kadar (2021) define culture as “a complex set of meaning systems that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, schemas, norms, and symbols, that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a social group and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people's behaviours” (p. 45). Correspondingly, individuals embody multiple cultures including not only national, ethnic and religious, but a whole set of other cultural perspectives that might relate to gender, generation, social class, family or life experiences. Hence, we belong simultaneously to multiple cultures which are constantly changing (Elsen & St. John, 2007). Intercultural learning thus refers to the process of becoming more aware of one's own culture(s) and other cultures through developing knowledge, awareness and attitudes as opposed to solely acquiring knowledge about the target culture. The ultimate goal of intercultural learning is to transform knowledge, awareness and attitudes into intercultural competence, which is defined in this study as “an integral whole of cognitive, affective and behavioural factors that influence the understanding of, and interaction with, diversity in a broad sense, and which can be developed through education and/or experience” (Borghetti, 2011, p. 143).

As in Europe and all over the world, Norway has acknowledged the importance of intercultural learning as an important objective and resource for studying English language. The role of culture in learning English was given prominence in the previous English subject curriculum (LK06), which was the main frame of reference for teachers when this study was initiated, and data collection was conducted. In the new curriculum, implemented in August 2020, intercultural objectives are integrated to a larger degree through the inclusion of an interdisciplinary topic Democracy and citizenship (to be covered across subjects) and a stronger focus on diversity, both cultural and linguistic, especially in the English subject curriculum. These changes in the curricular documents can partially be explained by the changing demands of a more globalised world, and partially by the demand for teachers to navigate in increasingly more diverse classrooms and find effective ways to support learners in this lifelong intercultural journey. Thus, the Norwegian curriculum does provide a call for intercultural learning, however, intercultural teaching in Norway is still dependent on teachers' own ideas and initiatives (Hoff, 2018; Lund, 2019). Possible reasons for this are that the curricula documents do not provide methods or materials to be used in the classrooms, and teachers still lack knowledge of intercultural concepts (Rosnes & Rossland, 2018). Moreover, learners' use of a resource or exposure to otherness does not automatically lead to the desired forms of learning (Berti, 2020; Hoff, 2018). Thus, it is important for teachers to critically evaluate if and how the use of a particular tool can provide potential for learners to actively engage in processes of intercultural learning. The demands of the curriculum for intercultural learning, on the one hand, and the insufficient support for intercultural teaching in the classroom, on the other hand, have led to the need to explore how teachers perceive a used tool aimed to foster intercultural learning.

This exploratory case study investigates how teachers in a lower secondary school in Norway perceive the affordances of the e-portfolio of intercultural competence (EPIC) taught to young language learners¹ (aged 14-15). The research question is the following:

What are the affordances of the e-portfolio of Intercultural Competence (EPIC) as perceived by the teachers?

The question is examined by analysing individual semi-structured interviews with three EFL teachers following an 8-week intervention. The intercultural e-portfolio, also known as electronic portfolio, is viewed as a digitized collection or any project of a student's work over time, based on intercultural objectives, which documents and manages student learning in ways that promote continuous intercultural learning. The focus on the affordances (defined as the subjective perceptions of the potential of the given tool) enables the researcher to explore the potential of the EPIC as an intercultural tool through the lens of their teachers.

2. Theoretical background and previous research

Affordance is viewed as a perception of a potential for action when using a tool (van Lier, 2000). The key element here is the relationship between an actor (more precisely, his or her perception) and a tool that affords opportunities. Two important considerations should be taken into account

¹ The term "young learner" is widely applied to describe children learning English from the age of 3 all the way up to 15 years of age (Nunan, 2010). Referring to Pinter (2017), learners aged 14-15 years old could be considered as "older young learners".

here. First, affordances emerge out of the interactions between the actor and their environment. A tool should not be viewed as determining action in static ways, rather, it can have its impact only when an agent *uses* it (Wertsch, 1998, p. 30). Second, the construct of affordances involves both challenges and benefits. Wertsch (1998) pinpoints that a narrow focus on the kinds of empowerment provided by tools gives us only a partial picture because it overlooks equally inherent characteristics, namely, that they constrain or limit the forms of action we undertake (pp. 38-39).

One of the most effective manners to familiarize teachers with the affordances of emerging learning environments is through experiential learning, for example, through professional development or studies based on intervention (Lawrence, 2020, p. 129). Teachers' perceptions of the affordances of the e-portfolio can deepen our understanding of the needs teachers have within a specific context. Thus, empirical studies carried out in this area can shed some light on how the perceived affordances of a tool used can inform teaching practices in language classrooms.

Studies on teachers' conceptions in EFL teaching (e.g. Larzen-Ostermark, 2008; Oranje & Smith, 2017; Young & Sachdev, 2011) report that language teachers are willing to promote intercultural competence, yet they do not actually practice this approach to language teaching. Despite the increasing spread of intercultural resources, teachers in their everyday practice continue to resist innovative digital tools and methods in their practice. According to a review of research on intercultural learning technology by Shadiev and Sintawati (2020), the digital tools most frequently used by teachers are videoconferencing, email, social media and discussion board, whereas the least frequently used tools were webinar and podcast. This tendency can be explained by the fact that the latter two require more resources for preparing content and involves potential technical issues (Shadiev & Sintawati, 2020, p. 5).

One of the tools which has attracted interest in intercultural learning and teaching is portfolio. Portfolios have been widely utilised to foster intercultural competence in FL contexts (e.g. Abrams et al., 2006; Allen, 2004; Su, 2011). Byram (2021) pinpoints that portfolio work implies the ability to reflect on one's own actions and to analyse one's own feelings of enthusiasm and of dismay and to see them as part of developmental reactions to otherness – all of which suggests that such evidence needs to be collected over time. Following Alvarez and Moxley (2004, p. 92), the portfolio is simultaneously a process, a product, and a tool, which makes it particularly suited for intercultural learning objectives.

The portfolio's potential as a tool has increased with the transition from the paper portfolio to the e-portfolio. Electronic portfolios differ from pen-and-paper portfolios in that information is collected and stored electronically, possibly using a variety of multimedia formats. In relation to intercultural learning, the e-portfolio is particularly beneficial considering that e-portfolio is process-oriented; uses multiple sources of information; is learner-centered, inquiry-based; and demonstrates growth of understanding (Dubreil, 2009, p. 8). Recent work on portfolios for the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c) confirms that there is a demand for providing learners with a tool which can be used to support the development of democratic and intercultural competences. The Council of Europe has designed a set of materials for two portfolio documents, one for learners

aged up to 10-11 years (Barrett et al., 2021) and a second standard version for learners from approximately 10-11 years upwards (Byram et al., 2021).

Various affordances of portfolios (both electronic and paper-based) as perceived by learners have emerged from the literature. First, portfolios can be used as evidence of cultural knowledge and awareness (e.g. Allen, 2004; Pearson, 2004). Second, an e-portfolio and paper portfolio might be employed to achieve higher levels of self-awareness and to support the user in becoming more aware of diversity within their own culture (e.g. Su, 2011). A study aimed at exploring self-awareness as an integral part of IC (Khanukaeva, 2020) indicated that EFL learners, aged 14-15, when linking the awareness of complex Self and the awareness of the complexity of Others, gained a deeper understanding of diversity within their own culture. In another study based on the same intervention, the findings indicated that change in perspective taking can be visible through the e-portfolios, if the activities included in the tool are selected and designed in such a way to promote learners' decentring (Hanukaev, 2022). A number of studies indicated that learners are encouraged to become increasingly autonomous through expanding their metacognitive knowledge via portfolios (Sudhershnan, 2014). In a case study with two international students in the US, Snider and McCarthy (2012) analysed observations and interviews and found out that the participants discussed their e-portfolios in terms of flexibility, aesthetics, functionality, and self-representation. The use of portfolios has been widely studied in the context of pre-service teacher education as a tool for teacher evaluation, professional growth and reflective practice (Dervin & Hahl, 2015; Jaatinen, 2013; Kremzer, 2021).

A limited number of studies reviewed focused on how primary and secondary in-service FL teachers perceive the potential of the tool in their intercultural teaching practices. For instance, a study with in-service German-as-a-foreign-language teachers implemented portfolios as a pedagogical tool to support plurilingual and intercultural education with 17-18-year-olds in Portugal (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007). The five participating teachers expressed their intention of continuing in the project, as they recognised a need for collaborative work due to a lack of resources on IC (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007, p. 209). Moreover, they emphasized the fact that the use of the portfolio plays an important role as it allows the teacher to recognise intercultural profiles of their learners. A study by Oranje (2021) conducted in New Zealand with German and French language teachers involved two phases. First, the researcher gathered three teachers' perceptions related to intercultural teaching through questionnaires and, second, implemented an intervention called cultural portfolio projects (CPPs) involving three classes of learners (aged 15-18). Data were gathered from various sources including audio recordings, classroom observations, students' reflections, teachers' interviews etc. The study indicated that reflection on one's own cultural viewpoint was mentioned as the most beneficial aspect of the CPPs (Oranje, 2021). Overall, the teachers recognised complexity in their own and their students' cultures as well as gaining a better understanding of their students as individuals as a result of the intervention (Oranje, 2021, p. 154).

Summing up, it has been argued that previous research has mainly focused on learners' perspectives of e-portfolio, whereas in-service teachers' perceptions on the affordances of the e-portfolio with young learners still need examination. In addition, the variety of intercultural resources as well as the lack of systematic guidance from national curricula have led to the need

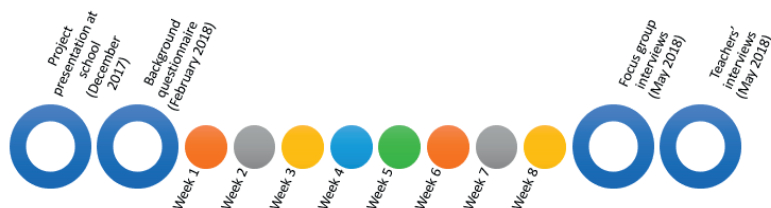
to investigate real classrooms and real teachers' perspectives on their use of a tool. In conclusion, by offering interpretations of the construct of affordance in the context of intercultural language learning, this study contributes to a better understanding of opportunities to design and implement e-portfolios for intercultural language learning.

3. Methods: an exploratory case study and e-portfolio-based intervention

3.1 The intervention

Between February and May 2018, an eight-week intervention took place at a lower secondary school in an urban area on the west coast of Norway (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Overview of the case study.



The project incorporated the EPIC (a collection of learners' materials structured as the combination of e-portfolio entries and reflection prompts) into regular EFL teaching. The EPIC was designed by the researcher as a tool aimed at exploring the learners' self-awareness and perspective taking. Perspective taking is viewed as the projection of oneself into another or unfamiliar frame of reference (Kearney, 2015, p. 170). The EPIC was built upon four main tenets, namely, self-awareness, awareness of others, perspective taking and perspective consciousness (the awareness of a diversity of perspectives)², represented by means of four metaphors: Mirror, Window, Reversed mirror, and Coloured glasses respectively (Appendix 1). The Mirror and Window metaphors were chosen to help pupils and teachers vividly imagine how they look in the mirror and see themselves and out of the window at others they want to interact with (Huber-Kriegler et al., 2003, p.7). The Coloured glasses and Reversed mirror metaphors imply that cultural practices and behaviours are perceived through a subjective personal experience and stress the importance of the awareness of a diversity of perspectives (perspective consciousness) in the process of developing IC.

Each EPIC entry contained: (a) Introduction (a set of instructions for how to fill in an entry); (b) Content entry (learner artifacts which were produced in forms of verbal text, drawing, audio recordings, movies); and (c) Reflection prompts (learners' immediate reflections on their experiences with the entry) (see Figure 2 for an example of one EPIC entry).

² For more detail and definitions, see Hanukaev (2022).

Figure 2. Example of the EPIC entry.

Sunglasses story



1. Read this story (or the teacher reads it aloud for you):

Imagine two groups of people who are born with sunglasses.

These two groups of people live on either side of a river, and on this side of the river (point to the group on your left) are the yellow sunglasses people.

You all were born with yellow sunglasses. And you know there is another group of people living on the other side of the river, but you've never met them and you really don't know anything about them.

So one day, you decide to send a delegation across the river to meet these other folks. So, you go across the river and you're pleasantly surprised to find that these folks on the other side of the river seem a lot like you.

Why? They're even born with sunglasses like you. As you talk longer with them, though, you realize that something is a little different about these folks.

And then you take a closer look at their sunglasses and you ask them if you can put on a pair of their sunglasses.

Now those are the blue sunglasses people, so what colour do the yellow sunglasses people see? (pause a moment).

They see . . . *green*.

Answer the questions:

- What is this story about?
- What did you feel when you read it?
- What this story made you think of?

In sum, the EPIC allowed the researcher to keep track of the pupils' interpretations about the content and provided evidence of the pupils' intercultural learning. Therefore, the EPIC functioned as a tool to enhance the learners' self-awareness and perspective taking as integral components of intercultural learning.

The researcher met the teachers prior to the start of the project, in order to gain information about the yearly plan and discuss the intervention in more detail. In collaboration with the teachers, it was decided that the intervention would be implemented while they were working on two topics from the textbook by Bromseth and Wigdahl *New Flight 2* (2007), namely "People on the move" (focus on migration) and "Fight for your rights!" (human rights movements), each topic covering a period of about four weeks. Based on the two topics, the researcher designed a number of

entries which the teachers could select from. At the request of teachers, the following adaptations were made. Some entries were combined and some of the reflection prompt questions were modified to make the whole process more manageable given the pupils' and teacher' time constraints. As for the mid-term assignment in week 5 of the intervention, the teachers sent to the researcher their list of essay alternatives and the researcher added three more options targeting intercultural language learning. The teachers also suggested which activities would be implemented as homework assignments ('My cultural and national identity', 'Interview room' and 'This is how we do it'). Google Classroom served as the main platform at the teachers' request. It supports text-based messages, hyperlinks, audio and video files. The researcher and the teachers had access to the e-portfolio of all the pupils, but pupils could only access their own assignments.

The implementation of the EPIC was made on a week-to-week basis, i.e. on average two EPIC tasks per week. A total of sixteen entries were implemented as part of the intervention (see Appendix 2). Each EPIC entry was uploaded a day before an English lesson. On the following day the pupils were provided with introductory instructions by their teacher of how to complete the task. Some of the EPIC entries involved group work, some were to be completed individually. The teachers worked as facilitators while the pupils were completing the entry or doing an in-class activity. The researcher was present at some of the classes and at times acted as an instructor but tried not to interfere with the other curricular activities during the data collection. Overall, each teacher taught two 45-minute class periods per week. The pupils were advised to use English when they completed their e-portfolios as the teachers viewed the intervention as an opportunity to facilitate their pupils' development of their language skills combined with intercultural learning.

3.2 Study participants

Sampling was purposive, the group of interest were EFL classes grade 9 (aged 14-15 years) and their teachers. The researcher used her network to contact EFL teachers in a specific grade from the schools in the area. One of the teachers expressed willingness to participate, and he also suggested recruiting two of his colleagues, both working at the same level at this school; hence they agreed to implement the project with all students at the ninth-grade level.

The three English teachers in this study had formal teaching qualifications and taught other subjects in addition to English. One of the teachers mentioned that he was half Swedish. Table 1 below shows the participants' background information.

Table 1. Demographic profiles of the teachers.

Teachers' names (pseudonyms)	Gender	Age (years)	Experience (years)	Teaching qualification
Heidi	female	46	8	MA
Lucas	male	28	2	BA
Peter	male	48	18	Teachers' college

Note. MA – Master of Arts, BA – Bachelor of Arts

The study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), ensuring that the treatment of participants, both the teachers and the pupils, and the data collection were in accordance with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Informed consent and approval from the school’s principal and the teachers were also provided containing a document with information about the project. Parental consents from the pupils’ caregivers and from the pupils (who had turned 15) were also collected. Consent forms were sent home to all pupils, for a total of 56 participants (36 female and 20 male) who participated in the study.

3.3 Data collection

The data was collected from various sources including pupils’ texts and focus group interviews (for details, see Khanukaeva, 2020). This paper draws on data from the teacher interviews. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the project, in April-May 2018, with the aim of documenting the teachers’ perceptions of the use of the EPIC. Interview as a method was chosen to obtain a thorough understanding of the teachers’ experiences with the use of the EPIC as a tool. The interviews were conducted in English. They were audio recorded and transcribed. Each interview lasted from 30 to 40 minutes, three interview transcripts resulted in 12150 words. Prior to the interviews, the researcher prepared a list of questions in the form of a short survey in order to obtain background information regarding education, teaching experience etc. The semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 3) served as a general guide with follow-up questions emerging spontaneously during the interview process. In order to minimise researcher bias, the researcher tried to remain neutral by not providing objective or negative feedback during the interviews and included open-ended questions.

3.4 Data analysis

The data gathered through interviews were thematically analysed in accordance with six analytical steps: familiarization; generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006). An inductive (bottom-up) approach to thematic analysis was taken as themes were developed directly from the data being analysed (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). NVivo (QSR Version 12.6) was used as a data storage and data analysis tool in order to search for patterns, generate initial codes as it allowed to create cases for each participant. Fourteen categories were created from clusters of codes and five themes were identified from these categories, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of themes and categories identified in the interview data.

	Theme	Category
1	Reflection	Self-awareness Multiple selves Perspective taking Metacognition Lack of reflection
2	Flexibility	Variation Appropriateness for learners Digital environment

3	Practical concerns	Lack of time Number of tasks Repetitiveness
4	Language learning outcomes	Writing Vocabulary acquisition
5	Emotions	Positive feelings

The following section will describe and discuss the themes 1, 2, and 3 (Reflection, Flexibility and Practical concerns). Due to space constraints, the themes 4 and 5 will be described briefly as they were relatively infrequent in the dataset.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Reflection

The teachers' comments during the interviews indicated the affordances for learner *reflections* offered by the e-portfolio in various ways (Table 3).

Table 3. Affordances related to the Reflection theme.

Category	Example code	Example	Teacher
Perspective taking	R1	You're able to sit across the table from someone that are complete, that's a completely different person and you can kind of think: "Hmm-hmm I am now sitting like this I'm acting like this. What does he or she think about me sitting like this?"	Peter
	R2	When you tell a story that people know from someone else's perspective, it's a very important lesson	Peter
	R3	To show them through the examples that it's not always obvious that the situation is like this, it will be completely different from another point of view	Heidi
	R4	They try to understand whose perspective am I taking here? Is it me? Is this, has this got to do with me? Or has it got to do with my family? Or has it got to do with someone else?	Peter
	R5	There is a lot to learn actually like reflection, seeing things from other perspectives	Peter
Self-awareness	R6	I'm not sure if they notice it themselves but I think it has contributed to a little bit more awareness of their own identity I think	Heidi
	R7	It's understanding who they are and where they're from	Lucas
Multiple selves	R8	Because I had a few people say: "Okay, so I'm multicultural here". And so uhm there were a few light bulbs we turned on [laughs]	Peter
	R9	I think uhm to be more aware of their own complex identity and to be open-minded towards uhm different groups of people	Heidi
Metacognition	R10	They have to reflect in a new way	Heidi
	R11	They have to like go out of themselves	Heidi

Lack of reflection	R12	The main challenge for teaching... students' understanding it. I think that's...because they see ... all they see is black and white	Lucas
	R13	As I said that their lives are black and white, they're not there yet sadly	Lucas
	R14	[the pupils are] in an age where they don't really some of them they don't really reflect much up uhm on who they are in the meeting with other people	Peter

The teachers' comments show that the use of the e-portfolio as a tool allowed the pupils to consider other people's perspectives and the ways others might see them (as Examples R1-R4 show). Peter observed that the e-portfolio provided opportunities for learners to see themselves through the eyes of others (R1). This issue was emphasized in R2, stated by the same teacher, who recollected the pupils' engagement with the Fractured Fairy Tale entry, which aimed to help the pupils to explore alternative perspectives while they wrote traditional fairy tales from a different perspective.

Another finding is that the EPIC had a positive impact on the pupils in terms of how it facilitated self-awareness. Examples R6 and R7 emphasise that the e-portfolio facilitated a deeper understanding of self among the learners. Similarly, the affordances of the EPIC for supporting the learners' recognition of multiple selves were evident in the data (R8 and R9). Peter in R8 reported on some of his pupils' insights on how they had realized that they were "multicultural". Heidi also raised this issue, as she commented on the link between an understanding of one's own "complex identity" and open-mindedness toward others (R9). Reflection is not a natural activity for everyone, thus, in the classroom setting it has to be explained, encouraged, and modelled (Oranje, 2021). Reflective elements serve to add an additional perspective through which an individual is transformed (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). As it was described above, in order to maximize the potential of reflection, the EPIC entries included a series of reflection prompts.

In sum, the teachers reported that when the learners engaged with or produced different kinds of stories or versions of one story (as, for instance, in History Corner or Fractured Fairy Tale entries) (see Appendix 2), they had opportunities to distance themselves from their own viewpoint (as in R1 and R4). Most importantly, the present findings show potential changes of different kinds that the e-portfolio tool stimulated among the learners as perceived by the teachers. These were cognitive changes at the individual level (as in R8) or a change in the relationships that an individual has with the Other (as in R1). Overall, the affordances highlighted by the teachers in the study are consistent with previous research that documents that the reflective nature of portfolios helps learners examine their own cultural perspectives as well as the perspectives of others (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Oranje, 2021; Watson et al. 2013). An intercultural orientation presupposes a double movement, where the meeting the other is both moving outside and inside; hence, both self-understanding and a shift of perspective allow decentring from one's vision of the self and widening that of others (Giorgis, 2018). Thus, a stronger sense of self-awareness, willingness to consider the perspectives of others and enhanced understanding of multiple selves among the learners relate to core elements of the ongoing process of intercultural learning (e.g. Byram, 2021; Dearthoff, 2011).

From the data, it seems that all the teachers recognised opportunities for reflection as one of the affordances of the EPIC. However, one of the main reasons for the *lack of reflection* during the EPIC project was attributed to the suitable age for integration of this tool into the language classroom. Lucas, for example, commented on challenges of the EPIC as related to pupils' lack of understanding of the aims of the EPIC (R12-R13). The comments expressed by Lucas might be interpreted by the fact that reflection does not come naturally to this age group; therefore, the importance of the teachers tracking opportunities for reflection for their pupils in this age period is crucial. Peter believed that the pupils might not otherwise have considered their own and other people's perspectives. Peter said that even though some of his pupils are in the age period when they do not "reflect much up on who they are in the meeting with other people" (R14), he pointed out that it is a positive thing to include reflection in the classroom. As stated in the literature, adolescence as a period is characterized by many challenges, such as puberty, self-concern, openness to diverse ways of reflecting on self and determining who they want to become (Gibbons & Poelker, 2019). Peter commented on this issue: "I don't think they thought much about their own culture as being adolescents and being in their puberty and focused on ... growing up". Along the same lines, one of the teachers from the study with 15-18-year-olds learners by Oranje (2021) pointed out: "they're teenagers so y'know it all revolves around them" (p. 154). Lucas has made a suggestion for how to resolve this tension related to the lack of reflection; he said that he would spread such a project out over different years: "I would do like some in let's say eighth grade and then I would wait and then ninth grade when they are ready for some and then some in the tenth grade". Being interculturally competent, according to Byram (2021), includes a high degree of self-awareness, and the stimulus for self-analysis might come from within the learner, a teacher, or any other person. Therefore, this stimulus is likely to appear at a number of different points in the learning or experience, and this in turn suggests that reflections need to be collected over time, for example, as part of an e-portfolio. Hence, the findings of this study support the need for the incorporation of the e-portfolio into the curriculum over a longer period of time as well as for an earlier start, as Lucas mentioned in the comment above.

To sum up, the teachers' accounts of the use of the tool suggest the e-portfolio entries accompanied by the reflection prompts supported the development of important aspects of intercultural learning. Interestingly, the teachers' perceptions of the learning touched upon most of the objectives which served as the underlying objectives of the EPIC (self-awareness, perspective taking, multiplicity of selves). This finding confirms the results from the previous studies based on the same e-portfolio intervention and focusing on the learners (Khanukaeva, 2020; Hanukaev, 2022). The findings of this study, conversely, stemming from the teachers' perceptions, suggest that the teachers revealed alignment with the underlying EPIC aims, namely, that the e-portfolio may serve as an effective tool for reflection aimed to promote some of the integral constituents of intercultural learning.

4.2 Flexibility

Under the *flexibility* theme, three subcategories were identified (Table 4).

Table 4. Affordances related to the Flexibility theme

Category	Example code	Example	Teacher
Variation	F1	At least that was, eh, something that we did in class, not in front of ... the iPad but they were standing or... yeah, interacting a little bit as well. So, they couldn't really...nobody could really hide	Heidi
	F2	It opens up a little bit for more variation, I think, I think it's good	Heidi
Digital environment	F3	They get a little bit more positive attitude towards their classes when they also get to use their iPads and different apps to do some kind of work	Heidi
	F4	I think it's important that they can go online and just see like OK are there... like a task can be like OK find a newspaper. Are there any cultural learning in this newspaper today? And also watch movies	Lucas
	F5	They found other stuff that's not in their textbooks	Lucas
Appropriateness for learners	F6	I've never had two classes that vary so much. uh, so I would have to do it completely differently in the one class and the other	Peter
	F7	[the entries are] tailored to 15-year-olds or 14-year-old Norwegians	Peter
	F8	I got, especially in one of the classes, I've got students who really do not know how to write that well, but still they, they don't want to hand in sound recordings or iMovies, they, they...want to write	Peter

The teachers seem to be enthusiastic about how many various entries and activities were included in the tool (F1-F2). The EPIC entries which were the most popular among the learners, according to the teachers, were the Seven Identity Game and Identity Tag Game both of which were done in class and were aimed to foster awareness of self and others. Heidi (F1) highlighted that an active participation of the learners was evident when they were engaged with self-discovery and self-exploration. As learners work with the e-portfolio and make new discoveries about themselves, their voices and choices are evident, and learning is more visible (Rhodes, 2010).

Heidi also expressed an opinion that an active engagement and willingness to participate among the learners was linked to the use of digital tools (F3). In a similar vein, Lucas indicated the digital format which the EPIC had offered was well-suited for cultural learning (F4-F5). Watching YouTube videos and other media found on the Internet makes it possible to bring about a greater degree of authenticity in the language classroom. These findings can be positively related to the affordances of the online platform of the e-portfolio found in previous studies, namely, adaptability (including a range of digital tools and media) and authenticity (Goodier et al., 2022).

The next issue relates to the appropriateness of the materials included in the EPIC. The teachers recognised the necessity for diversifying strategies that support diverse learners. Peter (F6) considered the differences between two classes he had been teaching and the necessity for

adapting the tasks in accordance with it. The teacher acknowledged the diversity of classes, and that the EPIC was helpful for him to adapt the activities to his pupils. In another example (F8), Peter commented on a few episodes with his pupils when he had noticed that they were more eager to write by hand or type rather than audio record or make videos in the e-portfolios. One of the main issues related to the affordances of the e-portfolio here is the fact that this teacher recognised these episodes by tracking individual learning needs. Furthermore, as classrooms become more diverse, it is important for the teacher to feel confident in their ability to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of their learners. For scaffolding to be effective, it needs to be tuned to the learner's developmental level (Ellis, 2012, p. 105). Peter also commented on the match between the activities in the EPIC (taken as a whole) and the learners' interests and capabilities as they were "tailored to 15-year-olds or 14-year-old Norwegians" (F7). Overall, the data reveal that the teachers' excitement about the affordances of the EPIC comes from the need to vary their teaching practices, especially in relation to teaching resources as it is difficult to "go outside the textbook" (Lucas). Peter mentioned a challenge to find appropriate resources in order to integrate intercultural learning in the classroom context: "You will have to find you can have sources for kids BBC for children or similar things but lots of them uh lots of the resources are written for adults or young adults at least so there's a challenge". The lack of flexibility in terms of finding relevant materials for intercultural teaching and learning was noted by teachers in a number of previous studies (e.g. Han & Song, 2011). In order to overcome this challenge, it is important to allow the learners and the teacher to see that textbooks are by no means the only resource in the language classroom. The e-portfolio affords multiple adaptation possibilities regarding the learners' language level and individual characteristics.

To sum up, the affordances of the e-portfolio identified under the theme of *flexibility* indicate that the e-portfolio provided variation in terms of selecting materials and tuning to individual learners' needs. The affordances related to flexibility are reported to be one of the most common affordances of e-portfolio in previous studies (e.g. Abrams et al., 2006; Allen, 2004; Snider & McCarthy, 2012).

4.3 Practical concerns

Table 5. Affordances related to the Practical concerns theme.

Category	Example code	Example	Teacher
Number of tasks	P1	It has gone very well uhm, apart from that I think we had too many tasks, that's the only thing	Peter
	P2	The only thing that I've got to say really about this is that there were too many of them	Peter
	P3	That maybe we could have...we could have done many of these tasks as homework and then spent the lessons talking about them and kind of making them realise what they have answered	Peter
Lack of time	P4	It would have to be then that we have less time to spend on the eh language itself- grammar parts and things like that, maybe.	Heidi
	P5	I think the tempo was too high so that we, uh, so it didn't sink in, I think	Peter

	P6	[I would] spend more time making them think about this	Peter
	P7	I think, many of the tasks have been or most of the tasks have been very good. But I'm not sure that we have had enough time to kind of get the message through that what we want them to learn that might be an issue.	Peter
Repetitiveness	P8	In the end, no, the last... during the last tasks, some of them... they, they felt that it was a little bit the same thing again and again	Heidi
	P9	In the start, uhm, and for first weeks, uh, quite lot of positive feedback but in the end a little bit more, maybe.... uh not so enthusiastic [laughs] feedback.	Heidi
	P10	When they - we were pushing out tasks at them and, and I heard them say: "Oh, not that"	Peter

Examples provided in the Table 5 above highlight the three main themes related to practical concerns: lack of time, number of tasks and repetitiveness. One of the major issues related to the practical concerns of the EPIC was the time involved in implementing the e-portfolio activities (P1-P3). Peter drew attention to the high tempo and the need to pace the tasks more carefully (P5-P7). Concerns of this kind are reported in many studies of e-portfolio for intercultural learning, indicating the challenges it poses for the teachers (e.g. Lo, 2010; Oranje, 2021). Furthermore, the teachers emphasized that some of the pupils were a bit de-motivated at the end of the project, when they perceived that the tasks and activities had become repetitive (P8-P10). The amount of work and consequent tiredness, coupled with the upcoming end of the school year, emerged as the most frequently identified constraints with the work on the EPIC. In order to reduce workload for teachers, Lo (2010) suggested reducing the number of portfolio entries, introducing pair, instead of individual, portfolios; and encouraging peer check and review (engaging students in checking grammar and sharing thoughts with each other) (p. 90).

Another important issue is related to Heidi's concern regarding insufficient time left for language teaching, in particular grammar, as a result of the intervention (P4). Heidi's comment was not developed further in the interview; however, it might indicate her ambivalence towards the integration of intercultural teaching in her practice due to the tensions between language and intercultural learning in the classroom. In the interview, even though Heidi recognised the lack of support for intercultural teaching in the curriculum, she emphasized the need to include cultural aspects and "mix" them into her language teaching: "For me as a teacher it [culture] is uhm something important but uhm in our læreplan [curriculum] it's not always a big focus on the cultural element but it's something that I try to mix into the subject anyway". This tension raised by the teacher in this study related to how the difficulties experienced in finding a balance between language teaching and intercultural learning that teachers attempt to integrate has an effect on teachers' practices and cognitions (Luk, 2012; Oranje & Smith, 2017). In previous studies on learners' experiences with portfolios, the participants pointed out that portfolio activities took too much time away from studying grammar, and that portfolio work was not reflected in their final grades (e.g. Abrams et al., 2006). A similar finding is identified in the Oranje's study (2021), when one of the participating teachers in a pre-project interview mentioned that portfolios would hinder language acquisition among her learners; however, the teacher had slightly changed her opinion at the conclusion of the project. This issue on the incorporation of a language component is one of the main challenges in the work with

intercultural (e)-portfolios. However, in addition to the affordances related to intercultural learning, the teachers in this project also acknowledged opportunities for language learning (see Table 2). The teachers saw specific benefits for vocabulary acquisition and writing:

And then and also when you tell the fractured fairy tales when you tell a story that people know from someone else's perspective it's a very important lesson for for their uhm for their continued work in... as writers (Peter)

When it comes to language, I think they have learned...quite some new words that they wouldn't maybe work with ehm otherwise. And words that they would not come across but the words that we would not like teach in school so they got to use their language in a new way (Heidi)

While there seemed to be practical concerns and some limitations in depth of reflection relating to intercultural learning, the three teachers noticed that their pupils were more engaged when intercultural topics were discussed. The teachers emphasized affective aspects of their pupils' learning, such as positive feelings, namely they mentioned: "fun", "entertaining". Peter commented: "You could see their smiles kind of, oh that is where we're going with this". This might have been associated with the "novelty factor", i.e. it seems that the learners had previously hardly ever been asked to reflect on themselves, their cultures and cultural experiences. They could have found such topics interesting, leading to more engagement.

To sum up, the teachers mentioned the challenges related to the pacing of the tasks and to the limited amount of time the learners were given. These findings highlight the complex and time-consuming nature of the process of incorporating the e-portfolio aimed at intercultural learning (Gonçalves & Andrade, 2007; Oranje, 2021). The data indicates that the teachers seemed to be willing to utilise an e-portfolio-based intercultural teaching approach (similar to the EPIC) into their practice if they are able to overcome time constraints. Peter (P3), for example, suggested that he would give the pupils more time to think more deeply about the issues and decrease the number of entries they make in class. Regarding this, one important implication from the study is that teachers need to be given sufficient time to plan, implement and work with the e-portfolio. Furthermore, attempts should be made to design e-portfolio entries where language learning prepared for intercultural understanding in a way that language flows into culture, linking both elements in a balanced manner (Biebricher et al., 2019). The language learning aspect could be incorporated within the e-portfolio as part of reflection prompts (in the form of, for example, listing vocabulary items learned). Further changes in the e-portfolio use could be including the intercultural e-portfolio in assessment practices to make it worthwhile for teachers to incorporate it more thoroughly into their teaching, for example, as an additional formative assessment tool. In such a way, the use of the tool would be more natural and purposeful for the pupils and the teachers. Nevertheless, while the teachers reported that the focus on culture seemed to have come at the price of language learning, they also acknowledged the opportunities when their pupils activated their language-focused learning development.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore three lower secondary school EFL teachers' perspectives on the affordances of the EPIC as a tool of intercultural learning. Teacher interviews revealed a number

of affordances in relation to the integration of the e-portfolio into the classrooms. The e-portfolio offers opportunities to collect learner artifacts to track their reflections on intercultural learning development. As the findings show, the e-portfolio has potential for promoting self-awareness, awareness of others and perspective taking viewed as integral components of IC. Specifically, the teachers observed that the entries which enabled the learners to actively engage with and “visualise” their learning (for example, Seven Identity Game) helped learners to enhance their understanding of the complex nature of their own identities. Thus, the tool can serve as a platform for promoting the awareness of the “complexity of me” (Lawrence, 2013), which in turn can provide a framework to see the complexity of others. Accordingly, reflection is also an umbrella term combining all the four metaphors in the EPIC (Mirror, Window, Reversed mirror, and Coloured glasses), all of which indicate the four tenets of the EPIC (Appendix 1). Overall, learning through a reflective lens can help teachers develop an innovative, learner-centred practice to facilitate relevant intercultural learning (Lawrence, 2020, p. 133). Similar to Snider & McCarthy’s (2012) findings, the results of the present study indicate that the teachers considered the e-portfolio as a flexible tool which allows for greater adaptability and variation and increases opportunities to go beyond textbooks. The electronic nature of the e-portfolio and technology can play an important role in this, giving learners access to authentic images and videos; additionally, the amount of interaction capability afforded by the use of digital tools outweighs those which can be achieved through paper-based means (Oner & Adadan, 2011).

This small-scale case study is limited to the experience and perceptions of the three language teachers in one Norwegian lower secondary school. The teachers displayed perceptions that might be shared with other teachers. On the other hand, the participants of this study are individuals with varied demographic characteristics (age, gender, educational background etc.). Therefore, the future researchers might be interested in how similar research designs could be transferred to other contexts as the implementation of the e-portfolio was situationally and culturally embedded in the Norwegian context. Although the researcher tried to remain objective during the interviews and data analysis, the relationship during the intervention between the teachers and the researcher would also have influenced the types of responses elicited in the interviews. One of the recommendations for future research might be to record a researcher’s own reflections to better examine what should be improved and what steps worked well during the data collection process. In addition, the duration of future studies is also a key issue, as the current study has shown; the teachers perceived that they were constrained by the large number of tasks and a short period in which the intervention took place. Future researchers might want to consider more longitudinal approaches and adopt other data collection tools, such as teacher observations and field notes, to increase the validity of the results.

In line with the study by Oranje (2021), the participating teachers were well-disposed towards the e-portfolio as a means of intercultural language teaching. However, the teachers felt that there was room for improvement, as practical concerns (related to time and the number and types of tasks) and issues of integration and balance between language and intercultural learning were also mentioned by the teachers. In the context of intercultural learning, practical constraints, such as limitations on time, resources, curricula support, perceived by the FL teachers (Larzen-Ostermark, 2008; Sercu, 2013) oftentimes prevent them from integrating an intercultural component in their classrooms. One of the main challenges in working with this tool identified

in the literature, is that teachers often see e-portfolio projects as add-on or “extracurricular” activities (Sudhershana, 2014, p. 160). Heidi’s concern regarding the language component is valid in this study and has to be taken into consideration. Previous research findings support the need for a careful integration of portfolios and language instruction (Oranje, 2021; Sudhershana, 2014). In order to overcome drawbacks of limitations on time and resources, it might be necessary to reduce the number of tasks, find a balance between culture and language components within the e-portfolio and spread them out over a longer period of time so that the learners can complete them more thoroughly and the teachers could focus more explicitly on the language learning in the e-portfolios. To sum up, the e-portfolio as a tool allows different kinds of opportunities for intercultural language learning. However, simply using a tool does not guarantee that intercultural learning will be fostered as its implementation is affected by each teacher’s different teaching practices and beliefs. Nevertheless, implementing tools where intercultural learning is promoted overtime and through a range of modes and text types would reduce the burden for teachers to find a platform for intercultural teaching and learning since such tools serve as flexible structural support and may thus help them to meet the curricular goals of intercultural learning.

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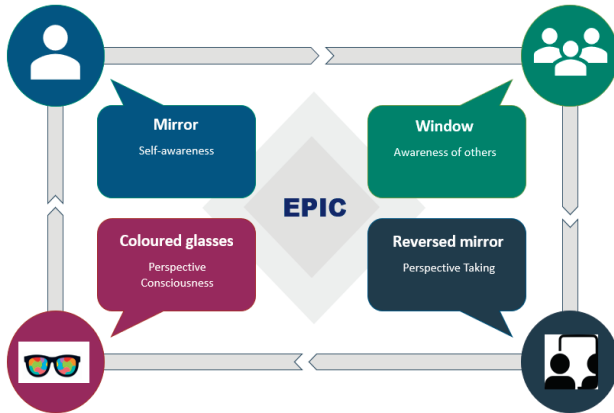
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Appendix 1 Visual representation of the central aims of the EPIC



Appendix 2 The overview of the EPIC entries

Week	Name and Source	Description	Objective
1	1. About me (Brander et al., 2016)	To describe themselves and their families in terms of places they have been, countries they have been travelled to.	• Self-awareness
	2. The ID t-shirt (SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre:	To design a T-shirt which visually shows the Self; to list three things that	• Self-awareness

	ID Booklet Ideas for Inclusion and Diversity, 2008, p. 16-18)	the pupils like, and three things that they do not like.	
2	3. Onion of identities (Brander et al., 2016, p. 30); (SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre: ID Booklet Ideas for Inclusion and Diversity, 2008, p. 20-21)	To answer the question: “Who am I?” and construct a model of their Self as an Onion by placing elements which make them who they are to five layers of an Onion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness
3	4. My cultural and national identity (Brander et al., 2016, p. 30)	To reflect on the way others make associations and stereotypes about one’s country and link them to their own self and their personality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Perspective consciousness
	5. Identity Tag Game (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 151)	To reflect on what are the most important things which make up who they are; to walk around the room and read the papers of the others, holding their paper in front of them so others can read it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of Others
	6. Seven Identities Game Inspired by the researcher’s supervisor and a member of the institution who practiced it with their students.	To make a list of top seven core “elements” of their identity and then to narrow it down to one last element they consider the most important.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of Others
4	7. Sunglasses story (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012, p. 153)	To reflect on a metaphorical story which helps them realize that one sees the world through one’s own unique lens. The story tells about two groups of people who are born with a differently coloured pair of glasses (yellow and blue). When the groups meet, they put on each other’s sunglasses, and realize that both see green lenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective consciousness • Perspective taking
	8. Comic strips on perspective-taking Online Cultural Training Resource for Study Abroad. https://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture/	To create comic strips and learn to recognize how seemingly ordinary activities can have different meanings depending on whether one is an actor or an observer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
	9. Multicultural societies (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007b, p. 100)	To write an article that debates a topic on living in multicultural cities, giving reasons to support alternative points of view and one’s own.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Others • Perspective taking
	10. Fractured Fairy Tale (Dolan, 2014, p. 72)	To retell a popular story, changing the point of view or the plot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking
	11. Music Hall (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007a, p. 80)	To write a short blog entry on the song “America” from the musical West Side Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Others • Perspective taking

6	12. Interview room (Huber-Kriegler, Lazar, & Strange, 2003)	To interview a person with a background different from their own about things they do in their everyday lives and compare obtained information with their own daily routines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of Others
	13. This is how we do it (Lamothe, 2017)	To complete a series of tasks as they read a picture book “This is how we do it”; to explore lives and daily rituals of seven kids and link them with their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Others • Perspective taking
7	14. ‘If I were..., I’d be...’ (Myself, my language and my culture) (Rigamonti & Scott-Monkhouse, 2010)	To complete 12 stem sentences by choosing 12 metaphors thinking about themselves, their culture, and the target culture (sentences starting with “If I were..., I’d be...” or “If Norwegians were..., they’d be” and “If the British/Americans were..., they’d be...”).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Awareness of Others • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness
8	15. History corner (Bromseth & Wigdahl, 2007, pp. 159-162)	To complete a series of tasks as they explore the story of Rosa Parks viewed from five different perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking
	16. The Other Side (Woodson, 2001; adapted from Rader, 2018, pp. 131-136)	To answer a series of reflection questions on their perceptions of the children book <i>The Other Side</i> by Woodson (2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspective taking • Perspective consciousness

Appendix 3 Interview guide

- 1) What has motivated you to take part in the project?
- 2) Tell me about a lesson(s) during this project that went well.
- 3) Tell me about a lesson(s) during this project that didn’t work.
- 4) Suppose that you were in charge to improve this project, what one change/changes would you make?
- 5) How would you evaluate the pupils’ behaviour during lessons when they were asked to complete their e-portfolios/tasks?
- 6) In your view, did the pupils find the project interesting/engaging? Did you find the project interesting/engaging?
- 7) What do you think were valuable elements of this project in terms of any aspect of teaching culture?
- 8) What do you think was difficult or unnecessary in this project?
- 9) Can you name three things which went particularly well. How, in your view, did the pupils benefit from the e-portfolio? Could you name a few things which need improvement?
- 10) What potential learning outcomes within the English subject this project might have had?
- 11) Did your pupils give any feedback to you about their participation in EPIC?
- 12) Would you use any activities/ideas from the project again in other classes/other levels/future 9 Grade?

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