2.1 Introduction

Taking the cultural dimension into account is no longer considered as something new in language teaching and learning. Because of the rapid development of language teaching and the widely defined notion of language as a means of communication, it has become evident today that foreign language learning comprises not just of “knowledge and skill in the grammar of a language but also the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways” (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey 7). Thus, for the modern scholars, teachers as well as learners, cultural competence is indisputably becoming an integral part of foreign language education as well as its goal.

In fact, we are witnessing a rapid growth of the importance of intercultural dimension in FLT, which in its turn brings up particular challenges for language teaching. The present Chapter is concerned with intercultural FLT and incorporation of the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom. More specifically, some considerations will be given to the need of incorporating intercultural dimension in the field of language teaching and to the related pedagogical issues. This is to counter the popular misconception that still permeates FLT, which is mainly the conviction that language is a code and that it can be mastered merely through grammatical rules. Therefore, the Chapter is intended to demonstrate that teaching a foreign language is not merely acquiring syntactic structures or learning new vocabulary and expressions, but mainly incorporating some cultural elements, which are intertwined with language itself. Conceptions of culture, the relationship between language and culture and the development of aims within FLT will be outlined and discussed. Furthermore, a discussion will take place on how to incorporate culture into the classroom by means of considering some techniques and methods currently used worldwide. The Chapter will also look into the potentials and challenges of Intercultural FLT. The main premise of the Chapter is that effective communication is more than a matter of language proficiency.
2.1.1 The Need for Intercultural Foreign Language Education

In the contemporary world, there is a general agreement about the need for intercultural foreign language education. The new reality commands respective challenges in communication bringing nearly everyone into contact with people of other languages and cultures. The importance of international and intercultural understanding has long been recognized at all levels. However, the issues of practical implementation and the potential of intercultural education are relatively new and unexplored.

What practical use does intercultural education have in the era of globalization? How can intercultural education contribute to our intercultural competence? This section is dedicated to the necessity of intercultural education accelerated by growing economic, environmental, informational and cultural global interconnectedness.

I will base my discussion on the obvious fact that language is a social institution, both shaping and shaped by society at large or at the levels of “the cultural niches” (Armour-Thomas and Gopaul-Mc. Nicol 55), in which it plays an important role. Therefore, language is no more seen today as an “autonomous construct” (Fairclough 4) but a social practice which, to repeat, both creates and is created by “the structures and forces of [the] social institutions within which we live and function” (ibid.). Thus, since language cannot exist in a vacuum there is a constant ‘transfusion’ between language and culture. And foreign language education is the first to react to this strong universal connection since learning a new language involves grappling with the notion of culture in relation to language. Thus, our further discussion is fundamentally based on the belief that language and culture are interconnected (Cruz, Bonissone and Baff, 1995; Heileman and Kaplan, 1985; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Peck, 1998; Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002; Sellami, 2000; Singhal, 1997; Stern, 1983; Thanasoulas, 2001).

The most significant fact underpinning the need for intercultural learning is the multicultural reality in which we live today. Our post-modern society is becoming “increasingly international, with abundant intercultural encounters through tourism, trade, diplomacy, exchange and the mobility of people” (Eva Larzen 21). In fact, for the last several decades we have been witnessing rapid and profound transformation of our society on a wider scale. Economic globalization, the communications revolution, dramatic increase in travel, new information technologies, notably the internet, has produced a great degree of mobility. Consequently, both the extent to which people are exposed to other people, and cultures are confronted with other cultures, has
exponentially increased. Thus, language has come to be seen as a social practice and culture as the very core of language teaching and learning.

Reacting to these rapid changes, writers such as Valeds (1990), Quasthoff (1986), Keller (1987), Byram (1991), Byram and Flemming (1998), Muller-Jacquier (1986) and Kramsch (1991, 1993) have stressed the impossibility of teaching language without teaching culture and have reaffirmed the role of cultural studies in foreign language education. They were among the first to recognise that the target language focus of traditional language teaching is no longer appropriate. They realized that it is neither realistic nor necessarily desirable for a language teacher to maintain the aim of producing native or near-native competence. Instead, they offered teaching that will enable the foreign language learner to function effectively in contexts in which other languages and cultures are at play.

Unfortunately, along with this growing intercultural collaboration at different levels, negative phenomena such as racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudices and different forms of extremism become increasingly common. Cultural diversity puts a demand on our contemporary society for timely education-based responses for a change in perspective concerning ‘the others’ and ‘ourselves’. For this reason, the focus of education in general and foreign language education in particular must in some way transcend the moral exclusion that feeds ethnocentrism and the most radical forms of nationalism. “This is when education about and for human rights becomes a vehicle for intercultural education and cooperation” (Reardon, “Intercultural Cooperation in Higher Education and Teacher Education”). By means of incorporating culture into FLT one can strive to promote a better understanding and peaceful dialogue between cultures. I strongly believe that putting culture into the central part within the domain of foreign language education will raise a cultural awareness, appreciation and acceptance of other cultures, as well as increase an awareness of one’s own.

Understanding that the present discussion is by no means exhaustive, I would like to start by following Kaikkonen (70-71), in seeing a person’s own cultural identity and its strengthening as the principal factor playing a role in the need for intercultural learning in today’s world. I agree with her that self-esteem and consciousness of one’s own identity serves as a foundation for intercultural learning. Since we are living in an age of post-modernism, which most of us would like to see as an age of tolerance towards different ideologies, religions, sub-cultures we need to understand ourselves and create awareness in the new generation not only of the other culture but also of our own.
As has been mentioned above, along with the positive phenomena of the present era some people tend to espouse ethnocentric views due to being culture bound. This in turn leads to major problems when confronting a different culture. Being culture bound, people try to reject or ignore the new culture or begin to talk about the supremacy of their own culture by creating a hierarchy of cultures in their own minds. This difficulty in understanding or accepting people with other points of view is highlighted by Kramsch (2001) in the following way:

People who identify themselves as members of a social group (family, neighbourhood, professional or ethnic affiliation, and nation) acquire common ways of viewing the world through their interactions with other members of the same group. These views are reinforced through institutions like the family, the school, the workplace, the church, the government, and other sites of socialization through their lives. Common attitudes, beliefs and values are reflected in the way members of the group use language—for example, what they choose to say or not to say and how they say it. (6)

The next step is to understand what is meant by *Intercultural competence* in foreign language education acquired by both teachers and learners. In fact, culture as a discipline in general, and its role in the language teaching and learning in particular, has been surrounded by controversy in recent decades. Byram and Zarate (1994), working within the framework of the Modern Language project conducted a study for the Council of Europe in which they drew up proposals for defining and assessing intercultural competence in FLT. Along with them numerous writers and researchers across the continents also addressed the issue of the aim of language teaching and learning from a cultural point of view. Thus, the idea of the native speaker was replaced with the new model of intercultural learner.

The model of the native speaker, commonly employed to determine the goals and competence expected at the end of a language course, is no longer adequate. This is firstly because the high level it demands is utopian when compared to the actual level achieved by school leaving students. Secondly, this model underestimates the skills required to go from one cultural system to another (Zarate 10-11).

Byram defines an interculturally competent learner as one who has three primary characteristics:
...a multilingual competence; a sensitivity to the identities present in interlingual and cross-frontier interaction; an ability to mediate/relate one’s own and other cultures with ‘intercultural communicative competence,’ i.e., with a communicative competence familiar to language teachers from the developments of the past two decades, which is complemented by ‘intercultural competence’. (18)

In order to answer the question to why one should overtly focus on culture as an integral aspect of the curriculum, first of all, one should concern him/herself with culture. This is because even though culture is inherent in what we teach, to believe that whoever is learning the foreign language is also learning the cultural knowledge and skills required to be a competent L2/FL speaker, “denies the complexity of culture, language learning, and communication” (Lessard-Clouston, 135). Secondly, the inclusion of culture in the foreign language curriculum is important because it helps avoid the stereotypes (Nemni, 1992). The third reason for teaching culture in the foreign language classroom is to enable learners to take control of their own learning and to achieve autonomy by evaluating and questioning the wider context within which the learning of the target language is embedded. Tomalin and Stempleski (7-8), modifying Seelye’s (1988) “seven goals of cultural instruction”, may provide an answer pertinent to the question posed. According to them, the teaching of culture has the following goals and is in itself a means of accomplishing them:

- To help students develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours;
- To help students develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave;
- To help students become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture;
- To help students increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language;
- To help students develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence;
- To help students develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture;
• To stimulate students’ intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

The above given list of goals is considered to be an improvement on Huebener’s (182-183) list of “desirable outcomes”. It follows that the aim of teaching culture is ‘to increase students’ awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, helping them to make comparisons among cultures” (Tavares and Cavalcanti 19). The comparisons are meant to enrich students’ experience and to sensitise them to cultural diversity:

This diversity should then be understood and respected, and never…over (sic) or underestimated. (ibid. 20)

The relevance of including teaching culture into foreign language education is explained further. For Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983), the main goal is to provide students with meaningful interactions in authentic or real life situations with native or native-like speakers of the target language. In this view Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983) maintain that it is necessary to teach about the target culture in social studies classes as well, so that students are not only taught how to meet these communicative goals, but are also taught, “the socio-cultural knowledge of the second language group that is necessary in drawing inferences about the social meanings or values of utterances”.

Among other benefits of teaching culture in foreign language classroom, we see that:

• *It* allows students to “feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign peoples and not just hear their language” (Peck 3). When students are taught the cultural contexts of the language their experience of language learning becomes more real, more purposeful and more authentic (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003);

• *It* piques the interest of students and acts as a motivator (Hammerly, 1982; Hendon, 1980). According to Shumin (1997), teaching about the target culture when teaching the target language reinforces the use of what she calls cultural-awareness, which in its turn serves to motivate students. The affect of motivation has been proven by experts like Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1965, 1972). Learners were observed enjoying culturally based activities such as singing, dancing, role playing, doing research on countries and people etc. Not only
learners’ interest and curiosity about another culture increases in target countries but also their motivation to learn the language;

- It helps dispel myths or debunk stereotypes associated with the people from the target culture (Hammerly, “Synthesis in Second Language Teaching”). Albert Einstein aptly expressed the rigidity of prejudices and stereotypes: “It is harder to crack a prejudice than an atom.” Thus promoting unprejudiced attitudes and preventing discrimination is thus a highly important benefit of incorporating culture into foreign language teaching and learning. Foreign language teaching today is seen to be in a particularly favorable position to contribute to this task.

Besides these benefits, studying culture provides a space for the learners to develop a liking towards the native speakers of the target language. It is noticed that studying culture also plays a useful role in attaining general knowledge about the geography, history etc. of the target culture (Cooke, “Suggestions for developing more positive attitude toward native speakers of Spanish”).

From the learners’ perspective, culture studies also solve one of their major problems, which is mainly to conceive a native speaker of target language as a real person. Without background knowledge of those “genuine real situations” given by the grammar books they may be considered as fictive by the learners. In addition, according to Chastain (1971) by providing access into cultural aspect of language, we provide them a possibility to relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places. Basing his views on the assumption that communication is not only an exchange of information but also a highly cognitive, affective and value-laden activity, Melde (1987) holds that FLT should foster “critical awareness” of social life—a view commensurate with Fairclough’s (1989 and 1995) critical theory (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994). To be more specific, “through a process of decentering and a level of reciprocity, there arises a moral dimension, a judgmental tendency, which is not defined purely on formal, logical grounds” (Byram, Morgan et al., 5) when the language learner understands the perspectives of others and reflects on his own perspectives as well.

In other words, the learner needs to take the role of the foreigner, so that he may gain insights into the values and meanings that the latter has internalised and unconsciously negotiates with the members of the society to which he belongs. (ibid.)

As Baumgratz-Gangl (1990) asserts, the integration of values and meanings of the foreign culture with one’s ‘native culture’ can bring about a shift of perspective or
the “recognition of cognitive dissonance” (Byram, Morgan et al. 38). Moreover, Swaffar (1992) acknowledges the role of culture to combat “cultural distance”, exposing students to foreign literature and helping them develop the ability to put into question and evaluate the cultural elements in foreign language texts. Kramsch (1993, 1987a) is also among those who strongly believe that culture should be taught as “an interpersonal process” and teachers are responsible for assisting language learners in coming to terms with the “other culture” (Singhal, “Teaching Culture in a Foreign Language Classroom”) rather than only for presenting cultural facts. According to her, by increasing multiculturality of various societies, learners become more aware of certain cultural factors such as age, gender and social class (Kramsch, 1988b).

Inclusion of culture into foreign language education has received considerable attention from multinational organisations, such as the European Parliament, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). Today all the important agencies, consortia and foundations generate publishing reports which publicise the enormous importance of taking this issue seriously and acting with political acumen and civic responsibility in the public spheres of civil society (Banks and Banks, 1995; Coulby, Gundara, and Jones, 1997). They are actively involved in the call for purposeful widespread social response to the necessity of intercultural cooperation.

UNESCO, for instance, acknowledging the importance of Intercultural Education, established two commissions, one of which is Culture and Development and the other is Education in the 21st Century. Their task is to develop concrete suggestions for an intercultural approach in education worldwide. Professor Cecilia Braslavsky, Director of the International Bureau of Education (IBE), notes that globalization paradoxically threatens the existence of many cultures and languages and thus stresses the importance of intercultural education in the survival of humankind. Acknowledging the increasing mobility of people between countries, Braslavsky noticed the desire of people to maintain one’s own culture in another country. Seeing it as a challenge for intercultural education, he called for methods in an intercultural education and a willingness to promote a peaceful, diverse and united world.

Recognizing 21st Century society as multicultural in essence, the international research community has also emphasized the importance of intercultural pedagogies as something that permeates education at large. Nieke (1995, in Doyé 15), for instance sees Interkulturelle Bildung as an indispensable component of Allgemeinbildung, and Klafki
elevates “the Culture specific and the Intercultural” as one of the seven problem complexes that should be the starting point for present-and-future oriented educational work.

Thus, it becomes obvious that the new societal demands make it necessary to rethink goals and content of foreign language education in order to help students develop awareness and competences that can be applied in many different situations. The main premise of the present section is that it is not possible to teach foreign language without offering insights into its speakers’ culture. Fostering ‘communicative competence’ is not possible without taking into account the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures. Communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and sifting his/her cultural baggage, while always “putting [the target] culture in relation with one’s own” (Kramsch 205). Moreover, we agree with Politzer (100-101) that “[i]f we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning…”

I also completely agree with Dimitrios Thanasoulas (“The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom”) that “At any rate, foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has, even implicitly, been taught in the foreign language classroom—if for different reasons”. And now it is more of a concern which is frequently debated upon as to what is meant by the term ‘culture’ and how it is integrated into language learning and teaching. Kramsch’s keenly observes:

Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (1)

In the following sections we will explore the conceptions of culture, have a closer look at the relationship between language and culture and shed light on how culture is conceived and understood by educators in the domain of FLT.
2.1.2. Conceptions of Culture and Culture Teaching

Discussion about the intercultural dimension in FLT is irrelevant without a discussion on what culture is. According to Williams (87), “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language”. Literature review on the discussion of culture in anthropology revealed that there are myriad definitions of culture. The period from 1920s to the 1950s was the most fruitful period for defining culture in various ways (cf. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). In their study entitled *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, cited by H. Ned Seelye (1972), Kroeber and Kluckhohn, initiated to examine nearly three hundred definitions and compiled another one hundred and sixty-four, most of which were introduced in the second half of the twentieth century. They offered a taxonomy illustrating how the concept of the term ‘culture’ was developed. The definition categories were based on the main emphasis including descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural and genetic, thus complicating the issue for language teaching theorists and researchers searching for a precise definition that could be readily applicable to the classroom practices. The recent publication by Balwin et al., *Redefining Culture* also presents over three hundred definitions of the term from across the disciplines.

The premise of the present section is that the more one knows about the concept of culture itself the better equipped one will be to develop the successful practice of learning and teaching culture. My purpose is not to re-present a history of how understanding of the term culture has evolved and developed. Nor do I aim to provide the definitive interpretation of the concept. The aim of the present section is to highlight the answer to the following question: How has the term ‘culture’ been defined in the area of foreign language education? In order to answer this question I will refer to the foreign language educationists’ perceptions of culture by looking at the range of definitions and interpretations that have been applied over time.

In fact since the very beginning culture has been an omnibus term presented in language education. From the 19th century onwards when the first attempts to define culture were made, this concept has attracted numerous definitions and interpretations (Atkinson, 1999; Baldwin, Faulkner, Hecht and Lindsley, 2006; Geertz, 1973; Kramsch, 1998; Robins, 2005; Tyler, 1881; Wilson, 1935). In my view, the most significant shift in understanding culture by foreign language theorists, experts and teachers was the one in the 1950s, when there was a shift from a humanistic understanding of the concept to
the anthropological one. Today it seems rather odd that most language education theorists following the anthropological views on culture did not account the relationship between language and culture in their works. However, anthropological description of the content culture as “never exhaustive” is because “culture is an abstraction and the listing of any relatively concrete phenomena confuses this issue” (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 46). Brooks along with other theorists (Damen, 1987, Lado, 1957, Lafayette, 1978, Nostrand, 1974, 1978, Rivers, 1981, Seelye, 1974, 1993) were preoccupied with an attempt to fix the term culture in concrete phenomena. Their aim was to rather concentrate on the techniques that would allow learners of foreign languages to understand the target culture better and appropriately behave in it, by taking up the anthropologists’ understanding of culture as a “concrete observable entity (that) does not exist anywhere” (Kluckhohn 45).

In fact the major language teaching theoretician Nelson Brooks (1964, 1968, 1971, 1975), emphasizing the need for an anthropological approach to the study of culture, made a clear distinction between a humanistic conception of culture that deals with a nation’s so called Olympian culture, mainly “great books”, “great ideas” and “artistic endeavors” (Toohey 5) and an anthropological concept which focuses on the way of a people’s life. The later, so called “Hearthstone culture” (Brooks, 1971) gained prominence in his works. The writer aimed at making teachers aware of the new frontier in language teaching by viewing culture anthropologically. Moreover, he argued that “the concept of (culture) must be developed according to the needs and insights of those immediately concerned” (Brooks 204).

Today, however, not all of Brooks’ initiatives are considered successful. He was looking at culture unproblematically believing that “cultural anthropologists are… reasonably clear as to what they mean by the word culture… in their discipline” (ibid. 205) which on closer analysis may not hold correct. Among the five different meanings of culture, mainly biological growth, personal refinement, literature, the fine arts and total way of life, it were the patterns for living that were “least understood” (ibid. 210). According to his own definition, the patterns of living referred to “the individual’s role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them” (ibid.). However, this was too vague, simplistic and a hardly usable conceptualization, which did not help in identifying the concept:

What is central in (this meaning of culture) is the interchange and the reciprocal effect of the social pattern and the individual upon each
other...what one is “expected” to think, believe, say, do, eat, wear, pay, endure, resent, honor, laugh at, fight for, and worship, in typical life situations. (ibid. 211)

That culture was not accorded a prominent place in foreign language education was also due to the fact that the list offered by Brooks was too abstract and arbitrary with “matters that appear central and critical in the analysis of culture” (ibid.) which included Symbolism, Value, Authority, Order, Ceremony, Love, Honor, Humor, Beauty, Spirit. However, in practice these categories were not likely to be pursued by teachers and were found to be not precise enough in providing teachers an idea of teaching culture. Moreover, neither was the materials suggested to address these matters nor ways to teach them.

Besides, Brooks argued, “knowledge of culture is best imparted as a corollary or an obbligato to the business of language learning” (Brooks 123). The presentation of a foreign culture in a form of five-minute “hors d’oeuvres” (ibid. 124) was offered on sixty various cultural topics. However, there was no attempt to provide a unified concept of culture along with this overwhelming list of topics. According to Stern (1983):

> Although it is claimed that culture is “patterned” and offers an integrated whole, in effect, what is presented is often a far from integrated miscellany of categories. No attempt is made to arrange them in any order, to control the degree of abstraction of the different headings, (or) to suggest principles of selection. (252)

It is not surprising that the teachers found it extremely difficult to use such an unclear list without any instruction in a classroom, which again led to the failure in giving culture a prominent place.

Another unfortunate tradition in the treatment of the anthropological culture started by Brooks was the disregard of the difficulties in providing cultural description. According to Brooks, culture could be taught by imparting ‘facts’ on the basis of comparison of these facts with the ones in the native culture. In a way, to be able to deliver the necessary knowledge and data was too much of a demand on the teachers.

Elaborated by Brooks (1965), the idea that “speech and act” (ibid) do not exist individually, but rather as components supported by thought, made “culture” into a chain of “Thought, Speech and Act”. Thus set by Brooks, the ambiguities and inconsistencies in culture teaching, led to limited, unsatisfactory practices. His view on culture as the
sum of a people’s life and systems of pattered behaviour overwhelmingly affected the approach to culture in foreign language education for almost the next forty years.

By the early 1960s, anthropology started demonstration of various theories and conceptualizations of culture linking it to language. However, it took years for culture teaching theoreticians in language education to refuse behaviorist views of culture, which did not address the need to relate language and culture. From the mid 1970s till the mid 1980s the practical techniques for presenting culture in foreign language classrooms were emphasized. However, the conceptualization of culture in language teaching still remained ambiguous. Stern points out:

Writers on culture were eager to show that even if the concept of culture was somewhat vague, cultural goals could be expressed in clear and unambiguous terms. (212)

Another prominent theoretician in the area of culture teaching, Ned Seelye, who first addressed the issue of culture teaching in the early 1970s, has also not been able to provide a solution to the conceptualization of culture. He preferred to rather refuse to define culture (1974, 1993) concluding that the teachers had reached the consensus regarding the concept:

(t)he most widely accepted usage now regards culture as a broad concept that embraces all aspects of human life, from folktales to carved whales.

(ibid. 22)

He further argues, “Teachers … have finally been content to shrug (their) shoulders and admit that it does not really matter how (culture) is defined as long as the definition is broad” (ibid. 23). However, literature review reveals how no consensus had been reached with regard to culture teaching in the language classroom and how the cultural elements addressed in the classrooms were inconsistent, confusing and even controversial. Seelye seemed to be by no means disturbed by the fact and exclaimed to language teachers:

Avoid being a wimp! Reach for as broad an understanding of the target culture as your interests and energies allow. (ibid. 16)

Believing that the controversy over the definition of culture had “lead to a dead end” (ibid.), Seelye as well as Toohey (1979), called for a dismissal of the definitional debates about culture, which they found to be “colossal wastes of time” (4). For them the logical difficulties of trying to operationalize this, was too broad a category. However, despite this, Seelye takes a functionalist stand on the issue:
The culture of each population is a response to present needs. (Seelye 240)

In other words he assumes that:

People act the way they do to satisfy universal physical and psychological needs (…they) have banded together to meet these needs (and) predictably different bands of people have developed different ways of doing so. (Besides) hence an individual attempts to satisfy a basic need he or she usually has to employ many interacting cultural patterns that form a relatively cohesive structure. (ibid. 117)

Just like Malinowski, he believed that culture should be approached on the premise that all the people have to meet “basic needs such as food and shelter, for love and affection, and for self-respect” (ibid.) as human beings. However, I find this reference to anthropological literature outdated since it does not take into account the current disillusionment with the methods that lead to generalizations about a national culture.

One more example of conceptualizing culture too broadly and using culture as an omnibus term referring to “all aspects of shared life in a community” can be found in the works by Rivers (1981):

The study of language should bring home to students the realization that there are many ways of looking at things, many ways of doing and expressing things, and that differences do not necessarily represent moral issues of right and wrong. (ibid. 319)

However, this perspective offers insights into the language/culture connection:

A language is learned and used within….a context (of shared life in a community) drawing from the culture distinctive meanings and functions (ibid.. 316). Once students have realized that a new language is much more than a code to be cracked in order to transform ideas back into the familiar ones of the native language, they have gained an important insight into the meaning of culture. (ibid. 321)

In spite of this, Rivers fell back into categories such as “values” or “behaviors” like many other language education theoreticians, who intuitively felt what conception of culture, could be fruitful but did not continue in the line.

Another prominent theoretician, Stern, gives his own view on culture and the methods of teaching it (1992). His threefold classification (ibid. 210) of the term which had been suggested earlier by Hammerly (1982, 1986), distinguished between factual
culture as “the average educated native knows about his society” (513) from behavioral culture as “the sum of everyday life” (ibid. 514), which includes attitudes and values constituting actual behavior and achievement as “the artistic and literary accomplishments of a society” (ibid. 515). Thus, Sterns focuses on what teachers conceive of in the classroom instead of elaborating on the concept itself. However, I think that these above mentioned distinctions remain vague. Moreover, Sterns assumes that culture is knowledge that should be taught and that teachers are required to spend more time to teach this cultural information:

Language teachers who do not want to neglect the cultural component need accessible and reliable information. However, at present they are…faced…with the absence of recourses, lack of cultural research, the patchiness of documentation, and the overall shortage of systematic descriptive accounts of cultural data. (ibid. 202)

However, in my view, such accounts have potential danger of generalizations and stereotypes. I rather consider that his main contribution to the theory of culture teaching is his emphases on learner’s own interests and needs in approaching culture:

The literature on culture teaching has too readily assumed that the approach to culture is either that of the humanities or that of social science. The informal and subjective perspective has never been completely left out but it has not been assessed for what its specific contributions might be. (ibid. 218)

Unlike Stern, who critiques the various conceptualizations of culture and its descriptions as being “too encyclopedic”, Kroeber and Kluckhohn ultimately stated and formulated culture with capital ‘C’, referring to the fine arts and literature of high-scope writings and small ‘c’ culture which was supposed to comprise the so-called “real culture” or “deep culture” of what a person thinks of and acts accordingly. Hence, foreign language teachers and educators followed this definition neglecting the reality that culture is not merely comprised with capital ‘C’. In Stern’s view (1992), while some used the term to refer to background information such as historical facts or geography of the target country, others were using the term ‘culture’ referring to its products such as literary texts or works of art, and there were those who admitted such aspects as behavior, attitude and the social knowledge within its fold as well (Michael et al. 1996).

This lack of consensus among culture teaching theoreticians, on the meaning of culture, lead to tricky issues and diverse perspectives. The ambiguous conceptualization
of the term as well as prevalent practices focusing mainly on the presentation of cultural ‘facts’ and information were predominantly relying on systematic accounts of cultural data provided by anthropologists. It was hoped to be able to provide students with the knowledge in respect to situations in which cultural misunderstandings could occur (cf. Nostrand, 1974, 1978; Rivers, 1981; Seelye, 1974, 1993; Stern, 1983, 1992). This view suggested that culture could be merely taught by presenting certainties, fixed knowable items and ready answers for various questions. As mentioned above, in my view it can lead to stereotyping which will in its turn equip the learners with merely static sets of features portraying a culture. Since meaning emerges through social infractions (Bakhtin, 1986; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1991), teaching fixed cultural meanings, which do not exist in reality, seems to be a useless task. As Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984) put it:

An information-centered teaching strategy implies that the culture under study is closed, final, and complete. (It also) eliminates consideration of culture at the personal level, where the individual interacts with and acts upon the culture… Although culture contains knowledgeable facts, these facts are in constant flux. More important to an understanding of culture than the collection of facts is an appreciation of culture as a constellation of phenomena in a continual process of change, brought about by the participants in the culture as they live and work. To study culture as a body of facts is to study the characteristics of culture; to study culture, as a process is to study its essence. (141-142)

One accepts the fact that with the large number of definitions of culture present in anthropological literature it is considered as a “gross oversimplification” (Ilieva, 27) to adopt a single one as it would not account for the complexity of the phenomena. This complexity and variation in understanding of the concept of culture has been echoed in the range of approaches, strategies and techniques that have been advocated for language and culture teaching.

One of the ways to approach the question of definition of culture is to emphasize the link between culture and communication, especially in the context of intercultural FLT and learning. For the purposes of this research, we will give the term ‘culture’ a basic definition as “a learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviours of a relatively large groups of people” (Lustig and Koester 35) and then continue with Byram’s conceptualization of culture on the basis of which
the ICC model is built. Since cultures do not exist in external objects or behaviours, which are separate from any individual but rather they reside in the minds of people forming an important link between communication and culture it makes sense to elaborate on the issue of universal interdependence between language and culture.

2.2 Interdependence of Language and Culture

An increasing interest in the ways in which language and culture intersect has been seen in many countries by various researchers (Cruz, Bonissone and Baff, 1995; Heileman and Kaplan, 1985; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Peck, 1998; Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002; Sellami, 2000; Singhal, 1997; Stern, 1983; Thanasoulas, 2001). Byram et al. (1994) for example emphasize the strong relationship between language and culture in the context of FLT and learning in his work “Teaching-and-Learning Language-and-Culture”. Doyé (1999) takes the discussion further and focuses on the importance of not separating language from culture within language education but states that since language is both part of culture and a representation of culture, the relationship between language and culture is a complex one. The objective of this section is to provide an overview of the issues surrounding the relationship between language and culture. Moreover, this Chapter focuses on our own understandings of the relationship between culture and language and the reasons why the teaching of culture should constitute an integral part of the foreign language curriculum.

I would like to begin my discussion by agreeing with Fengping Gao (2006), who is convinced that language use should be analyzed in relation to the context of communication and as a means of communication in social interaction:

Language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself. The meanings of a particular language point to the culture of a particular social group, and the analysis of those meanings—their comprehension by learners and other speakers—involves the analysis and comprehension of that culture. It disregards the nature of language to treat language independently of the culture, which it constantly refers to. Thus, language teaching should always contain some explicit reference to the culture, the whole from which the particular language is taken. (58)
Thus, if we assume that language is a cultural practice and that it cannot exist in vacuum, we must agree that there is a kind of ‘transfusion’ between language and culture. Duranti succinctly encapsulated the illustration of how these two interpenetrate:

To be part of a culture means to share the propositional knowledge and the rules of inference necessary to understand whether certain propositions are true (given certain premises). To the propositional knowledge, one might add the procedural knowledge to carry out tasks such as cooking, weaving, farming, fishing, giving a formal speech, answering the phone, asking for a favour, writing a letter for a job application. (28-29)

Moreover, by looking at Duranti’s definition of culture as “something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human actions, often in the form of face-to-face interaction, and, of course, through linguistic communication” (24), one clearly understands that language, being in fact a subpart of culture plays a pivotal role. Bourdieu too has emphasised the importance of language not essentially as an autonomous construct but rather as a system determined by various socio-political processes. According to him, a language exists as a “linguistic habitus” (Bourdieu 52), as a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also as an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating, with particular systems of classification, address and reference forms, specialized lexicons and metaphors (Bourdieu 31, cited in Duranti 45).

In fact by the very act of talking, we assume social and cultural roles, which are so deeply entrenched in our thought processes as to go unnoticed. Moreover, culture defines not only what its members should think or learn but also what they should ignore or treat as irrelevant (Eleanor Armour-Thomas and Sharon and Gopaul-McNicol 56).

If we all agree that language has a setting and that the people who speak a language do belong to a race or races and play particular cultural roles, then we should also agree that:

Language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives. (Sapir 207)

Moreover, language is perceived as “a key to the cultural past of a society” (Salzmann 41), as “a guide to ‘social reality’” (Sapir 209, cited in Salzmann 41).
Many ethnographers such as Buttjes (1990), Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), Poyatos (1985) and Peters and Boggs (1986) have recently attempted to show that “language and culture are from the start inseparably connected” (Buttjes 55). More importantly, Buttjes (1990) also summarises the reasons for that:

- Every society orchestrates the ways in which children participate in particular situations, and this, in turn, affects the form, the function and the content of children’s utterances;
- Caregivers’ primary concern is not with grammatical input, but with the transmission of socio-cultural knowledge;
- The native learner, in addition to language, acquires also the paralinguistic patterns and the kinesics of his or her culture.

Therefore, it becomes obvious that language acquisition differs across cultures and does not follow a universal sequence. It implies that language teaching is culture teaching:

Language teachers need to go beyond monitoring linguistic production in the classroom and become aware of the complex and numerous processes of intercultural mediation that any foreign language learner undergoes. (Buttjes 55)

Bourdieu (2001) has also contributed to the understanding of the relationship between language and culture by emphasising the “importance of language not as an autonomous construct but as a system determined by various socio-political processes” (Thanasoulas ). According to him, a language exists “as a linguistic habitus and is a set of practices that imply not only a particular system of words and grammatical rules, but also as an often forgotten or hidden struggle over the symbolic power of a particular way of communicating, with particular systems of classification, address and reference forms, specialized lexicons, and metaphors (for politics, medicine, ethics)” (Bourdieu 31, cited in Duranti 45).

An eminent diplomat and scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote:

The spiritual traits and the structure of the language of a people are so intimately blended that, given either of the two, one should be able to derive the other from it to the fullest extent… Language is the outward manifestation of the spirit of people: their language is their spirit, and their spirit is their language; it is difficult to imagine any two things more identical. (Humboldt, 1907, cited in Salzmann 39)
In fact “to speak means to choose a particular way of entering the world and a particular way of sustaining relationships with those we come in contact with” (Dimitrios Thanasoulas, “The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom”). And it is through language that one achieves “an important window on the universe of thoughts” (Duranti 49); attains a link between thought and behaviour; and finds “the prototypical tool for interacting with the world” (ibid.).

Following this line of thought, one should refer to Brooks’s (1968) argument that physically and mentally everyone is born the same, but it is the interactions between persons or groups that vary widely from place to place. Patterns that emerge from these groups give birth to behaviors and interactions, which might be approved of, or disapproved of. Behaviors which are acceptable will vary from location to location (Brooks, 1968), thus, forming the basis of different cultures. Hantrais (1989) brings this idea further and states that culture is the set of beliefs and practices governing the life of a society for which a particular language is the vehicle of expression. Therefore, one can conclude that our views are dependent on the culture that influences us, and are described by use of the language which has been shaped by that culture. As Emmitt and Pollock (1997) points out, even though people are brought up under similar behavioral backgrounds or cultural situations, they speak different languages and their worldviews are different, the degree of which may vary. Thus, understanding of a culture and its people can be achieved by the knowledge of their language. This crucial point, once again, brings me to the understanding that teaching and learning of a foreign language is and cannot be without the teaching and learning of a foreign culture.

One more argument by Sapir-Whorf leads us to the same conclusion that learning a new language involves the learning of a new culture (Allwright and Bailey 1991). According to him different thoughts are brought about by the use of different forms of language and different languages will create different limitations. Therefore, people who share a culture but speak different languages will have different views. Thus, language is rooted in culture and culture is reflected and passed on by language from one generation to the next (Emmitt and Pollock, 1997). From this, one can see that teachers of a language are also teachers of culture (Byram 1989).

Although very few would subscribe to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on the connection between language and culture within foreign language education, here I would like to bring up Tornberg’s (2000: 61-62, 2001: 182-183) discussion on the same subject. This hypothesis is usually interpreted as claiming that the language we speak
determines our thinking and our conceptions of reality. Alternatively, it can also be interpreted as entailing the possibility of just interrelation between language, thought and perception (Bennett, 1998). Similarly, other researchers, such as Ochs and Schieffelin (1984), Poyatos (1985), and Peters and Boggs (1986) have attempted to show that “language and culture are from the start inseparably connected” (Buttjes 55). Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981) added their own observations in the following way:

Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted…Culture…is the foundation of communication. (24)

Recently researchers such as Ortuno (1991), Alptekin (1993), Coffey (1999), Martinez-Gibson (1998) and McKay (2000) have also shed light on the importance and place of cultural information in language teaching, stressing on the fact that communication is an interrelationship between a language and culture. Thus, the CC model is based on this understanding of the relationship between language and culture claiming that if culture is not taught as a part of communicative competence, complete communication does not happen.

It is important to note here that the development of culture and language learning is not a simple linear development, but a complex process in which all the strands described coexist and interact with each other. The following table by Jin and Cortazzi (see Fig. 2.1) illustrates the complex interactive relationship between the society, culture and language. In some senses, it shows how difficult it is to divide these three into distinct parts:

![Fig. 2.1 Complex Links between Language and Culture. A Framework of Communication and Learning; Jin and Cortazzi;1998.](image-url)
It is evident from the above figure that the relationship between language, culture and communication is extremely interrelated: culture is often carried forward by language and language is used to communicate. In my next section, I will show how the teaching of culture developed through its attempts towards understanding the interrelation between these three. I will trace the history of culture teaching in the domain of foreign language education to lead the reader to the modern understanding of the importance of incorporating culture into practice and its various approaches.

But before that, to conclude the present section I would like to once more underline its premise that language is no more accepted as an “autonomous construct” (Fairclough 6) but as a social practice, both creating and created by “the structures and forces of [the] social institutions within which we live and function” (ibid.). This impossibility of a language to exist in vacuum leads to the clear understanding of ‘transfusion’ between language and culture. This interdependence of language learning and culture learning is so evident that we can draw the conclusion that language learning is culture learning and consequently that language teaching is culture teaching. Before proceeding any further to the practical considerations of incorporating culture into the foreign language classroom, it would be necessary to briefly consider the history of culture teaching.

2.3 The History of Culture Teaching in FLT

Although teaching culture in foreign language teaching seems often to be regarded as a new phenomenon by language learners and teachers today, the practice actually started with the very beginning of language teaching itself. All methods employed in teaching languages throughout the whole language teaching history always included culture, as I believe it is impossible to teach a language without teaching the culture in which it operates. Thus, the cultural dimension of language teaching has long been an integral part of language teaching, though the issue has not always been clearly recognized and remained as “one of its unstated aims” (Kelly 1969):

The cultural orientation of language teaching has always been one of its unstated aims. Otherwise, it is impossible to explain the hold Greek literature, history, and attitudes had over Roman thought. It is likewise noteworthy that the scholia so frequent in medieval editions of the classics dealt with cultural facts as with grammar. We have already
mentioned the importance of the Renaissance colloquy in teaching basic
etiquette. In addition, scholars of the Renaissance recognized the utility
of language as a medium of international understanding. (378)

In fact culture teaching has been known in various places by different names. In
Britain it is referred to as “Background Studies”, in France it is called “Civilization”, in
Italy “Civiltà”, in Germany and Austria it is known “Landeskunde” (Byram, 1994). In
this Chapter, we will examine the two major perspectives that have historically
developed in the West and influenced the teaching of culture in foreign language
teaching across the globe, including India. In addition to a brief survey of the relevant
literature and seeing how the teaching of culture has developed, I will illustrate my
preference for the third perspective on teaching culture, of the three perspectives
discussed below.

The first perspective pertains to the transmission of factual and cultural
information, consisting in statistical data, such as information on institutional structures
and other aspects of the target civilisation- the so called highbrow information (literature
and the arts) and lowbrow information, focusing on the customs, habits and folklore of
everyday life (Kramsch 24). This preoccupation with facts rather than meanings, offers
“mere book knowledge learned by rote” (Huebener 177) leaving much to be desired as
far as an understanding of foreign attitudes and values is concerned. The learners are
virtually blindfolded to the minute albeit significant aspects of their own as well as the
target group’s identity that are not easily divined and appropriated (ibid.).

The second perspective is drawn upon cross-cultural psychology and
anthropology thus embedding culture within an interpretive framework and establishing
connections between the learner’s and the target country. According to some
researchers’ and theorists’ this approach has certain limitations, furnishing learners
“with cultural knowledge, but leaving them to their own devices to integrate that
knowledge with the assumptions, beliefs, and mindsets already obtaining in their
society” (Dimitrios Thanasoulas “The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign
Language Classroom”).

The approach tends to view culture as a relatively invariant and static entity
made up of accumulated, classifiable, observable, and hence, eminently teachable and
learnable “facts” (Brooks, 1975; Nostrand, 1974). This perspective allows us to focus
only on the surface level behaviour. It fails to look at the underlying value orientations
and recognize the variability of behaviour within the target cultural community, the
participative role of the individual in the creation of culture or the interaction of language and culture in the making of meaning (Moore, 1991).

As has been mentioned above, culture was integrated in the teaching of the language during the early years and down to the long period dominated by the Grammar-Translation Method. It was in 1918, when a report in the British journal “Modern Studies” became one of the first to recognize the need for culture teaching emphasizing “the need for a better knowledge of a country and its people as parts of second language education” (Stern, “Issues And Options in Language Teaching”). Since then, a number of educators and language teachers followed and emphasized the importance of the cultural aspect in language teaching. However, as Lessard-Clouston (1997) notes, in the past, people learned a foreign language to study its literature, which was the main medium of culture. “[I]t was through reading that students learned of the civilization associated with the target language” (Flewelling 339). Later in the 1950s and 1960s there was also an emphasis on teaching geography and history as a part of language learning.

And since the 1950s and 1960s cultural aims have appeared in many official language teaching objectives in different parts of the world. Many scholars and educators began to deal with the problem seriously. For instance, the leading works on language teaching theory during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Lado, 1957, Brooks, 1964, Rivers, 1968, Chastain, 1976) have all indicated the importance of the teaching of culture while teaching the language. The criticism is almost to the effect that if one teaches the language without teaching culture, one is essentially teaching meaningless syllables. This view of the importance of the teaching of culture in language teaching has also been taken up by some other scholars of the time such as Kelly (1969) and Seelye (1974).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the eminent scholars Hall (1959), Nostrand (1974), Seelye ([1974] 1984) and Brooks (1975) attempted to base foreign language learning on a universal ground of emotional and physical needs, so that “the foreign culture [would appear] less threatening and more accessible to the language learner” (Kramsch 224). In the 1970s, an emphasis on sociolinguistics resulted in stressing the situational context of the foreign language. For example, Savignon (1972) in his study on CC suggested the “value of training in communicative skills from the very beginning of the FL programme”. Consequently the role of culture in the foreign language teaching was enhanced and greatly influenced by Seelye (1974) and Lafayette’s (1975) works.
Communicative approach replaced the audio-lingual and according to Canale and Swain (1980) “a more natural integration” of language and culture took place “through a more communicative approach than through a more grammatically based approach”.

As it was mentioned in my previous section, Brooks (1964) being the first among those who strongly advocated cultural component in language education, emphasized an anthropological approach to the study of culture. Many people have thought of culture as what is often called “high culture”, being set in the framework of history and of social, political and economic structures i.e. art, literature, music and the like. Being one of those who believed that language teaching should include knowledge about the country and its way of life, Brooks made the distinction between Culture with a capital C that referred to formal culture and culture with a small c or deep culture, which referred to the “way-of-life” culture. In his seminal work “Language and Language Learning”, he offered sixty-four topics regarding such crucial aspects of culture as greetings, tobacco and smoking, cafes, bars expletives, personal possessions, cosmetics and restaurants, contrast between town and country life, verbal taboos, keeping warm and cool, medicine and doctors […]. Today we should admit that his groundbreaking work was very conducive to a shift of focus from teaching geography and history in the foreign language classroom to an anthropological approach to the study of culture. The importance of making the distinction between ‘Culture with a Capital C’—art, music, literature, politics and so on—and ‘culture with a small c’—the behavioural patterns and lifestyles of everyday people—helps in dispelling the myth that culture is an intellectual gift that belongs only to the elite.

Thus, the main thrust of Brooks’s work was to make people realize that culture is present in their very beliefs, assumptions and attitudes and not only in a form of aesthetic reflections or high-falutin ideas. We agree with Weaver (1993) who insightfully remarks that the commonly held notion of culture is largely concerned with its insignificant aspects, whereas people’s actual interaction with it takes place at a subconscious level. I also hold the opinion that the most important part of culture is that which is internal and hidden, yet governing human behaviour. The most significant part is the unconscious or below the water level of awareness and includes values and thought patterns (Weaver 157, cited in Killick and Poveda 221). It reminds me of an iceberg with the tip sticking above the water level of conscious awareness.

Later during the audio-lingual era in language teaching, Brooks (1968) “emphasized the importance of culture not for the study of literature but for language
learning” (Steele 155). As the result Nostrand (1974) developed the so called Emergent Model scheme comprising of six main categories:

1. Culture in forms of value systems and habits of thought;
2. Society including organizations and familial religious, and other institutions;
3. Conflict comprised of interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict;
4. Ecology and technology including knowledge of plants and animals, health care, travel etc.;
5. Individuals and intra/interpersonal variation;
6. Cross-cultural environment dealing with attitudes towards other cultures.

According to Singhal (“Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom”), “[i]t is evident that one would have to be quite knowledgeable in the culture under study to be able to present all of these aspects accurately to second language learners”.

Since the 1960s, educators have concerned themselves with the importance of the cultural aspect in foreign language learning inspired by Hammerly (1982), Seelye (1984) and Damen (1987) who have carefully considered ways of incorporating culture into language teaching. Later in the 1970s, an emphasis on socio-linguistics led to a greater emphasis on the situational context of the foreign language.

However, it was mostly confined in its narrow sense and regarded as being something secondary to the teaching of the language grammatical forms and knowledge, thus, satisfying the new role of language required by the communities. The period is characterized by the lack of sound theoretical basis and sophisticated discussion of the matter in question.

It is only in the 1980s that scholars began to carefully consider the dynamics of culture and its vital contribution to “successful” language learning (Byram, Morgan et al. 5). Littlewood (cited in Byram, Morgan et al. 6), for instance advocates the value of cultural learning, although he still “keeps linguistic proficiency as the overall aim of communicative competence” (ibid.). Many insightful comparisons were made between culture-specific behavioural conventions and those which impede understanding: the use of silence (Odlin, 1989; La Forge 70-81), frequency of turn-taking (Preston 128-131; Odlin 55), politeness (Odlin 49-54), so on and so forth (see Byram, Morgan et al. 8).

Moreover, in the 1980s and 1990s, advances in pragmatics and sociolinguistics (Levinson, 1983) have rendered people’s frames of reference and cultural schemata tentative and led to attempts at “bridg[ing] the cultural gap in language teaching” (Valdes, 125).
In the modern foreign language teaching, two major trends of the teaching of culture can be theoretically identified from a pedagogical perspective. The first one is represented by such theorists and educators as Brooks (1964), Rivers (1968) and Chastain (1976) among others. The summary of the central points of the perspective is as follows:

- While integrating culture into language teaching, culture should be defined broadly rather than in a narrow way;
- The integration of the teaching of culture is supposed to be realized along with the actual teaching of the language;
- Based on the idea that language is first of all a tool of communication, the teaching of culture is largely viewed as the teaching of target culture only. Culture is only incorporated into the curriculum when needed or desired.

The given approach advocated that culture should be taught through the actual teaching of the language and was followed by some other educators such as Lafayette (1978), Seelye (1984), Spinelli (1985), Omaggio (1986) and Kramsch (1993) among others. For example, according to Lafayette, the most basic issue in cross-cultural education is the degree to which cultural information is integrated within the study of language. In order to make this integration of culture in language teaching work, he suggests the following procedures:

- Present cultural topics in conjunction with related thematic units and closely related vocabulary and grammatical content whenever possible;
- Use a variety of techniques for teaching culture that involve speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Do not limit cultural instruction to lecture or anecdotal formats;
- Treat cultural topics in the target language whenever possible;
- Use cultural information when teaching vocabulary. Teach students about the connotative meaning of new words;
- Group vocabulary into culture-related clusters;
- Use cultural contexts for language-practice activities, including drills and exercises for the learning of grammar;
- Use small-group techniques, such as discussions, brainstorming, and role-plays, for cultural instruction.
Similarly, another theoretician, Spinelli (1985) suggests that learning culture can be easily integrated into vocabulary or grammar lessons by means of conceptualized exercises. According to him, students who are at the beginning and intermediate levels of proficiency in speaking, can benefit from practicing such things as numbers, dates, times, addresses, weather expressions, greetings and vocabulary clusters dealing with everyday topics and basic grammatical structures. It can be done while learning about using the phone, having currency exchanged or buying food at the market as well as in the context of using the public transportation system or by contrasting mealtimes in the target and native cultures. Very similarly, Kramsch argues:

As educators who teach language in the full sense of word, their obligation is to confront students with the meanings associated with the specific uses of words, not with disembodied ideas and beliefs. People are not what we believe they are, but what they say they are. The responsibility of the language teacher is to teach culture as it is mediated through language, not as it is studied by social scientists and anthropologists. The privilege of the intercultural speaker must be accompanied by an increased sense of personal and individual responsibility in the use of words and in the ownership of their meanings. (31)

Later she developed her argument in the following manner:

Cultural competence can best be developed in a structured learning environment, where conscious parallels can be drawn, where language can be explicitly linked to its meaning in a particular socio-cultural and historical context, where disparate linguistic or cultural phenomena can be brought together and attached to more abstract principles of both base (C1) and target (C2) language and culture. (229)

Here we should note that Kramsch’s and some other later educators’ approaches advocate a much clearer intercultural dimension, which allows the inclusion of the learners’ own culture and to teach culture through the teaching of language. Similarly, Byram (1989) applies this approach to the teaching of culture in his model, though he uses a different view as will be illustrated in the further discussion.

The Cultural Studies Approach developed by the European scholars (Byram, 1988, 1989, 1994 and Murphy, 1988 among others) is the other major trend to the teaching of culture in language teaching. Taking a much broader view of culture by
recognizing the importance of the anthropological sense of culture, it includes the relevant high culture content. The approach recognizes intercultural communication as the objective of language teaching and therefore gives primary emphases on understanding of the foreign country and its people as well as the learners’ own culture and society by contrasting the two cultures. However, according to Meyer (1991) and some other theoreticians, in this approach teaching of culture is placed as a much looser context of the main language teaching, being a separate course, and only as one of the techniques of training proposed by its proponents. Since the late 1980s, this approach has dominated the discussion of the issue in question in Europe and has also been supported by several research projects (Byram and Esarte-Sarries, 1991, Byram et al., 1991, Byram and Cain 1998, Kaikkonen, 1996 and 1997 among others). Comparison between the learners’ own culture and the foreign culture is one of the major techniques advocated by the Cultural Studies Approach for the purpose of teaching culture in language teaching (Byram, 1989, Byram and Morgan et al., 1994).

In the 1980s and 1990s, influenced by the Cultural Studies theory and supported by a number of researches, more language teaching syllabuses began to be drawn up with more clearly stated and sophisticated cultural aims. The idea of teaching culture was widely accepted by the vast majority in the profession. As a result more classroom teachers have better theoretical bases for their work today, having included a much larger amount of cultural information. Ever before in history, the majority of textbook-writers have shown much greater cultural awareness in language teaching including a lot more cultural information in the textbooks.

As Kramsch (1991) comments on the above classification of the two major trends in the teaching of culture:

If the American view might be seen as too much focused on language as a tool for action, the European view might be considered to be too concerned with language as an object of linguistic or social reflection. Both views illustrate two complementary aspects of culture: culture as performance, culture as competence. (226)

As far as the research in this area is concerned, the results seemed to be disappointing before the late 1980s. As Lafayette and Strasheim (1981) and Omaggio (1986) found, in spite of the hot discussions on the integration of culture into the foreign language curriculum since the early 1970s, the integration of culture in language teaching remained insubstantial and sporadic in most language classes. Stern’s (1984)
opinion on the matter is more critical as he states that “Next to nothing has been done to
describe cultural aspects of languages commonly taught” (64). He blames the belated
contact of social sciences and language teaching, arguing that:

…social scientists, unlike linguists, have been somewhat indifferent to
language pedagogy and have hardly recognized the importance of
theories and descriptions of society and culture for language teaching . . .
language teaching theory today is fast acquiring a sociolinguistic
component but still lacks a well-defined sociocultural emphasis. (246-
284)

Thus, in spite of the great shift towards culture in foreign language teaching and
learning the practical situation in actual classrooms in most Western countries, is still
acknowledged to be very unsatisfactory being dominated by grammar instruction,
incidental and superficial in nature (Kramsch, 1993). Recent research findings of Byram
et al. (1991b) and Kaikkonen (1996, 1997) have also clarified that the language teaching
profession seems to be still groping for ways to make the teaching of culture consistent
and systematic. Sercu’s (1998) recent research paper describes the situation of foreign
language and culture teaching in Belgium, which is considered as another proof on this
aspect of the matter:

Belgian teaching is largely dominated by the knowledge dimension of
learning and teachers feel uneasy having to deal with affective or
behavioural aspects of the learning process. Also, they have a hard time
reflecting on their own teaching practices, partly because they have not
acquired the necessary professional terminology to discuss and reflect
upon theories and proposals for practical applications. The professional
identity of language teachers, too, is a very traditional one. Most
language teachers think of themselves as ‘language people’. Their
courses, traditionally, consist of language work and are sometimes
complemented with literature or ‘Kennis van landen yolk’ (knowledge of
the country and its people), which is said to bring a welcome change from
teaching but which is not felt to be an important objective of foreign
language teaching. As it appears in schoolbooks, ‘Kennis van landen
yolk’ is eclectic in content and method. It does not support reflective
learning nor does it aim at enhancing the learners’ intercultural
competence. (257)
The above given opinion echoes Morgan’s (1996) statement:

‘Cultural competence’, in the field of modern foreign language teaching, is a field of study relatively unexplored in Europe . . . In Germany and France, a proportion of the Modern Foreign Language curriculum is devoted to an understanding of the history and institutions of the target country (‘Landeskunde’ and ‘Civilisation’) but in general this deals with information on external cultural realities and does little to help students to understand the inner codes and values that inform these realities. In Britain, although lip service is paid to an understanding of cultural values in both Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary curricula, the main emphasis is on linguistic proficiency (seen solely in terms of language and not cultural semiotics) and on literary appreciation or encyclopaedic knowledge. (225)

Thus, the situation in England is described as following:

…the learning of foreign language is not well received by the students, and foreign language teaching in upper secondary schools focuses largely on literature. (242)

From the above stated fact, it is evident that the concept of cultural teaching in England is always related to and is often associated with the teaching of literature. Thus, the image of foreign people remains a blind spot in the textbooks and even though some of them (which are for the lower secondary schools) are more communicatively orientated, Byram’s analysis reveals their failure to help the pupils to understand the target people and culture. As a result, students hold stereotype-dominated images of the target country.

In the British tradition, teaching culture has largely been taken for granted and considered unproblematic. It would be fairer to assume that Britain lacks any tradition of cultural learning at all, easily divorcing it from language learning and relegating it to the level of background. Known as Background Studies, the discipline tended to provide background contexts for the presentation of a language syllabus viewing culture as something that will happen to students, something that they will somehow absorb. Thus, presentation of culture is restricted to the status of supplementary and background information while the proper aim of a language course is seen as merely teaching the language. The reason for the dissociation of culture from EFL can be found in British attitudes to the very notion of culture. Negative attitude against the export of culture
through language teaching, that was persuasively advanced by Robert Phillipson, the author of *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), reflects the sense of post-colonial guilt felt by many EFL teachers: “...the ‘white man’s burden’ [has become] the English native-speaking teacher’s burden, and...the role played by ELT is integral to the functioning of the contemporary world order.” Thus, cultural knowledge in EFL classrooms in Britain remained largely peripheral to language learning, acquired by students incidentally.

However, since the late 1980s, when the communicative consensus had begun to give way to a more pluralistic set of approaches (often labelled “principled eclecticism”), the British view of what language is and how it works has become more complex. This shift has been reflected in materials and in classrooms:

Syllabuses are no longer *either* structural *or* functional, but multiple; the focus of language teaching is tending increasingly away from the level of the sentence and towards the level of discourse; and there is growing interest in social and expressive functions of language which are broader in scope than the merely transactional. It is in this climate that literature has gradually been rehabilitated, for its creative linguistic playfulness and for its affective potential, rather than for its traditional, canonical status as culture with a capital C. This renewed attention to literature, together with the increasing popularity of video in the classroom, has contributed to a reappraisal of the place of cultural learning in ELT. (Alan Pulverness, 8)

However, in spite of this shift there could still be found plenty of ‘background’ books, especially on Britain and the British. It is only in the past few years that a number of books and some main course books have appeared on life and institutions, acknowledging cultural learning as a significant component of language learning. Reinforced by the publication of Tomalin and Stempleski’s *Cultural Awareness* (1993), the trend makes the simple and useful distinction between what the authors call ‘big C’ (or ‘achievement’) Culture and ‘little c’ (or ‘behaviour’) culture. According to the authors it is the ‘little c’ culture and the ways in which it is manifested through linguistic and paralinguistic behaviour that has developed the social contexts in which language operates.

In France the situation of foreign language learning is described as ‘worse’ than in England due to the fact that the communicative dimension of language teaching is still not well established. Though the cultural aim is referred to in the national guidelines, in
reality languages are taught largely isolated from its social and cultural context. According to the researchers:

There is no hostility towards the English language, as most French students and their parents are utterly convinced of its usefulness; this creates a different kind of problem: English is considered to be a sort of international Esperanto not connected in any way to any cultural matter; Another element to be taken into account is the gap between the 11-15 year old group and the 15-18 year old group: for the former, language itself is the main objective, one could almost say the only aim pursued, the prevailing idea being that cultural matters can always be dealt with later on, in the lycee. However, language mastery is still the overwhelming issue during the first two years of lycee, and although the last year is traditionally devoted to the study of the United States, British culture is often never dealt with. (Byram and Cain, cited in Byram and Fleming 33)

As we can see, foreign language teaching in France seems to be traditional, primarily focusing on language acquisition. The target cultural information seems to be very rarely presented in their textbooks. For example, the French students’ understanding of the contemporary British people almost does not exist. From the researchers’ summarized statements about the understanding of based on the findings of a survey concerning the students all over France it is revealed that their understanding about British people and the country contains stereotypes:

It is a rainy country, deprived of industry, with no historical past, ruled by a queen, where people drink tea, beer or whisky, where men are still carrying umbrellas and wearing bowler hats, where the countryside is green. The country is also famous for its rock group or singers, when they are not confused with American ones. It is inhabited by people of phlegmatic temperament and will soon be connected to the continent by a tunnel. (Cain 1990, in Byram and Fleming 33)

In order to improve the given situation, Byram (1989) points out:

The task for the future is to improve the situation by bringing together the theory and the practical experience, by theoretically well-founded empirical research. (79)
Another experiment conducted by Kaikkonen (1993-1995) in collaboration with the Tampere University Department of Education and the high school, Tampereen normaalikoulu was called Culture and Foreign Language Learning. According to Kaikkonen (1997) this two-year teaching experiment with Finnish upper secondary school pupils (17-18 years of age) consisted of five courses, thirty-eight lessons each, of French and German in the upper secondary or high school level. Each course had to contain culturally connected themes, which gave the framework for the study of language and culture (50). The third course was planned as a study visit to both France and Germany where each pupil lived alone with her/his host family and was in addition given daily observational and linguistic assignments. According to Kaikkonen during these courses, the relevant teaching materials were considered very carefully. As a part of the teaching experiment, the students also kept a reflective journal about what they did in the group and as an individual in their spare time which was considered of great importance:

They were linked to a certain theme, such as living, eating, living in town or countryside, etc. the pupils worked in small groups, sought information, evaluated it, simulated the foreign situation and presented their own projects to the others. . . Within the framework of their project, the pupils designed a questionnaire for the pupils of the twin school and got back extensive written materials about the young people’s ideas on friendship, dating and falling in love. The Finnish pupils considered this material more valuable and authentic, according to our interview, than the ready-made material. This is only natural because the writers were their friends of the same age who they really knew. (50)

In addition to this, the researcher used many video-recordings. His findings showed that during their project work students have realized that a foreign language cannot be studied without its cultural background and that the foreign language learning as a traditional school subject can help students grow towards intercultural understanding and learning only to some extent. These results lead Kaikkonen to firmly believe that:

A dramatic change in pupils’ opinions on the importance of intercultural learning is unlikely to come about on the strength of one school subject. (123)
Moreover, Kaikkonen suggests introducing the integration of intercultural learning into the whole school curriculum:

In order to achieve intercultural learning, the curriculum of all school subjects should be developed in the direction that includes all the basic fundamentals in intercultural learning: (a) an individual’s own culture, his own cultural behaviour, and his own language on the one hand, and (b) foreign culture, strange behaviour, and foreign language on the other. So familiarity and ‘foreignness’ are the experiences the pupils should be exposed to constantly at school. (50)

Concerning the teaching practice in the Scandinavian countries there is much in common in terms of the teaching content. As Risager points out:

The elementary level in particular, and to some extent the early intermediate level, are marked decisively by materials produced in Sweden. The cultural content of these is mostly characterized by the pragmatic trend. Yet the materials are of a quality that can easily compete with non-Scandinavian materials. At the intermediate level, teaching in Denmark, and to a certain degree in Norway, is influenced by materials produced in Denmark, with a cultural content characterized primarily by the anthropological trend, often with a critical perspective. (1991b, 44)

Within the German foreign language teaching, culture is known as Kulturkunde or as Landeskunde. Buttjes (1991) reviewed the history of the teaching of culture in German foreign language teaching. He traced it from the beginning of the modern language reform movement in the 1880s to the 1960s, a time when foreign languages became a regular school subject in the German educational system. He reveals that the close link between language and society was well recognized among the early German language theorists and historians and culture became a part of the foreign language curricula only during the first half of 20th century. However, according to him, the attitudes towards their own tradition of the teaching of culture in foreign language teaching within the German language teaching profession have been ambivalent.

The debate on the teaching of culture in foreign language teaching in Germany started in the 1880s from the moment of acceptance of foreign languages into the German school curriculum. In less than twenty years, the cultural objectives of foreign language teaching had become widely accepted among the teachers. For instance, the English teaching materials, according to Buttjes, demonstrated a clear tendency towards
everyday life and social customs in Britain. However, they failed to reject topics like education, Ireland or the empire for the advanced learners. According to the author, cultural contents of foreign language teaching during this period were realistic and fairly reflected the foreign societies:

Within the foreign language rationale, culture had come to occupy a central and crucial position. Foreign language teaching was seen to concern itself with the real life expression of modern people and foreign language teachers were considered experts of the material and intellectual culture of foreign peoples. The term ‘realia’ was at the time expanded beyond merely visible objects for demonstration to include any aspects of the foreign social reality. Foreign language skills as well as literary and linguistic knowledge were considered subordinate and instrumental only in achieving such cultural and educational objectives. (Buttjes 53-54)

However, during the Nazi period, the notion of culture was strongly influenced by German political ideology and branded by a clear ethnocentric nature. Western democratic values of sociology were rejected as alien. As a result culture was set apart from the social realia and mystified as people’s soul and character expressed in their philosophy, arts and literature. Any expression of culture was reduced to certain national traits of character to be compared between the native and the foreign cultures. This would lead to knowledge of weakness and strengths serving the national benefit. At last, the German cultural values known as Deutschkunde “were prescribed as the cross-curricular standard for all subjects in the Prussian school reform of 1924/25, leaving no room for any genuine interest in foreign culture” (Buttjes 55).

Nonetheless, “the majority of foreign language theorists supported Kulturkunde, even under the perverted and paradoxical label of Deutschkunde” (Buttjes 56). However, the cultural content in most of the textbooks of this period, according to the author, is characterized as distorted and full of prejudices. As a result, cultural teaching was confined to the domain of high culture of the target country influencing foreign language curricula and the teaching materials of the subsequent 1950s, which show a clear bias toward the classics and aesthetics.

Later during the 1970s and 1980s the debate on the teaching of culture in foreign language teaching in Germany gained new development. There could be seen profound changes in the curriculum as well as the growing concern among many German teachers, scholars and administrators to make foreign language teaching serve
international understanding. However, in spite of the fast development “the language teaching profession in Germany did not find it easy to break with their nationalist cultural learning tradition after World War II” (Buttjes 61).

Thus, Buttjes criticizes the German cultural teaching tradition without expressing any firm hope for a change:

With the legacy of Kulturkunde dominating great parts of the German language teaching history, the faults and contradictions of narrow culture concepts have been exposed. Such a view of culture has not only discredited cultural studies, but has also counteracted language teaching in several ways. It was used for the national distinction between foreign and native cultures rather than serving international objectives. It was committed to idealistic speculation rather than on comprehensive concepts of culture. Finally, it was reserved for social elite and the advanced learners only, rather than addressing all pupils at all stages of language learning. (61)

All in all, teaching culture in German foreign language education bears its own peculiar characteristics, serving both as a good example and as a lesson for the language teaching all over the world. In our view Stern’s (1983) statement best generalizes this fascinating and controversial history of teaching language and culture in Germany:

Since the days of Von Humboldt the German intellectual tradition had been accustomed to viewing language and nation as closely related. Moreover, some German historians expressed ideas on the culture of nations which have much in common with the modern anthropological culture concept . . . However, the concept of culture became tainted by the development of extreme nationalism. Even before World War I, and more so in the interwar years, Kulturkunde was increasingly understood as an assertion of German identity. German educators advocated Kulturkunde in mother tongue education as the unifying principle binding together the feeling of ‘German subjects’, German language, German literature, German history, and the geography of Germany. (248)

The concern with the teaching of culture in the United States foreign language education, goes back beyond the 1970s and was renewed by such researchers like Seelye (1984), Valdes (1986) and Kramsch (1989). With the introduction of the direct method at the end of the nineteenth century, language teachers came to realize the close
connection between language and culture and the inseparability of both from each other (Lafayette, 1975c). Along with recognition of the universals of human relations, self and home culture became the means for international understanding.

One could divide the approaches of teaching culture within foreign language education in the United States into two categories: teaching culture as a part of foreign language teaching and teaching culture as a part of bilingual education. The former included: 1) understanding the target language, 2) understanding the speakers of the target language as well as their cultures, and 3) communicating with the speakers of the target language.

As has been mentioned above, the end of the nineteenth century brought with it an understanding of the significance of culture in foreign language education. Influenced by anthropologists who made the relationship between language and culture clearer, language teachers started emphasizing culture in their classrooms. Based on writing similar to Sapir (1970), who stated it was not possible to understand even a single poem without looking at culture, many language teachers acknowledged the fact that language is deeply rooted in culture.

Last century emphasized international understanding in the domain of foreign language teaching in the United States. In 1933, Milton (1948), the Secondary Education Board declared that one of the practical values of foreign language study included:

The breaking down of the barriers of the provincialism and the building up of the spirit of international understanding and friendliness, leading towards world peace… (104)

Later, in 1956, three contributions of foreign language teaching were pointed out by the Modern Language Association (M. L. A) policy. Two of them, which mainly focused on the experience with foreign culture and information about foreign culture, were recognized as greatly contributing to the International understanding (M. L. A., 1956).

Thus, with an International understanding in the centre of foreign language education in the United States in the late 1960s, the importance of role of culture gained a lot of attention. According to Babathy (1974), one of the goals set at the North East conference in 1968 was to make learners able to cope well with foreign culture. As a result studying a foreign language in the United States included the study of the foreign culture as well.
The third category of teaching foreign languages in the United States included Intercultural communication. The cultural aspects of language and the cultural background of its speakers were emphasized by Seelye (45) in the following way:

Since the basic aim of a language class is to have the students learn to communicate is the foreign language, it is obvious that if fairly common emotions and thoughts cannot be understood apart from their cultural referents, then these referents must be taught in the language classroom, and that some interesting examples of difficulties in cross-cultural communication that arise from ignorance of the target culture are recounted in several articles.

Fries stated that in order to achieve intercultural understanding:

He (a learner) can, however, set himself the task of attaining as complete a realization as possible of the common situations in which the language operates for the native speaker. To do so…. He must be really interested in the details of the whole life experience of the people. (10)

The end of World War II brought America into more frequent contact with people from different cultures. However, inappropriate preparation of Americans including those studying abroad in 1950s made foreign language teaching recognize lack of orientation programmes. Teaching foreign languages did not include teaching about how to cope with new situations in foreign countries (Bourque, 1974).

Thus, many foreign language teachers came to realize that knowledge of language and knowledge of culture were both equally necessary before going abroad (Bourque, 1974). As a result, teaching culture began to be emphasized more. Along with the recognition of importance of culture in foreign language teaching, the professionals had to also consider the content and ways to teach and test culture (Morain, 1970). Sixty-four items of culture were listed by Brooks and in 1968, a Committee of the Pacific Northwest Conference on Foreign Language teaching presented cultural items to be taught at each level (Nostrand, 1968). However, three techniques introduced for teaching culture, mainly “culture assimilators” (Piedler, Mitchelle and Triandis, 1971), “culture capsules” (Taylor and Sorensen, 1961) and “culture clusters” (Meade and Morain, 1973) were not integrated into these programmes and they also did not include guidelines about the content of culture teaching.

Wallach (1973) was one of those who reported on semester-long programmes of culture orientation at the University of Wisconsin. The programme, which covered such
countries as Britain, France, Germany, the USSR as well as some Spanish-speaking counties, aimed to prepare students for a trip in its following semester. Students were asked to study actual cross-cultural experience, examine stereotypes and prejudices as well as attitudes and other aspects of culture. Moreover, students were also encouraged to explore their own interests within the alien culture. The responses showed the effectiveness of the programmes. Students demonstrated greater understanding of the target culture and increased motivation for learning foreign languages.

By the end of the 1970s, orientation programmes gained popularity and became a necessary preparation for students going abroad. With increase of necessity of intercultural communication, teaching culture became common and widespread. However, it was not the only trend in the United States. As has been mentioned above it was not only international understanding and intercultural communication that emphasized teaching culture. An important trend in 1960s in the United States was to help Americans understand each other better. Americans were encouraged to understand their own backgrounds rather than just accept themselves as in a “melting pot”. Along with the popular movement in the 1970s, the bilingual act was passed, which emphasized bilingual education.

From all the above instances, one may conclude, that the element of culture has gained momentum in foreign language learning in many countries. Majority of educators have seen it as yet another skill for a learner of foreign languages rather than as an integral part at which he/she should aim. As has been mentioned at the beginning of the present section, there have been two major perspectives on the issue. The present work takes a third one, mainly stating that cultural knowledge is not only an aspect of communicative competence, but rather a part of Intercultural Communication. Lies Sercu, in her work on “Foreign language Teachers and Intercultural Competence” very well describes the link and hierarchic relationship between both:

In the context of foreign language education, Intercultural Competence is linked to communicative competence in a foreign language. Communicative competence refers to a person’s ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way (Council of Europe, 2001). Intercultural Communicative Competence hence builds on communicative competence, and enlarges it to incorporate Intercultural Communicative Competence. (3)
Thus, rather than viewing cultural knowledge as a prerequisite for communicative competence, it is more important to view it as an ICC. A corollary of this third perspective is to view the phrase ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’ as the one that “… expands the concept of “communicative competence” in significant ways” (Byram, 1997):

Intercultural competence is [the ability] "to see relationships between different cultures - both internal and external to a society - and to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people." It also encompasses the ability to critically or analytically understand that one’s “own and other cultures’ perspective is culturally determined rather than natural. (8)

It goes without saying that to foster intercultural competence awareness by teaching culture means to bring to our learners’ conscious understanding about “how the world should not be viewed from a one-sided perspective” (Latif, Teaching towards Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Competence”) and most importantly, to provide students with opportunities to help them define and design for themselves their ‘third place’ or ‘third culture’, a sphere of interculturality that enables language students to take an insider’s view as well as an outsider’s view on both their first and second cultures.

As has been shown, language and culture are so intricately related that it should be reiterated that language teaching is culture teaching and that Communicative Competence is Intercultural Communicative Competence. What the next Chapter sets out to show is that this understating and its realization should become a part of an educational objective.

2.4 Objectives of Foreign Language Education

In today’s globalized and internalized world individuals should be endowed with the necessary tools to become citizens of the world. Thus, foreign language teaching should adopt the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes of ICC as its guiding and ultimate goal.

(Jan A. van Ek 602)

Objectives in Foreign Language Education have long been a major preoccupation of all involved in the provision of language teaching. Objectives play a
determining role in practically all aspects of the planning of teaching, as no responsible decisions can be made as to what learning-content to seek or to offer without fairly clear views on objectives. Although many other factors are equally important in decision-making on such issues like learning activities, the choice of the most important learning-aids, the amount and quality of teaching required, the amount of time to be invested, the nature and roles of assessment procedures required and many others but objectives end up playing the major role.

This Chapter aims at discussion of the objectives of foreign language education in connection to Intercultural Competence development. The Chapter looks at two fundamental questions: *How the objectives of foreign language education have undergone changes?* and *What are the objectives of foreign language education today?*

To begin with, Foreign Language Education is an ongoing process. Often changes are seen in terms of methods and materials, but in our view it is more important to look at purposes and functions. Thus, the literature review reveals that over recent decades foreign language teaching and learning has undergone a redefinition of the subject and a rapid change in its objectives. Some decades ago, foreign language education moved from a position of regarding learning a language mainly in order to study its high culture to the more profound view that the goal of foreign language learning is to communicate. However, interestingly in both cases the focus and direction of attention was almost exclusively towards the native speakers of the target language.

In this midst of the change to communicative aims, there have been attempts to retrieve some of the lost educational aspects. The first attempt, which was labeled as “language awareness”, included the illumination of the nature of language and critical reflection on its significance for learners and served as an apprenticeship in more effective language learning. The second attempt was the shift of “cultural awareness” from “background studies” in realization of some of the other aims of language teaching. During the shift, the development of positive attitudes towards others and a better understanding of other cultures were stressed. However, behind these various developments “there was an implicit view of a monolingual learner in a homogeneous society focused on a similar homogeneous society of native speakers” (Byram 43).

In fact the communicative reorientation in foreign language teaching has brought about a profound and comprehensive reconsideration of foreign language teaching objectives as an educational process:
...we are not simply concerned with training certain kinds of skilled behaviour, but also [...] with the steady and purposive development of the learner as a communicator and as a learner, as well as with his personal and social development. (Van Ek 694)

In other words, objectives of foreign language education today are recognized as essential not only to address the learners’ cognitive powers but also their psychological, emotional and social condition. Thus, the overtly stated aim of foreign language teaching is recognized today as the ability to communicate. This ability may be labelled by variety of terms; however, it will always remain as the ability to use the foreign language for purposes of communication. This is considered by us to be the essential object of foreign language teaching and learning. It goes without saying that the concept of communication is not restricted here to oral face-to-face communication but rather covers the full range of communicative language activities.

The issues on what is involved in the ability to communicate has been numerously discussed and publicised. Our understanding of this ability has been increasing; however, the conditions for achieving it seem to become more and more complex. William Littlewood (2002) describes this development in the following way:

One reason why foreign language teaching keeps so many people in employment (not only in classrooms, but also as methodologists and theorists in various fields) is that as we devise more and more techniques for dealing with the problems we encounter, we also discover that language learning is more complex than we had thought. This means that new problem areas emerge for us to try to understand and solve. (200)

Thus, our increasing insight into the complexity of the ability to communicate is reflected in consecutive specifications of foreign language learning objectives. As it is clearly pointed out by Corbett:

Obviously, one key goal of an intercultural approach remains language development and improvement; however, this goal is wedded to the equally important aim of intercultural understanding and mediation. (2)

Corbett (34-35) is also one of those who highlights the aim of helping students to become ethnographers to be able to approach any kind of cultural phenomena from a “detached” or “scientific” perspective through observation, description and interpretation.
Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (10) went further and specified the aims underlying the incorporation of an intercultural approach into foreign language teaching in the following way:

- To provide learners with intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence;
- To prepare learners for interaction with people of other cultures;
- To enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors;
- To help them see that such an interaction is an enriching experience.

In addition, the authors (9) state that a further goal of intercultural approach is the development of “learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping that accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity”.

As I have said before, the widening of the scope of Foreign Language Education is directly related to the increasing understanding of what constitutes communicative ability. The analysis of communicative ability allowed Jan A. van Ek (2001) to draw up the following overall framework for the description of comprehensive FLL objectives:

**Table 2.1 Communicative Ability**

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<th>FLL OBJECTIVE</th>
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<td>- socio-linguistic competence</td>
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As can be seen from the table, the basic component of communicative ability is “linguistic competence”. It is evident that verbal communication is not possible without the knowledge of the vocabulary items and the mastery of certain structural rules. The second component of communicative ability is referred to as the “socio-linguistic
competence”, which makes a learner aware of ways in which the choice of language forms is determined (setting, relationship between communication partners, communicative intention, etc.). Thirdly, in order to be a successful communicator one also needs “discourse competence” – “the ability to perceive and to achieve coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns”. A simple example of this is “knowing how to open a conversation and how to end it” (Jan A. van Ek 12).

In addition to these three types of competence, which alone will not ensure successful communication, there is a fourth type, which Canale and Swain (1980) call “strategic competence”. According to them the type involves:

The use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in the language user’s knowledge of the code or for breakdown of communication for other reasons. (30)

Moreover, “the use of a particular language implies the use of a reference frame, which is at least partly determined by the socio-cultural context in which that language is used by native speakers” (Jan A. van Ek 35). As the Bremen points out, “every language act is situated in a socio-cultural context and is subject to conditions which in the foreign language are partly different from those in the native language”. In other words, in order to be a competent user of that language, one needs to have a “certain degree of familiarity with that socio-cultural context” (Landeskunde in Germany). The author refers to this aspect of communicative ability as “socio-cultural competence”.

Communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals. (Gumperz, “Discourse Strategies”)

It implies one more competence: “if two or more individuals are to coordinate their efforts to engage in interaction they must, at least, have the will and the skill to do so. The will to interact involves motivation, attitude and self-confidence; the skill to interact involves such qualities as empathy and the ability to handle social situations” (Jan A. van Ek 52). The author collectively calls these qualities as “social competence” and underlines that this competence “brings the general educational aims within the compass of the subject-specific aims of FLL” (Jan A. van Ek 56). He adds that social competence becomes an indispensable component of foreign language learning objectives when communication is recognized as its essence. Moreover, social competence is a factor in the overall development of a learner’s personality and is thus, linked to ‘cognitive (intellectual) development’ and ‘affective (emotional and moral) development’, the last two components of communicative competence. The complete analysis of
“communicative ability” given by Jan A. van Ek (2001) provides the rationale for the pursuit of general educational aims through foreign language learning.

The realization that a special aspect of communication in a foreign language is its cross-cultural facet, has started since the 1980s (Berns, 1990). In order to become a competent speaker of a foreign language and communicate well, as has been summarized above, a learner needs to acquire the necessary linguistic, pragmatic and discourse competencies. I would like to highlight that he/she also needs to understand how culture affects communication and learn how to mediate between cultures. It means that a learner needs to acquire insights in the ways in which cultures can differ and a positive disposition towards engaging in intercultural contact situations (Sercu, forthcoming; Smith et al., 1998).

Obviously this insistence on the development of learners’ intercultural skills, attitudes and knowledge requires a revision of the concept of professionalism in foreign language teaching. Today’s language teacher’s curriculum requirements are high. Teachers need to possess an adequate socio-cultural knowledge of the target language community, understand that cultural models differ and that they pervade our outlook on life and communication with others. They should be familiar with the levels of communication at which intercultural misunderstandings may arise (e.g. notions, speech acts, non-verbal level of communication). They should be able and willing to negotiate meaning where there is a danger of cross-cultural misunderstanding. These and other demands will be discussed in the next section, thus, ultimately bringing us to the question of Teacher Cognition highlighted in the next Chapter.

2.5 New Professional Demands for Foreign Language Teachers: From Linguistic Competence to ICC

The work of teachers is not easy. Teachers are, in the every day life of school, confronted by a diversity of students whose learning and welfare to a great extent are determined by the way teachers personally and professionally are able to ‘read’ the classroom, and the student identities within it. They are expected to manage diversity, act promptly in a variety of situations and must be able to solve a variety of conflict.

(Arnesen 157)
Today new professional demands are made on teachers of foreign languages. Internationally foreign language teaching is no longer regarded as a mainly linguistic task but viewed from an intercultural perspective. In the light of the above mentioned discussion on the objective of foreign language education, I would like to elaborate on the need of the conscious shift from Linguistic Competence to ICC.

As has been mentioned in the previous section, language teachers are highly responsible in different ways. “Language teachers now have to perform educational, technical, ethical and psycho-social functions, with various responsibilities attached to each of them” (Sercu 260). In the related literature, professionalism in foreign language teaching tends to be defined in terms of five areas that have basic insights regarding how languages are learned: linguistics, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistics, pedagogy and teaching methodology. In addition to linguistics, teachers are expected to know how student motivation and attitude influence the learning process, as well as how to manipulate these factors to favorably affect the learning process. Teachers are expected to know how to assess, select, design, sequence and use materials, and how to manage a classroom and the language learning process in order to promote their learners’ acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language (Willems, 2000). Finally foreign language teachers should know how languages and intercultural communication functions. Moreover, they are themselves expected to be skilful users of the foreign language and culture they teach.

Thus, the new context requires professional and personal development in many layers and in different directions: “changes in their [the teachers’] self concept, in their professional qualifications, in their attitudes and skills” (Sercu 256); “to be acquainted with basic insights from cultural anthropology, culture learning theory and intercultural communication” (Sercu 152). In order to communicate successfully with ‘the other’, an open and critical attitude towards one’s own culture and towards the culture of others and the development of specific intercultural skills should be fostered. In other words, today’s teachers are asked to anticipate and understand their students’ needs and professionally cater to them (Field, 2000; Willems, 2002), and to “develop an understanding of the learners’ investments in the target language and their changing identities” (Norton 137).

The redefinition of the subject has lead to the reformulation of educational policies, which hasn’t proved easy. The increasing importance of ICC in language teaching requires understanding of the theory and practice of ICC. Even though
intercultural competence appears in practice across the world, it still remains unproblematic, uncritical, teacher-centred and is mainly geared towards the transmission of information (Byram, 1997; Freeman and Johnson, 1998; Sercu, 2002b).

The second issue is the lack of a consistent methodology for the teaching of culture which makes it difficult for teachers to identify cultural objectives and in many cases such objectives remain outside core language teaching and learning (Starkey, 1990). Moreover, after outlining the cultural objectives in foreign language teaching, further decisions on what cultural elements should be included to enhance communication need to be made. Finally, research reveals that most of the teachers neither have “a systematic plan as to how to go about teaching intercultural competence, or as to how to deal with stereotypes and prejudice in the foreign language classroom” (Sercu 162), nor clear criteria that could facilitate such decisions (Met 265). It is explained but not justified by the lack of appropriate preparation of the teachers and their feeling of being unable to fulfil a variety of aims (Byram and Morgan, 1994; Sercu, 2002a).

Next, teachers preparation and ability to fulfill these tasks, roles and responsibilities greatly depend on their training and professional development. Regardless of the knowledge and skills that foreign language teachers possess, their maintenance, development and improvement must be an ongoing process. In many countries, in order to keep their teaching license current, teachers continue to accumulate academic credits while teaching. This is done through evening courses, summer seminars, lectures, conferences or workshops offered by professional associations and universities.

Hughes is one of those who strongly believe that without significant experience or time spent abroad teachers find themselves in a difficult position. He argues that training and exchange programmes need to be organized since only adequate training can provide us with the necessary additional instruction on how to teach language through culture. He encourages active attendance in conferences and seminars. Moreover, he calls for teachers to acquire the knowledge of differences between cultures, keep a balanced and a neutral attitude, and escape emphasizing on positive or negative cultural particularities and stereotypes.

Sercu (160) believes that “without teachers’ awareness and understanding of the main issues in intercultural communication, the students’ progress is under threat”. However, this connection between theory and practice should come from a critical
reflective exercise from the teachers themselves (Richards, 1990; Halbach, 2000; Vélez-Rendón, 2002) as the training per se does not fully prepare teachers to deal with the specifics of the intercultural dimension (Dunnett et al., 1986; Met, 1993; Lázár, 2001; Ruane, 1999; Guilherme, 2002; Gundara, 2003).

Thus, when planning and discussing the integration of the intercultural dimension into foreign language teaching, the following qualifications should be taken into account while looking for teachers for intercultural foreign language instruction, as advocated by Edelhoff (1987, 76ff cited and adapted from Sercu. 256-257):

- **Attitudes**

  Teachers who are meant to educate learners towards international and intercultural learning must be international and intercultural learners themselves. In other words, teachers should be prepared to consider how others see them and be curious about themselves and others.

- **Knowledge**

  Teachers should have and seek knowledge about the sociocultural environment and background of the target language community/ies as well as that of their own.

- **Skills**

  Teachers should have and further develop the necessary skills to connect the experience of the student with ideas, things and objects outside their direct reach and create a learning environment which lends itself to experiential learning, negotiation and experiment.

Regardless of the various opinions on the teacher’s roles we may conclude that it involves many responsibilities, after taking into consideration all the expectations put on them. According to Hughes (Valdes), teachers are super scholars:

The burden placed upon language instructors has greatly increased. Since we cannot expect them to be linguists, psychologists, philosophers, and cultural anthropologists (and, perhaps, geographers, historians, philologists, and literary critics) we can, at least, suggest a
basic course in cultural change and cultural universals would be of most use to the second language teacher. (168)

As we can see from above, today’s language teachers are considered to be skilful creators of such learning environments that can promote and fasten their learners’ acquisition of ICC. Moreover, teachers of ICC need to be acquainted with basic insights from such areas of study as cultural anthropology, culture learning theory and intercultural communication. They need to be willing to teach intercultural competence and need to know how to do so (Edelhoff, 1993; Felberbauer, 1997; Paige, 1996; Willems et al., 1998). Teachers should know about their students’ perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards the people and cultures associated with the language they learn. Finally, and most importantly, foreign language teachers should be holding such beliefs about culture and teaching culture which makes their teaching practices truly intercultural. In the next Chapter we will closely discuss teachers’ cognition and beliefs regarding culture and teaching culture in their practices.

2.6 An Overview of the Language Teacher Cognition Domain

It has become evident that the teacher’s perspectives on their subject matter influence the teaching practice. A review of the research literature conducted by Pajares (1992) reveals that teachers’ beliefs strongly correlate with their behaviour and the choices and decisions about instructional practice. The study of the relationship of the teacher thought processes and actions have two goals, mainly to describe the mental lives of teachers and explain how the observable activities of teachers’ professional lives take the form that they do (Clark and Peterson, 1986).

Many educational researchers in the West have made an attempt to define the above mentioned concept (Calderhead 1996; Carter 1990; Clark and Peterson 1986; Fenstermacher 1994; Richardson 1996; Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer 2001). Amongst the most prominent definitions of teacher cognition is one by Borg. It takes into consideration “beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, perspectives about teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities, (and) self”. Thus the term teacher cognition embraces all these aspects of the teachers’ mental lives and refers to “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think” (Borg 81). Therefore, the studies of language teacher cognition, focus on what teachers at any stage
of their careers think, know or believe in relation to any aspect of their work, and which, additionally but not necessarily, also entails the study of actual classroom practices and of relationships between cognitions and these practices (Borg 50).

The design of the current research project is based on a review of the language teacher cognition literature by Borg (2006), who in his latest comprehensive review has identified more than 180 studies published between 1976-2006 in the areas of first, second and foreign language contexts. The reason for inclusion of a section on teacher cognition in the present dissertation is very obvious: teachers’ beliefs directly affect their teaching practices and their instruction and decision making in the classroom are rooted in their knowledge, assumptions and beliefs about the nature of language learning and language teaching. Moreover our study inquires into the foreign language teachers’ perceptions of culture in their profession and teaching practices.

This Chapter reviews a selection of research from the field of foreign and second language teaching into teacher cognition – what teachers think, know and believe, and the relationships of these mental constructs to teaching culture. Within a framework suggested by the present project I discuss language teacher cognition with reference to two main themes: (1) cognition and place of culture in foreign language education, and (2) cognition and classroom practices related to incorporating culture into it. In addition to this, the finding of studies in two specific areas in language teaching cognition research, mainly Pre-service teachers and In-service teachers, are also discussed.

I want to start my discussion by referring to the known fact that the beliefs which the students and language teachers hold about language learning, have been a focus of research in the field of language education for more than thirty years now and has also achieved a steady and significant growth in the last fifteen years. It has resulted in hundreds of individual studies exploring language teacher cognition from different perspectives in a wide variety of educational contexts. Active research on the relationship between thinking or beliefs and behaviour in the field of foreign language learning started in 1968, with special focus in the field of education, when Jackson ‘drew attention to the deeply hidden aspects of teaching related to teacher thought processes’. Evidence for the idea that individuals’ beliefs strongly influence behaviour, was accumulated (Abelson, 1979; Eisenhart et al., 1988) and many questions were raised in discussions about the role of teachers and their perceptions about what is taught at the interface of language and culture.
It is interesting to note that both the findings of ‘teacher cognition research’ in general and ‘language teacher cognition’ in particular have shown that all the language teachers’ instructional decisions are ultimately influenced by cognitive and contextual factors. The key findings in this area and their pedagogical implementations are discussed in my next section.

2.7 Key Findings of Previous Research and Pedagogical Implications of Language Teacher Cognition

Before we examine the selected empirical studies on foreign language teachers’ perception of teaching culture, let us summarize the key findings of language teacher cognition research in relation to the pedagogy of language teacher education in general.

The results of the studies investigating language teacher cognition have pointed to several variable ways in which teachers make sense of their teacher education programmes as well as their classroom practices. However, I will stop here to discuss only one of the factors that seem to be particularly influential in the process of teacher learning, mainly teachers’ prior experience.

*Teachers’ Prior Experience in Learning to Teach*

It has now been well established in research on teacher cognition that what teachers learn in teacher education programmes is filtered by prior experiences accumulated over the years of the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie 61). “This set of language learning experiences is transformed, largely subconsciously, into beliefs about how languages are learnt and how they should or should not be taught” (Kubanyiova 4). The extensive body of research on the subject shows that if these beliefs are not made explicit, questioned and challenged (Freeman 439-454); teachers’ pre-training cognitions regarding teaching a language may be influential throughout their career despite the training efforts (Borg 81-109).

The researchers suggested several tools for facilitating belief changes by means of accommodating new principles into the teachers’ existing belief systems. The list of these tools include: *language learning autobiographies* (Bailey et al. 11-29), methods of cognitive apprenticeship, namely, *narratives* (Golombek and Johnson, 2004; K. E. Johnson and Golombek, 2002), *case studies*, and *practical arguments* (K. E. Johnson,
1996a), or teacher development activities which are data-based (Borg 273-281) and provision of opportunities for teachers to explore their own theories. According to K. E. Johnson (439-452), when the teacher’s newly formed beliefs are in conflict with the stable models which were gained through the apprenticeship of observation, there is a requirement for conceptual changes. Thus, both the modeling of desired behaviors and attitudes, as well as the generation of experiential opportunities which urges one to engage in new practices has been highlighted (Grossman, 1991; Kolb, 1984; van den Berg, 2002). Due to the considerable threat which was caused by implementing alternative models, ‘receptive and supportive training environments’ become a prerequisite for teacher development (K. E. Johnson, 1994; McCombs, 1991; van den Berg, 2002), where individuals were free to expose their beliefs and experiment with new ideas (Calderhead 531-535). Finally, the fact that teachers develop in variable and individual ways (Borg 81-109) as a result of teacher education, emphasizes the importance of variable inputs (Woodward, “Ways of training”). These variable inputs cater for these varied ways in which teachers make sense of and are shaped by teacher education.

However, it is necessary to mention here that very little empirical evidence has been produced to illustrate the effectiveness of these specific instructional approaches in positively influencing teachers’ cognitive development (Grossman 345-347).

Now, I will briefly outline two of the major research findings within the field of foreign language teacher cognition. As can be seen in table 2.2 several thematic strands have been examined:

### Table 2.2 A Thematic Classification of Studies in the Field of Language Teacher Cognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Focus</th>
<th>Pre-service Teachers</th>
<th>In-service Teachers</th>
<th>Specific Curricular Domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• trainees’ prior learning experiences and cognitions</td>
<td>• the cognitions of novice language teachers</td>
<td>Teachers’ cognitions and/or practices in relation to the teaching of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• trainees’ beliefs about language</td>
<td>• cognitions and reported practices of</td>
<td>• grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57
Specific concerns

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• trainees’ decision-making, beliefs and knowledge during the practicum</td>
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<tr>
<td>• change in trainees’ cognitions during teacher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-service teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cognitions and actual practices of in-service teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• cognitive change in in-service teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• comparisons of expert-novice cognitions and practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• reading
• writing


**Pre-service Teachers**

Various pre-service teacher education programmes have been studied: PGCE programmes (Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996), CELTA courses (M. Borg, 2005), MA in TESOL programmes (Warford and Reeves, 2003) or its various components, such as the teaching practicum (K. E. Johnson, 1994, 1996b) or individual modules like SLA (MacDonald et al., 2001; Peacock, 2001). However, the results of these studies are found to be inconclusive, since some findings point out the impact of beliefs on teaching practice while others point to the absence of it. In addition to this, the diversity of examined programmes and contexts as well as differing conceptualizations of impact across the studies make it all together difficult and problematic to draw generic conclusions (see also Borg, 2006). As has been mentioned above, among the rather pessimistic views of teacher education as a weak intervention (Kagan, 1992), various degrees of influence have been noted in most of language teacher cognition studies. For instance, Cabaroglu and Roberts conceptualized change as ‘movement’ or ‘development’ in beliefs:

…shifts which standard measurement may register as quite minor, such as on a rating scale, may actually represent movement in beliefs that meaningfully influence a student teacher’s perceptions and practice.

(389)
As the result of their studies, a classification system that labels different types of belief development (e.g. awareness, consolidation, elaboration, addition, re-ordering, relabeling, disagreement, reversal, pseudo change, no change) was devised. They called the cognitive development that occurred in all but one participant as the early confrontation of trainees’ prior beliefs and self-regulated learning opportunities.

The results of the studies of other researches such as MacDonald et al. (2001) and Peacock (2001), who used pre- and post-course instruments to assess the development of teacher trainees’ beliefs with regard to SLA, seem to be controversial. In contrast to MacDonald’s et al. (2001) findings that changes in key beliefs did take place, Peacock (2001), in spite of his anticipated expectations of positive impact in the development of the trainees’ beliefs in the desired direction, found very few changes.

Another example of a contradiction is Gutierrez Almarza’s (1996) study, the results of which indicated changes in trainees’ behaviors, which were, however, not accompanied by changes in their belief systems. The researcher concludes that such behaviors may have been a result of the pressure on the trainees to conform to the expectations of the programme.

All findings of the previous studies, including the findings mentioned above, bring us to the understanding of two very important methodological points that need to be addressed in language teacher cognition research:

1. It seems that our understanding of teacher change is limited if cognitions are examined in isolation of behaviors because behavioral change does not imply cognitive change and vice versa (see also Borg, 2003c; 2006, who has repeatedly stressed this point);

2. Caution must be exercised with regard to claims based on data elicited as part of the trainees’ formal assessment. Given that the ‘language teacher education research’ was mostly conducted in such contexts where the teacher educator/supervisor’s role converges with that of the researcher, one needs to pursue a more critical inquiry into the status of data elicited in this way.

Two further studies were conducted, which while focusing on the in-service teachers also threw more light on the impact of their pre-service teacher education. According to the finding of Borg’s (1998c) study of an experienced teacher’s grammar-related instructional decisions in the EFL classroom, the initial intensive teacher training programme that this teacher had participated in, had a profound impact on his/her belief
Moreover, the study reveals that contextual factors which are considered as powerful forces that diminish the impact of teacher education, did not in any way interfere with this teacher’s adherence to his belief system developed through the initial teacher education and in-service development. According to Borg (273-281), course-related as well as dispositional factors that could have contributed to such a powerful impact, included the intensity and strong practical focus of the course, the expertise and reflexivity of trainers, the novelty of the course content and an open mind and a willingness to learn on the part of this teacher. According to Kubanyiova (57), Borg’s study demonstrates that, (1) the initial teacher education impact could perhaps be more meaningfully assessed within a longer time-span and in relation to the in-service teaching practice, and (2) employing a multi-methodological approach, which embraces multiple data sources, could be an avenue towards a fuller understanding of the nature of the pre-service teacher education influence.

The second study that was by Watzke (2007), confirmed the above assertions. It explored a long-term impact of pre-service teacher education by following up the in-service teachers for the first three years of their teaching career. The findings reveal that although initially, the teachers’ practices could have been seen as traditional and even contradictory to their initial teacher education, these teachers began to develop in alignment with their initial teacher education (control over students or instructional content). Watzke concludes that the theoretical approaches, which had been, advocated in teacher education programmes “develop as pedagogical content knowledge through a process of teaching, conflict, reflection, and resolution specific to the in-service classroom context” (74).

All in all, Watzke’s (2007) study signifies the importance of bridging pre-service education with in-service teaching practice to better examine the long-term impact of pre-service education. It goes in line with Richards and Pennington’s (1998) findings that none of the five teachers who had been trained in the communicative language teaching approach applied its principles in their first year of in-service teaching practice.

In-service Teachers

The number of studies on the impact of in-service teacher development programmes on language teachers’ growth is markedly less than that of pre-service teacher education. Among them Freeman’s (1993) study focused on how four high
school French and Spanish teachers responded to the new ideas encountered by them in their in-service MA degree course. The qualitative data of this study reveals newer ways in which these teachers think, which Freeman refers to as renaming experience. However, it is not easy to understand whether the renaming of experience actually led to reconstructing practice. According to Freeman (485-497), although there was a clear evidence of changes in some practices, others remained to be part of the teachers’ old routines. The researcher points out the need to examine how teachers rename their every-day experience, which in turn, enables them to reconstruct their practice, which does not necessarily happen in an externally observable way. Without understanding why the change that is manifested in the teachers’ new understanding of their teaching leads to no improved practice and thus no improved conditions for student learning, we cannot speak about the success of an educational intervention. “Unless we have a more holistic picture of the teachers’ cognitions and teaching practice and a more detailed description of how the evidence of change in teaching practice was assessed, any claims regarding the impact may be unfounded and their broader relevance questioned” (Kubanyiova 59).

Although language teacher cognition research domain is a growing discipline and has undoubtedly generated a relatively large volume of insightful data, even today fragmentation, terminological diversity, a limited geographical spread, methodological limitations and a lack of conceptual grounding (see also Borg, 2006) make it hard to draw generic conclusions. I have outlined below the area of culture teaching in foreign language education, which I believe, will need more attention in the language teacher cognition research agenda.

2.8 International Research: Integrating the Intercultural Dimension and Language Teacher Cognition

Every teacher must have raised a question about the objective of his/her teaching. In this respect, foreign language teachers often face the dilemma regarding which is primary - linguistic goals or ICC? In light of the above discussion, regarding the lower priority status of culture teaching and learning among foreign language teachers and researchers worldwide and the confusion regarding the nature and teaching of culture, we would like to discuss teachers’ perceptions of culture and its place in their classroom practices. The present section explores international research in teachers’
perceptions of objectives of Foreign Language Education about intercultural education. Addressing the development of the research on teacher cognition will bring us to a better understanding of the results as I take it for further discussion in Chapter three.

As has been mentioned above, the review indicates that although “the study of teacher cognition has established itself on the research agenda in the field of language teaching and provided valuable insight into the mental lives of language teachers, a clear sense of unity is lacking in the work” (Borg 81-109). Moreover, there are several major issues in language teaching, which have not yet been explored from the perspective of teacher cognition. Although large volumes of studies have been significant in furthering researchers’ understanding of teachers’ practical knowledge, there is still a lack of research particularly in the fields of applied linguistics and foreign language education, which Meijer et al. (60) calls “the knowledge base of teachers”. In other words, very little attention has been paid to how the intercultural dimension is perceived by teachers and learners (Bernhardt and Hammadou 289-298).

Robinson was the first who attempted to investigate on a large scale the perceptions held by teachers, students and their parents regarding the socio-cultural goals of foreign language education. She found a remarkable explanation regarding the socio-cultural benefits and stated that:

Foreign language study will give one the key to another culture, will lead to an awareness, understanding and sensitivity toward other people and their way of life. (24)

Among the first researchers to integrate the studies on teacher cognition and the intercultural dimensions in FLT were Byram and Risager, who together with their English and Danish colleagues compiled material from 212 language teachers in Britain and 653 in Denmark thus carrying out one of the first studies in this field back in the early 1990’s. Byram and Risager summarize their findings as follows:

Teachers’ understanding of the concept ‘culture’ appears to be lacking in the depth and complexity needed to grasp its significance for language teaching in the future. There is a concentration on ‘national’ culture and little attention to aspects of culture beyond those already found in textbooks. They are also often frustrated in their attempts to treat the cultural dimension seriously because of pressures to produce measurable results and focus on linguistic competence. (104-105)
In 1999 a similar survey was conducted among one hundred and thirty-five teachers of English, French and German in Flandern, the Flemish part of Belgium. Sercu (2001) showed that most of the respondents represented a view of culture in FLT as a traditional paradigm with no reference to promoting ICC (ICC). She states that foreign language teachers’ perceptions of professionalism seem to be typically those of teachers teaching for Communicative Competence (hereafter referred as CC), not those teaching for ICC.

Another study clearly inspired by Byram and Risager is Guilherme’s doctoral thesis in 2000, for which one hundred and seventy-six Portuguese teachers of English were asked about their attitudes towards the teaching of culture in English-speaking countries. The aim of the study was to explore how the teachers concretised the notion of ‘a critical interpretation of the cultural context’ included in the Portuguese curriculum of English. Guilherme’s focus was “critical cultural awareness”, which is a term borrowed from Byram’s model of the five savoirs. The results indicate that although the respondents advocate a critical pedagogy in theory, they do not apply this in practice.

Lazar (2000, 2001) has conducted two studies on the attitude of English teachers about the intercultural dimension of language training. The former is a quantitative study with three hundred and ninety-three teachers, carried out simultaneously in Estonia, Poland, Iceland and Hungary. The latter is a qualitative study set in Hungary, which can be seen as a follow-up of the former. The majority of the Hungarian teachers do not include ‘culture’ in their teaching to any noteworthy extent. According to Lazar, increased awareness of working with intercultural understanding will have to be linked to intercultural communication as an integrated part of teacher education.

In Spain, Castro, Sercu and Mandez Garcia (2004) have conducted an investigation among secondary school EFL teachers, focusing on the extent to which teachers support the new culture-and-language teaching objectives in the curricular guidelines. Their findings suggest that teachers are willing to support the new objectives, but that they experience conflicts when having to prioritize between language teaching and the teaching of culture.

This study is part of a quantitative comparative survey that comprises questionnaire answers received from teachers in seven countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain and Sweden). The focus is on the data about how teachers perceive the cultural dimension of FLT, on their perceptions of their students’ knowledge of and attitudes to target language countries, their own teaching and the
significance of study trips and exchanges. The overall results are published in Sercu et al., 2005.

In Sweden, Ulla Lundgren emerges as the main researcher interested in this field. In her doctoral thesis (Lundgren, 2002), she examines the prospects of developing intercultural understanding through EFL in the Swedish comprehensive school. Her overall aim is split into two subordinate aims: 1) to analyse and problematize the intercultural dimension of EFL as three discourses namely research discourse, authority discourse and teacher discourse; 2) to relate these discourses to each other in order to reveal a space for the interpretation of culture teaching and learning culture in EFL. Lundgren summarizes her findings in two categories: opportunities and obstacles for developing intercultural understanding in EFL education.

For this study, her analysis of the teacher discourse is of particular interest. Ten experienced teachers were interviewed about how they relate to the intercultural dimension in the teaching of English as well as what other obstacles and opportunities they can identify. The interviews were followed by telephone conversations, where the respondents were invited to clarify points discussed in the personal meetings six months earlier.

All teachers claimed to find intercultural understanding important but very few saw it as an explicit task for FL teaching. Similarly, few teachers in Lundgren’s study refer to societal changes and central guidelines as reasons for an intercultural approach to teaching and learning English. The national assessment is considered of more significance. The fact that it does not assess intercultural knowledge sets the norm for what counts as important and valuable knowledge. In this respect, Lundgren’s survey correlates with findings from the international arena.

Lundgren’s study may also be regarded as a source of inspiration or starting point for Eva Gagnestam’s doctoral thesis in 2003, involving both qualitative and quantitative methods. She has approached students as well as teachers in Swedish upper secondary schools. Her phenomenographic study of English teachers’ and student teachers’ interpretations of ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural understanding’ reveal an uncertainty concerning how to deal with culture in language teaching. The respondents feel that they lack the necessary tools to be able to carry out adequate teaching about culture.

Three studies set outside Europe are worth mentioning. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Qahtani (2004) has explored views and attitudes of EFL teachers towards introducing
the TC (teaching culture) in their EFL classrooms to develop their students’ sociolinguistic competence. The data consists of questionnaires filled in by 70 teachers at selected male middle schools in Riyadh, as well as material from semi-structured interviews with four of these teachers. Al-Qahtani’s findings suggest that the teachers have positive attitudes towards introducing the TC and are aware of the importance of developing their students’ cross-cultural understanding. According to Al-Qahtani, the teachers also exhibit a broad understanding of what ‘culture’ means and what teaching ‘culture’ could entail. However, the teachers are limited in their involvement in the teaching of culture. Thus, Al-Qahtani attributes to the teachers’ fear that exposing students to the TC could affect their cultural and religious beliefs in an unfavourable way. The idea that intercultural language teaching (ILT) could harm the students is a new and interesting element, brought to the fore by this particular context of the study. The teachers in the study also appear to lack the profound understanding of the role of culture in language teaching, which is needed to realise its necessity in developing language learners’ sociolinguistic competence.

In the United States, Diaz-Greenberg and Nevin (2003) have shed light on how critical pedagogy and multicultural education can help meet the challenges that world language teachers experience in the teaching of culture. The purpose of their study was to explore some of the factors influencing culture teaching by getting an insight into student teachers’ reflections. Three graduate students completing their last term in the teacher preparation programme were interviewed with the purpose of determining to what extent they understood the distinction between the ‘Five Cs approach’ and the ‘Four Fs approach’. According to Diaz-Greenberg and Nevin (215), the ‘Four Fs approach’ (Food, Fashion, Festivals and Folklore) trivialises the complex nature of culture, whereas the ‘Five Cs approach’ (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities) involves including all the five topics in a systematic approach at all levels of language instruction.

In order to elicit the students’ conscious and unconscious beliefs about the nature of their understanding, the researchers put the following questions to them: 1) How is the concept of culture approached in the textbook you are using during your student teaching?, and 2) How is the textbook concept of culture similar or different to what you have learned in the teacher education programme, or how are concepts of culture taught in the language classrooms? (Diaz-Greenberg and Nevin 220).
The results indicate that language prospective teachers can tie in the teaching of culture using the ‘Five Cs approach’ even when their textbooks might be presenting the ‘Four Fs approach’. All the three respondents are very much aware of the fact that it is the teacher rather than the textbook that should guide the teaching of culture. One of the problems discussed in the interviews was concerning the emphasis on textbooks in Spain, although most of the foreign language students in the United States are closer to Mexico and Central America than Spain. The researchers conclude that the cultural base of the teacher can often influence (unconsciously) the perceptions and subsequent presentation of the cultural norms of the other culture.

In Turkey, Okan Onlan (2005) investigated Turkish teachers’ opinions and beliefs about the place of target cultural information in English language teaching, as well as their related practices and applications in EFL classrooms in Turkish higher education context. Two hundred copies of the survey (forty in each university) were made and distributed to Prepatory Schools (Hazırlık) of five universities in Ankara (Ankara University, Baskent University, Bilkent University, Hacettepe University and Middle East Technical University). The surveys were handed out at the end of the Fall semester 2003-2004, thinking that teachers would have better understanding of their students and their attitudes at the end of the semester.

The study shows that teachers mostly define culture in the sociological sense, such as values and beliefs. Their definition of culture in the framework of ELT slightly shifts towards the more visible culture such as food and clothing. The study also reveals teachers’ positive attitudes towards incorporating cultural information in their instruction.

Noticeably, fewer studies have investigated the link between teachers’ approaches to teaching and students’ intercultural competence development. In Finland, Kohonen and Kaikkonen have both contributed with a substantial body of research in the field of intercultural language learning. Studies where teachers voice their views on this matter appear to be limited to Kaikkonen’s analysis of pre-service teachers’ paths to becoming language teachers. However, the respondents’ experiences, perceptions and knowledge about culture in language teaching are not the only issue addressed in the study.

Liselott Forsman’s licentiate thesis (2004a) addresses the influence of extracurricular activities in English on Finland-Swedish EFL-students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge/awareness and attitudes. As part of her empirical study she
interviewed eight teachers, all of whom saw the effects of media influence on their students’ learning as something positive. Increased knowledge of and interest in certain cultures and aspects of cultures were mentioned as positive outcomes. However, the teachers find the knowledge somewhat one-sided in the sense that students seem to know more about the United States than about Great Britain or any other English-speaking society. The teachers also commented on stereotypic views, sometimes negative ones, primarily aimed at representatives of Britain and British culture. This also became apparent in the preceding student interviews, suggesting that students show less variation of ideas, seem more uncertain and express conservative views concerning British teenagers, whereas their descriptions are more detailed and ‘up-to-date’ concerning American teenagers. This can be attributed to less media influence from Great Britain or less diversity in existing images.

Since the students in Forsman’s study do not express clear opinions about different English-speaking cultures, many of the teachers in the study report that they try to provide more realistic and complementary information or enhance students’ general cultural awareness. They advocate more systematic ways of bringing in positive role models in the form of representatives of other cultures to the classroom as well as helping students meet with them outside the classroom. Such experiences, Forsman writes, could give the students more knowledge about people from other cultures than the conveyance of superficial facts would. She concludes the following: “It seems impossible to expect our students to develop respect for and understanding of foreign people with other conventions and traditions than their own with such little awareness and actual knowledge of representatives of the English-speaking target cultures whose language they actually study at school. If the findings of the study are the result of what has been expressed about cultural education in the curriculum so far, it seems that further emphasis of cultural aspects is needed” (178-179). Forsman’s study is first and foremost a study of student knowledge/awareness and attitudes. The consequences of such research have tended to influence educational practices and improve learning outcomes by increasing the quality of learning and teaching.

The international research briefly presented here ranges from large-scale quantitative studies to qualitative studies where just a small number of teachers have been interviewed. The findings indicate that teachers are very much aware of the importance of integrating cultural aspects in language teaching. However, they do not always problematize the multifaceted concept of culture, which is often linked to a
national paradigm; neither do they realize it in their own teaching in ways that would effectively promote intercultural understanding.

It ought to be clearly stated and recognized that beliefs about language teaching and learning are context-specific. Teachers and learners from different cultures may have different attitudes, approaches and opinions about learning a new language and integrating cultural component into their practices. The problems of teaching foreign languages in India are different from the problems of teaching in a monolingual setting.

2.9 The Present Study: Specification of Research Questions

In spite of the numerous calls to conduct classroom-based research, the reality reveals that it is still very little known as to what really goes on in the foreign language classroom (Byram and Esarte-Sarries, 1991; Byram et al., 1991; Lessard-Clouston, 1996b; Robinson, 1985; Ryan, 1994). According to Salomone (1991), in comparison to student performance that has been studied extensively for over 20 years, teachers’ practices and beliefs have not been similarly scrutinized (57).

Tom and Valli are also among those who argue that (as cited in Meijer et al. 171) although “teachers and some teacher educators stress the importance of teachers’ practical knowledge …it is not clear how that knowledge can be integrated into a codified knowledge base.” Similarly, Shulman stresses the importance of this research in his study:

Practitioners simply know a great deal that they have never even tried to articulate. A major portion of the research agenda for the next decade will be to collect, collate, and interpret the practical knowledge of teachers for the purpose of establishing a case literature and codifying its principles, precedents, and parables. (12)

It has become obvious that the field of foreign language study was not part of teacher cognition and action research until recently, when it became involved with issues related to the social context of language.

In contrast to the few attempts in international settings to study teacher’s beliefs about the role of culture in teaching outlined above, the review of the national literature in the field as well as it comparison to the international studies of language teachers’ perceptions of the intercultural dimension of foreign language education (Byram and Risager, 1999; Sercu, 1999; Lázár, 2000, 2001, Guilherme, 2002) reveals that:
The concept of culture in foreign language teaching in India is not problematized.

A critical approach to teaching culture is non-existent.

There is an urgent call for the national classroom-based research.

As illustrated in Chapter two, there was no systematic study or research to shed light on how foreign language teachers in India perceive and understand culture on their way towards improving the learning/teaching of the target language.

Therefore, being the first and unique of its kind, the present survey was conducted very carefully to enrich the knowledge about Indian teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the treatment of culture in foreign language teaching at the University level. The study was conducted with the participation of the students and teachers of Foreign Languages schools (primarily of European languages, such as English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Russian) of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Jamia Islamia University (JMI) and Delhi University (DU), New Delhi, India. Discovering the nature of translation of the objectives for cultural teaching into practice and also the way teachers’ knowledge and beliefs actually inform their practice, helped me create the necessary variables for the present research and answer its main question, mainly whether or not language teaching in India today can be described as intercultural. Inspired by the works of Byram and Risager, 1999; Sercu, 1999; Lázár, 2000, 2001; Guilherme, 2002 and by the recent comparative study undertaken in seven European countries (Sercu 2004), I directed my attention to the need for further research into teachers’ beliefs about culture and language teaching by looking at the Indian context, thus following the call for contributing to an international research.