

# Intercultural communicative competence in teaching sociocultural contents of Spanish as a foreign language. Analysis of history teachers' lesson plans

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## **Abstract**

This paper proposes the application of the concept of intercultural communicative competence in Spanish speaking teachers teaching sociocultural contents of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). Specifically, subjects under investigation are Argentine history teachers in charge of a course concerning the history of their country aimed at young foreigners of different nationalities. We organized the course as an intercultural device in a quasi-experimental design comprising *prefacto* (a personal language biography and intercultural experiences survey), the *de facto* (planning, selection and / or creation of educational materials for the class and its implementation) and the *post-facto* (individual written self-assessment of their own performance). The classes taught by rotating teachers provide abundant empirical data for the analysis of this competence in the pre-active, active and post active stages (Jackson, 1991). The situation is particularly interesting as it is about native teachers who teach about their own culture in their native language to students of different socio-linguistic backgrounds interested in the proposal. As part of this major investigation, this paper is devoted to analyzing the lesson plans written by teachers for their classes. From its components (objectives, contents and activities), we searched the main indicators of intercultural communicative competence according to its main theoretical models and the integrated approach of cultures and languages (*enfoque integrado de culturas y lenguas –EICLE-* in Spanish or Content and Language Integrated Learning-CLIL-). The conclusions point out which aspects have to be promoted in teacher training for the proper development of this competence.

## **Keywords**

Intercultural communicative competence; Spanish as a foreign language; sociocultural content; lesson plan.



## 1. Introduction

The teaching of social disciplines to foreign language students constitutes a dilemma about who should be involved in such a task. On one hand, the high degree of social expertise exceeds language teachers' knowledge. On the other hand, teachers of History, Geography, Citizenship Education have not received intercultural training, essential for a successful content transmission to students of other nationalities. Reflection on the part of the teachers is particularly necessary in the case of native instructors who teach their own language and culture that is quite familiar to them. This is the case of Argentina, a country in which foreign language knowledge has increasingly diversified demands. Besides inter-comprehension with native speakers, communication in sporadic trips, learning as a hobby or for schooling or employment demands (Pozzo, 2009), new requirements related to academia have appeared. The greater number of higher education foreign students who wish to enter university (Pozzo, 2013a) imposes greater expectations concerning an integrated approach to language and disciplinary content. Indeed, in the last decade Argentina has expanded its profile as a target receptor, traditionally associated with its natural beauties. With a remarkable growth, the country is chosen as a place to study Spanish language and national culture. These courses may be taken in curricular or extra-curricular university subjects or in non-governmental institutions such as language institutes. Academic prestige, the favorable exchange rate and the relatively greater safety compared to other Latin American nations contribute to the arrival of idiomatic tourists, foreign students and immigrants. In this context, Argentina has become the international competitor in teaching Spanish as a foreign language (from now on, SFL) for Spain (Flores Maio and Carrera Troyano, 2008, p.125).

In the context described above, we investigated History teachers' intercultural competence teaching Spanish as a foreign language with its sociocultural contents to foreign students (Spanish speaking or not). Specifically, we researched the competence related to the teaching of the History of Argentina- through the teacher planning for the subject. From its components (objectives, contents and activities), we looked for the most important indicators of intercultural communicative competence according to its main theoretical models, as described in the following section.



Research on this field can improve teaching practices, teacher training and teaching materials. Thus, the ultimate goal is to promote effective teaching and a deep sociocultural understanding in foreigners, especially of other languages. The construction of knowledge about this magnified interculturally distant situation may shed light on the intercultural teacher education at various levels and disciplines.

## **2. Intercultural communicative competence**

### **2.1 Principal definitions**

Traditional approaches to the relationship between language and culture in language teaching address each other's culture as alien and distant (Lo Bianco et al., 1999). Hence, they give rise to ethnocentric or reductionist positions, promoting stereotypes and isolated and decontextualized knowledge with a homogeneous and static view.

Research from an intercultural approach, point to the need for teacher training from a foreigner's perspective, examining empty cliché content that usually circulate in the enunciation of the teacher's culture. The concept of intercultural competence is a response in this sense, although its meaning may change within the academic community. Some authors take into account the role of language in its definitions. In this sense, Michael Byram (2000), proposes a distinction

between 'Intercultural Competence' as 'the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture' and 'Intercultural Communicative Competence' which means performance in a foreign language. (p.298)

In a similar way, Fantini (2010) considers the role of language in this competence, but in a general sense; whether it be the first, second or a foreign language:

Intercultural communicative competence is a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself. Whereas "effective" relates to one's own view of one's performance in the LC2 (i.e., an "etic" or



an outsider's view of the host culture); "appropriate" relates to how one's performance is perceived by one's hosts (i.e., an "emic" or insider's view). (p.1)

Other definitions are even more general: they mention *communication* but not *language*.

Intercultural communication competence is the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactant's multiple identities in a specific environment. This definition emphasizes that competent persons must know not only how to interact effectively and appropriately with people and environment, but also how to fulfill their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the multilevel cultural identities with whom they interact. (Chen and Starosta, 1996, p.358–359)

A compilation of the most relevant definitions refer to the ability to communicate but dropping "communicative" in the name of the competence.

the top-rated definition was one in which intercultural competence was defined as (...) the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes. (Deardorff, 2006, p.247-248)

Another group refers to it in even more general terms as an ability to interact.

Intercultural competence is the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality. (Byram, Gribkova y Starkey 2002, p.10)

In the situation that is analyzed in this paper, the difference between the mother tongues spoken by the participants (Argentinean Spanish of the host teachers and the languages spoken by the foreign students in Argentina) is an important variable. For this reason, the first definitions are more suitable. Going further, as we are interested in the effort towards communication made by both parties (the native speaker teachers of the vehicular



language and the ones who try to learn it), Fantini's definition (2010) is more operational. As defined, "effective" and "appropriate" -present in varied definitions- are two helpful features to analyze empirical data.

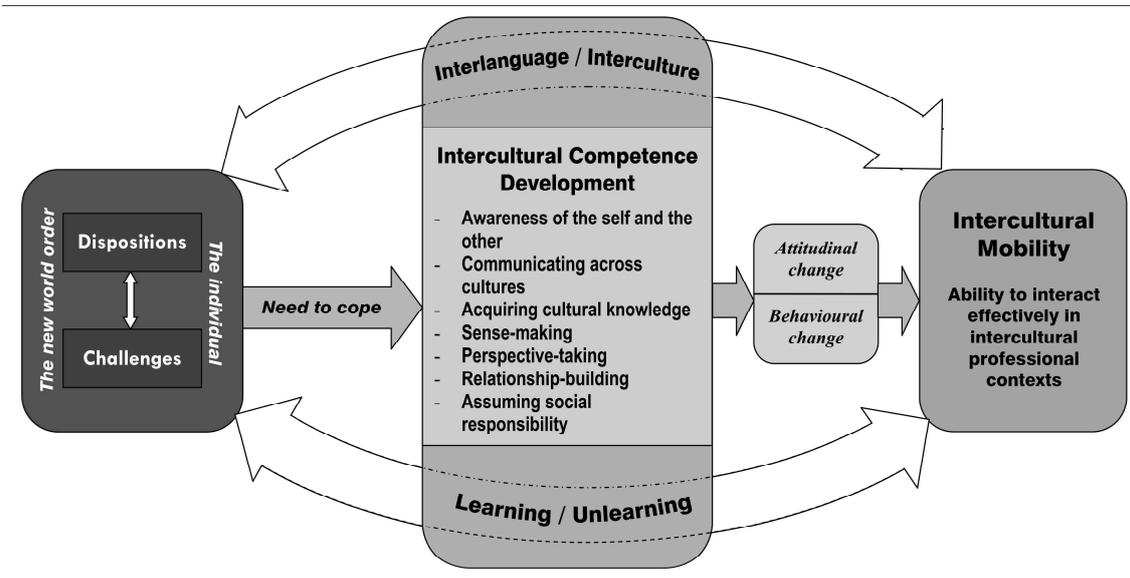
Other concepts have been used previously in a similar way: *intercultural competence*, *intercultural effectiveness*, *intercultural adaptation* (e.g., Hammer, Gudykunts & Wiseman, 1978; Ruben, 1976, Ruben & Kealy, 1979; Wiseman & Abe, 1986). It is not the purpose of this paper to make a thorough recount, but only mention conceptual antecedents.

## 2.2. Main theoretical models

Intercultural communicative competence is not a dichotomous variable, which can be evaluated at all or nothing, but it may vary according to the cultural proximity of the partner country, the encyclopedic cultural heritage and personal profile. In fact, many theorists have provided models that intend to explain its components and assessment tools. These categories can be applied to both the native teachers and visiting students, or what Cupach and Spitzberg (1984) would call the native-host and the sojourner.

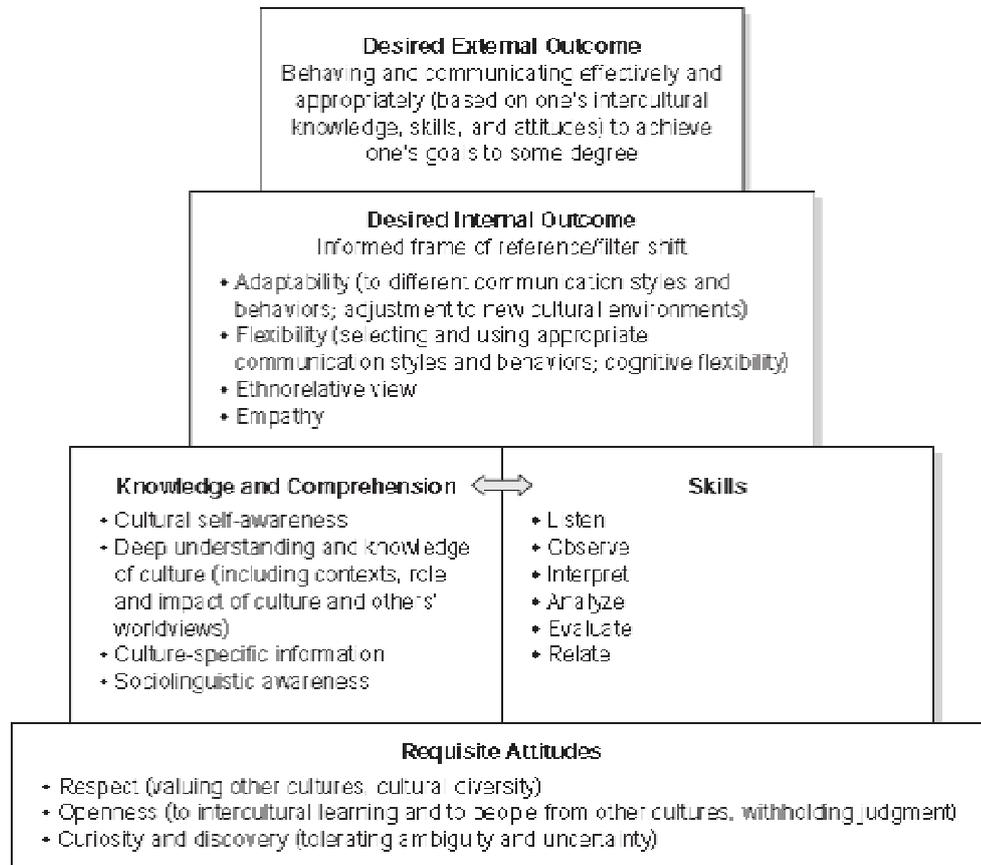
Among the most relevant models for the analysis of this situation is that of Glaser et al. (2007), which is part of the project ICOPROMO (Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility). This model integrates knowledge, skills, insights and attitudes, as shown in Graph 1.

**Graph 1:** The development of intercultural competence (Glaser et al., 2007, p.19)



The ICOPROMO model offers features of interest in the central module of interlanguage/intercultural. Meanwhile, Deardorff (2006) proposes a model of intercultural competence in two versions: a pyramidal-shaped and a procedural flow. Since our analysis is cross-sectional and not longitudinal, we refer exclusively to the first (Graph 2).

**Graph 2:** Pyramid model of intercultural competence of Deardorff (2006), in Spitzberg and Changnon (2009, p.13).



This model is more detailed than ICOPROMO; in addition to the usual reference to knowledge, skills and attitudes, it includes the desired results, both internal and external.

### 2.3. Curricular documents

Curriculum documents relating to foreign languages have taken these contributions to the definition of its components. As this work aims to analyze lesson plans, we transcribe the operational segments for the analysis of empirical data.

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), intercultural competence comprises:

- the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other;
- cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;
- the capacity to fulfill the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflictive situations;
- the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships (p.104)

In the case of Spanish as a foreign language (SLE), the Curricular Plan of Cervantes Institute (2006) proposes three dimensions to build the intercultural speaker: the cultural references, cultural knowledge and behaviors (they both form the sociocultural contents) and intercultural attitudes. The relationship between these components is metaphorically described by Simons and Sixs (2012), who allude to the cultural references as "the raw material of intercultural communicative competence in SFL classroom" (p.1). Thus, sociocultural contents constitute an interdisciplinary field in which Social Sciences, Language Sciences and Science Education converge. Therefore, the analyzed situation is framed in the integrated content and language approach (Pérez Vidal, 2011) in and academic purposes SFL teaching (Vázquez, 2002).

Specifically, the Curricular Plan of Cervantes Institute details intercultural attitudes:

1. Configuring a plural cultural identity
2. Assimilation of cultural knowledge (cultural behaviors and cultural references)
3. Cultural interaction
4. Cultural mediation

According to this document, intercultural competence requires the development and the capacity to use a series of knowledge, abilities and attitudes which will enable to:



a) observe and interpret from different perspectives, cultural and sociocultural communities, keys of the communities to which one gains access, regardless of filters or stereotypes; and function successfully in new social and cultural environments;

b) act as an intermediary between members of different cultures, building bridges to overcome the possible misunderstandings (p.448).

Although these goals mostly refer to daily living, they also apply to academic environments as analyzed here. Conversely, training based on the development of intercultural communicative competence can overcome stereotypes and prejudices of common sense.

Byram and Fleming (2009, p. 11) summarize the objectives of language teaching in the following categories:

- Those that focus on developing practical communication skills;
- Those that focus on the understanding and awareness of the language;
- Those that promote positive attitudes and understanding of foreign language speakers and their way of life;
- Those that are general in nature that help develop learning skills that are also found in other disciplines;
- Those that guide student's attention to themselves and to the way of life that is assumed and almost never questioned, that is, the "cultural awareness".

After considering the main features of intercultural communicative competence, we will move on to analyze its attributes in lesson plans written by teachers. That is, whether they take into account the intercultural nature of the teaching-learning situation and, if so, in what respect is it done. Although the production is related to intercultural awareness among teachers (Posse, 2014), this study focuses in the performative dimension. As we

rely on grounded theory, we do not adopt any a priori instrument, but we interpret the empirical data in the light of the theory, as we have synthesized.

### **3. Antecedents**

Intercultural competence has been specially researched in students (cfr. Young & Sachdev, 2011), mostly in foreign language classes and/or on stays abroad. On the other hand, there are studies on intercultural teacher education at various levels and disciplines (see Dominguez, 2006 for Social Sciences Middle School Teacher; Yurén y Saenger, 2006 for French Teachers). Also Rubio (2009) proposed to apply the concept of intercultural communicative competence to initial teacher training. However, his approach is theoretical and concludes with suggestions and without any empirical work.

As noted by Young and Sachdev (2011, p.81), there are few empirical studies on how intercultural approaches from both theoretical literature on applied linguistics and curricular guidelines such as the Common European Framework of Reference are put into practice. Most of these studies are theoretical or rhetorical. For this reason, we implemented a research project in which we evaluate the intercultural communicative competence of native teachers teaching Spanish as a foreign language cultural content to non-Spanish speaking students. That is, Social Science (History) teachers, teaching about their own culture (Argentine History) in their native language (Spanish) to foreign students. To carry out the study, we held a course on Argentine history for foreign students of various nationalities in the city of Rosario, Argentina. The choice of this discipline is justified for two reasons: the binding nature of this field of study knowledge around multidisciplinary cultural contents which in the field of language teaching are known as sociocultural contents, and the interest aroused by this knowledge in Spanish as foreign language students, as previous studies revealed (Pozzo, 2010).

The course lasted two months (March and April, 2012) and comprised 18 classes. To implement the course, we selected a non random sample of teachers at different times of their teaching profession; that is to say, a theoretical sampling within the interpretive paradigm. Specifically, the course was in charge of a large group (forty in total) of



advanced students, newly graduated and experienced teachers of the History Department at the Institute of Higher Education N° 28 "Olga Cossettini" of Rosario, Argentina.

The teachers are mainly women (26 females and 14 men) and graduates (26 teachers and 14 advanced students). The crossing of these two variables indicates a majority of female teachers and a smaller amount, similar in number, of women and men students (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Subjects by sex and academic situation

Men		Women	
Students	Teachers	Students	Teachers
8	6	6	20

The subjects participated voluntarily and were selected by senior teachers (team coordinators) based on their good performance as students and for their willingness to take the experience as a training instance. These criteria offer a prosperous research situation to compare their conceptions and actions in the classroom. Small rotative groups (sometimes individuals) were in charge of each class and were completely videotaped. All subjects participated in the pre-active, active and post-active phases of the practice (Jackson, 1991), as the design allows cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches.

In the first stage, data on the language biography and cultural experiences of the participating teachers were surveyed. This diagnosis was made through a semi-structured questionnaire adapted from the European Language Portfolio (Council of European Languages, 2002) to collect previous and ongoing studies, language skills, trips, contacts with people of other nationalities and other intercultural experiences. The data obtained in this diagnostic stage is itself interesting as they provide knowledge on this population's intercultural communicative competence, within the limits of this nonrandom sample. In turn, this stage is also the pre-facto of this quasi-experimental design (Campbell and Stanley, 1993), necessary for the next steps.



After the diagnosis, we proceeded to the implementation of the device (the *facto* stage): the course of Argentinean history for foreigners. This involved the respective lesson plans -that concerns us here-, the analysis of the treatment of the topics in the textbooks available and based on this, the preparation and / or selection of texts and activities.

The dictation was observed *in situ* and completely filmed for later viewing and analysis as done in Pozzo, 2013b.

The post-*facto* or post-*active* stage showed the subjects' perception about their own intercultural communicative competence during the classes (Pozzo, 2014). It was carried out through a written individual self assessment, half-structured, in which they had to numerate their strengths and weaknesses of their own class from their own point of view.

At the same time, we announcement an Argentinean history course for foreigners taught in Spanish in a non-formal education setting. The attendants' profile was recorded through a half structured survey which asks: origin, age, condition, mother tongue, years of study and level of Spanish language, length of time in Argentina, reason for interest in the course, prior knowledge of Argentine history and difficulties faced in this country. The mandatory participation variable was that of being foreigners, as a requisite to being the foreign target group. The other variables of the audience (Spanish speaking or not) established the degree of cultural distance and heterogeneity within the device to analyze.

#### **4. The present study**

In the context of the major research mentioned in the Antecedents section, this paper focuses on the proactive step, specifically, the lesson plan. Due to lack of space, we selected a nonrandom sample of planning, resulting in a corpus of three. They were chosen for their different format and the variety of its authors, as summarized:

Planning No. 1 was conducted by an individual teacher, older than 30 years old.

Planning No. 2 was written by 2 teachers: one of them in service and the other one without teacher performance. They are older than 50 years old.



Planning No. 3 was carried out by three in service teachers. They are between 20 and 30 years old.

This information is only descriptive, due to the exploratory nature of the study. Although all teachers were aware of this special course to foreigners, it is still interesting to investigate on their intercultural communicative competence as it is very difficult to concretize it in the classroom.

The student body was made up of a Mexican, two Venezuelans, a Colombian, four Belgian and a Dutch. When the course began, European students had been in Argentina for eight months. The rest had only been in Argentina for a few months though, of course, they enjoyed the advantage of being Spanish speakers. The course coordinator-author of this work-, and the academic supervisor were also present.

Following the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1980), we transcribed the lesson plans to analyze them from the theoretical developments related to intercultural communicative competence. The analysis extracts from each document what matches with ICC.

## 5. Results

In this section we transcribe the teachers' lessons plans and their analysis. The productions are given a number as a code. The teacher's name is preserved anonymously.

### ***Lesson Plan N° 1: "Argentinean History between 1955 and 1966"***

#### **Rationale**

History is a fundamental science so that through the past, students can understand and explain the present and future of their society and the world. When trying to analyze, understand and interpret the facts in different times and spaces, it allows students to acquire the ability to look at the present critically and understand it as the result of a historical process.

The teaching strategies will try to promote that students recognize a culture and a history, achieving a global vision of society, always seeking the active participation of students through different techniques. Therefore I will work with multi-causal explanations, selecting the economic, political, geographical and cultural aspects, through the analysis and critical readings of texts and images.

It is intended that the student -in the development of this topic-, acquire the knowledge and tools necessary for the construction of the past history of Argentina.

Expected goals:

Students are expected to achieve:



- \* Comprehension and understanding of the interdependence between global and national history.
- \* Recognition of the events and processes of national history between 1955 and 1966, perceiving the various interests of different sectors of society
- \* Acquisition of skills in handling concepts and documentary sources.
- \* Understanding and explanation of the present as part of a larger historical process marked by the actions of individual actors and events that occur in the course of our history as a country.
- \* Identification and characterization of this period of national history through the socio- political transformations.
- \* Recognition of the distinguishing features of the different social groups that interact during this period.

**Conceptual contents:**

- \* Liberating Revolution
- \* Different governments in Argentina between 1955 and 1966
- \* Social, cultural, political, and economic aspects of the period 1955-1966
- \* 'Desperonization'
- \* Developmentalism
- \* Militar proposals

**Procedural contents:**

- \* Temporal and spatial location of the period 1955-1966.
- \* Sequences of events that occurred in Argentina from 1955 to 1966 and their consequences.
- \* Analysis and interpretation of the political, economic and social reality of the period.
- \* Concepts analysis (where necessary).

**Attitudinal contents:**

- \* Appreciation of the facts that contributed to the building of the Argentinean nation
- \* Interest in learning about different events that occurred between 1955 and 1966 in Argentina.
- \* Willingness to agree on guidelines and respect teamwork.
- \* Ability to reflect on the historical knowledge that favored the construction of the identity of the country's population.

**Working Methodology:**

- \* Tracking of knowledge taught in past classes.
- \* Short dialogical exposition.
- \* Reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources that allow students to understand the context in which social actors perform.
- \* Individual practical work

Planning N° 1 begins with a rationale about the importance of the historical discipline. It notes the importance of a global view:

History is a fundamental science so that through the past, students can understand and explain the present and future of their society and the world.

In this fragment, it is striking the use of the possessive "their society". Thus, the teacher forgets that the student will not study about their society, but an alien one.

Among the expectations of achievement, this plan includes only one content focused on supranational relations:

- \* Comprehend and understand the interdependence between global and national history.



This relationship is inherent to the object of study and not to the individuals involved, either individually (by the relationships that can be established between the subject and the culture of the target language) and group (the encounter between native teacher-  
sojourner and students, and between students of different origins).

However, this is not presented as an intercultural content in which students of different nationalities can contribute different perspectives. Still, it is worth pursuing a globalizing perspective, but -as we said-, it comes from a monocultural look.

The procedural contents mainly refer to the national sociocultural knowledge:

- \* Temporal and spatial location of the period 1955-1966.
- \* Sequences of events occurred in Argentina from 1955 to 1966 and their consequences.
- \* Analysis and interpretation of the political, economic and social reality of the period.

One content is of a general nature:

- \* Concepts analysis (where necessary).

This planning is profuse in attitudinal contents. Several of them are related to intercultural communicative competence:

- \* Appreciation of the facts that contributed to the building of Argentinean nation
- \* Interest in learning about different events that occurred between 1955 and 1966 in Argentina.
- \* Ability to reflect on the historical knowledge that favored the construction of the identity of the country's population.

Another attitudinal content, however, is general in nature:

- \* Willingness to agree on guidelines and respect teamwork.

About methodology, it is striking that uses a brief (why not extensive or transverse?) dialogical exposition and individual practical work. While the ICC does not necessarily refer to an external process, the interaction is undoubtedly a promoter factor.



**Lesson Plan N° 2: The 1930's Coup d'etat**

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE: The difficult situation in the country in 1930 led to a military coup; therefore, a de facto government, was forced to call elections in 1931, thereby returning the oligarchy to power.

CONCEPTS	CONTENTS
- De facto government - Rule of law - Nationalism - Democracy - Corporate system - Electoral fraudulence - Bilateralism: base industry, internal migration, shantytowns, trade unions.	1 - Situation in Argentina in 1930, which led to subsequent coup d'etat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy</li> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• Society</li> </ul> 2 – 1930 Military coup d'etat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The army in the power</li> <li>• De facto government</li> <li>• Corporationism</li> </ul> 3 - The Return of the Conservatives <p>Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concordance</li> <li>• The patriotic fraudulence</li> <li>• Justo-Roca government</li> <li>• Ortiz - Castillo government</li> </ul> <p>Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English and American capital investment in the country</li> <li>• Bilateral and triangular trade</li> <li>• Roca-Runciman agreement</li> <li>• National Industry</li> <li>• Pinedo's Plan</li> <li>• Road and rail network</li> </ul> <p>Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in social structure</li> <li>• Problems and social demands</li> <li>• Trade unions</li> </ul>

PROCESSES	TEACHING-LEARNING SITUATION
Recognize	Recognition of the situation in the country through documental sources.
Analyze	Description of the most important features.
Identify	Identification of the causes and consequences of the 1930 coup d'etat.
Recognize	Understanding of Concordance' objectives and the opposition's complain.
Analyze	Analysis of the economic policies of the government with respect to the global context.
Operate	Development of explanatory synthesis on social transformations



Planning No. 2 starts with what its authors call "organizing principle". It aims to situate students at the period they will study. Beyond this introduction, the plan contains one reference to the situation at the national level:

- Situation in Argentina in 1930, which led to subsequent coup d'état

In the other sections, the plan includes one reference to process, in the manner of skills of Deardorff's (2006) pyramidal Model (in Chart N° 2 of this article).

This planning does not include attitudinal contents. They are all conceptual (in columns: 'concepts' and 'contents') and procedural (in columns: 'processes' and 'teaching-learning situation'). Within the latter, they are all cognitive, except for one, which is linguistic in nature:

- Development of explanatory synthesis on social transformations

### ***Lesson Plan N°3: Class on Peronism***

<b>Expected goals.</b> It is expected that students achieve:	<b>Thematic areas</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Methodologies</b>
<b>Conceptual content:</b> - Understand the process of Peronism building of power.	- Peron's Project - The labor movement, social legislation. - The classes' harmony. - National industrial development. - The planned economy	- Dialogical exposition. - Preparation of outlines, summaries and tables. - Reading and interpreting documentary sources	- Inductive - Deductive - Group works
<b>Procedural content:</b> - Select information - Identify positions in favour and against Peron.			
<b>Attitudinal contents:</b> - Appreciate the situation of Argentina during the Peronist period.			

Planning No. 3 exhibits a macro approach instead of stopping at individual points of references:

- Understand the process of the Peronist building of power.



This same approach is evident in the thematic areas, which, as such, involve encompassing notions. The most representative example is:

- National industrial development.

It also includes an attitudinal content on national identity (Byram and Fleming, 2009, p.15):

- Appreciate the situation of Argentina during the Peronist period.

It also includes a procedural content related to social identity:

- Identify positions in favour and against Peron.

This is, as Byram and Fleming (2009, p.15) point out, no longer enough to learn the national identity, it is necessary to advance to know the social groups that make up a nation.

Methodologically, planning includes verbal exchanges and group activities:

- Dialogical exposition.
- Group works

The other components of this lesson plan, although denote a constructivist stance, do not match any of the variables of intercultural communicative competence. They relate to Byram and Fleming's (2009, p.11) objectives categorized as general in nature, that help develop learning skills and are also found in other disciplines. For example:

- Procedural content: Select information

## **6. Final thoughts**

The analysis of the lessons' plans has showed various aspects related to the variables of intercultural communicative competence, whether these relate to knowledge, skills and/or attitudes.



In many cases teachers refer to national circumstances, in an effort to present global processes. To some extent, references to global processes are also included, very suitable for international students. However, this reference seems inherent to the historical facts themselves rather than a deliberate strategy according to the audience. As such, no "intercultural" reference was found, which indicates a perception more linked to the distance of the receiving audience than a real opportunity to engage in exchanges with them. In terms of Chen and Starostrá's (1996, p.358/9) definition, the lesson plans do not recognize the multiple identities of the interactants in the specific context. That is to say, the expressions denote excessive self-centeredness, with the best intentions to achieve an appropriate and effective teaching (Fantini, 2010) but without reference to the cultural situation of the class.

The results also show a majority of general content inherent in learning the discipline, similar to school planning. According to intercultural attitudes presented in Cervantes Institute Curricular Plan (2006), the lesson plans express a strong intention toward the assimilation of cultural knowledge, mainly present in the list of concepts or conceptual contents. This denotes a perception more linked to the sociocultural distance with the receptor auditorium (materialized in all they have to learn) than a real opportunity to engage in exchanges with it. From this cultural knowledge, students should achieve setting a plural cultural identity only by itself. In contrast, lesson plans do not show on cultural interaction and even less so on cultural mediation like that listed by Cervantes Institute (2006).

Moreover, there are few linguistic references (both associated with skills and knowledge). This absence may be expected in planning history classes, but in the particular case of this course, the fact that students are faced with another language seems forgotten.

Also dialogic instances are few; hence there is no intention of achieving relational and communicational effectiveness, according to the terms of Spitzberg and Cupach (1984). If subjects do not interact, as all ICC definitions say, we cannot evaluate whether communication is effective and appropriate, as others add. The result, then, is a unidirectional plan of communication, in which the interaction is mainly validated by understanding the contents of the students. Indeed, the lessons plans show more concerns



regarding the content of their discipline, that is, the sociocultural content (knowledge and points of references in the Cervantes Institute Curricular Plan), than to the intercultural attitudes.

In short, the results show little coincidences, indicating a low presence of intercultural communicative competence in the mental conception of the class of these teachers. The absence of ICC as a goal of the lesson plans (pre-facto stage) is overcome in part on the fact and post-facto, as our studies revealed (Pozzo, 2013b and 2014) -once history teachers have faced the challenge of teaching about their own culture to foreign students. This is seen through ICC indicators in the analysis of the classes and the high degree of satisfaction relieved in the same group after the class. This discrepancy regarding the first stage can be explained either by an overestimation of the group or by the change that occurred from the abstract planning of the class to the post-class reflection.

Being that training and performance of history teachers is carried out in a monocultural environment as Argentina's high schools, the proposal to participate in a course on Argentine history for foreigners means a challenge. Voluntary participation ensures motivation and helps achieve intercultural communication. However, the planning stage poorly reflects this challenge, hidden by the habit of planning stereotypically. It is noted that planning is experienced as a formal commitment in which there is a style to be followed, rather than a true working guide.

In this context, much effort still has to be done to make true the yearnings expressed in both the academic literature and curricular guidelines documents. In a situation characterized by the bibliographic proliferation with numerous definitions, theoretical models and tools for assessment of ICC, we need empirical studies that establish the possibilities and limitations of such heuristic tools to analyze the various intercultural contexts. We long for the present study, written far from the hegemonic knowledge production epicenters, constitute a contribution.

The research design presented here and the collected empirical material allow further analysis in various ways. Considering the mixed composition of the population (advanced students/graduates, men/women and other variables not mentioned here), a detailed



comparison of trends could be done. A future work should pursue an individual monitoring of the ICC of teachers in the three steps from case studies. In a later instance, didactic materials written by the teachers and textbooks analysis could be investigated and then crossed with lesson plans. Although, as I previously mentioned- there are other definitions and theoretical models not included in this work, the ones presented here form a very representative matrix for ICC analysis.

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