

Coursebook Authors on the Role of Literature in Developing Intercultural Competence

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Abstract

This paper presents three English language coursebook authors' views on the role of literature in the development of general upper secondary school English students' intercultural competence. The interviews with the Finnish authors were held in 2017 and analysed using a qualitative, phenomenological method to establish the interviewees' views of *literature* and *intercultural competence* and the way these concepts interconnect. The authors understood literature as texts consisting of a variety of formats and modalities, functions and content. While intercultural competence was challenging to define, it was seen as kinds of knowledge, attitudes and abilities. Literature was seen to contribute to students' intercultural competence by feeding students' curiosity, engaging them affectively, broadening their perspectives and developing their cognitive capacities and ability to act in changing contexts. Throughout the interviews, the authors maintained a subject pedagogy perspective whereby they considered what guiding students toward intercultural competence means for teachers, how students develop through reading literature in ELT settings, what the pedagogical goals are, and what kinds of expectations are placed upon the teacher. Educating interculturally competent students is an internationally shared educational aim. To work toward it, educators need clarity around the key concepts. This study contributes to the body of professional knowledge that ELT practitioners and teacher educators may use to reflect on their own understanding of these concepts. Teacher education and training should develop student teachers' understanding of not only why, how and which literary texts to use in ELT, but also show how the why, how and which have changed over the decades.

Keywords: literature; intercultural competence; coursebook authors; ELT

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Introduction

The role of coursebooks in language education is markedly strong both globally and in Finland (Curdt-Christiansen & Weninger, 2015; Karvonen, Tainio & Routarinne, 2017; Zhang, 2017). While coursebooks as educational artefacts have been approached from many perspectives, less frequently are their authors in focus in nexus with issues related to the inclusion of literature in language education. Here, I examine three Finnish English language teaching (ELT) coursebook authors' views on the role of literature in developing students' intercultural competence. The aim of my study is to provide qualitative research data on how the concepts and their interrelation have been understood in this particular ELT context.

According to Kuivalainen (2015, p. 491), author biographies, prose and poetry have had a role in Finnish ELT from its very beginning, circa the end of 19th century. Kuivalainen (2015) summarizes that in Finnish ELT of the 1930s, British literature gave way to American literature, and that classics were joined by popular literature and detective fiction at the end of 20th century. Throughout the decades, the functions of literature in Finnish ELT have reflected a contemporary understanding of what it means to educate learners toward interacting with people from cultures different from their own. In the early 19th century, literature in foreign language teaching was used to familiarize students with different countries' literary histories, literary currents and ideologies (Kuivalainen, 2015, p. 492). Over the decades from 1910 to 1930, the aim was to give students a taste of quality literature and to broaden students' knowledge of the target countries, peoples, cultures and the English sense of humour (Kuivalainen, 2015, pp. 497–498). Kuivalainen (2015, p. 501) observes that from the 1940s onward, literature read at schools sought to 'provide cultural knowledge [and] teach writing skills'. Teaching and learning materials aimed to establish in students a sense of appreciation for literature as an art form and the cultural atmosphere, and to describe the attributes of English-speaking peoples (Kuivalainen, 2015, p. 502, 504). Toward the end of the 20th century, the focus shifted from an awareness of literary history to dealing more closely with modern phenomena. While Kuivalainen (2015) does not focus at length on the contemporary role of literature in Finnish EFL, she does note that almost all coursebooks continue to include references to literature. This study is part of a larger research project in which the role of literature in contemporary Finnish ELT is explored.

The research questions I seek to answer in this paper are:

1. How do the coursebook authors understand *literature* and *intercultural competence*?
2. What role do the authors attribute to literature in the development of students' intercultural competence?

A phenomenological research strategy has been employed in the study, because it allows me to appropriately acknowledge my holistic view of individuals and *intercultural competence* as an educational aim. It likewise allows me to acknowledge my understanding of *literature* as a socially constructed and contextually bound body of texts, to which individuals attach a variety of different kinds of values (Meretoja et al., 2015; Paulson, 2007; Schmidt & Pailliotet, 2008; Surkamp, 2016), and my understanding of *language education* as a pedagogical paradigm within which literature is included for different kinds of educational ends (Niemi et al., 2016). By choosing to study individuals' understandings, I recognize that these will vary according to situation, context, culture and time (Jaatinen, 2007, p. 21; Kohonen et al., 2001; Kramsch, 1993). The purpose of the study is to establish an understanding of how these ELT coursebook authors view literature, intercultural competence and their interrelation. Although this is a small-scale qualitative study from a specific educational context, the study contributes new empirical evidence to the field and hopefully can enrich cross-cultural understanding between different English language teaching and learning contexts that share an interest in including children's and young adult literature in language education, especially when used to develop students' intercultural competence.

Literature and Intercultural Learning in the Framework of Values in Education

In their extensive synthesis of research on intercultural competence, its definition, assessment and development, Perry and Southwell (2011, pp. 454–455) observe that while numerous terms and definitions exist, 'intercultural competence is generally related to four dimensions: knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours' (see also Arasaratnam, 2015; Hoff, 2017; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Young and Sercombe (2010, p. 181) see interculturality 'as a dynamic process by which people not only draw on and use the resources and processes of cultures with which they are familiar but also those they may not typically be associated with in their interactions with others'. Perry and Southwell's (2011, pp. 454–455) categorization of the components of intercultural

competence varies only slightly from Byram's (1997) model – which Wagner et al., (2018) used in their research project – in that Perry and Southwell's model also includes critical cultural awareness as a component. Analogously, reflection and critical thinking are also present in the way Bland (2020, p. 69) defines interculturality as 'promoting dialogue and understanding between diverse cultural identities and the forging of links based on mutual respect. At the same time, reflection and critical thinking in familiar and unfamiliar contexts should be involved in all learning'. Sercu (2005, pp. 3–4) organizes the components of intercultural competence into a conceptual framework of kinds of knowledge, skills or behaviours, attitudes and traits as discussed by Byram (1997) 'that are integrated and intertwined with the various dimensions of communicative competence. Communicative competence itself can in fact be considered a sixth *savoir*, namely *savoir communiquer*'.

Kaikkonen (2001, p. 67) highlights the importance of clarifying these concepts amongst educationalists, by noting that

If we are to guide children, young people and adults, too, so that they can encounter diversity, otherness and foreignness in a significant way, we have to consider what intercultural competence means and what it includes. Only then is it possible to set more accurate learning and teaching goals, to understand what qualities are worth developing in the pursuit of these goals, and to devise suitable tasks to train these qualities. (Kaikkonen, 2001, p. 67)

Teachers' conceptions of culture have been studied from a variety of perspectives. The Finnish-Swedish teachers, whom Larzén-Östermark (2008) interviewed, conceptualized culture through three distinct orientations. In the cognitive orientation, culture was understood as knowledge and teaching facts, while in the action orientation culture encompassed social and socio-linguistic skills. The affective orientation associated culture with the ability to defamiliarize oneself from one's own culture, and to act empathetically and respectfully with members of other cultures. Byram and Risager (1999, pp. 85–86) found that Danish teachers understood culture broadly as traditions, social structures and art, while teachers from England understood culture more anthropologically, as traditions, social structures, norms and values, and less as art.

While any literary texts can be used for intercultural learning, fostering intercultural competence is particularly important with children and young adults. Children's and young adult

literature can effectively be used for fostering students' intercultural learning (see e.g., Bland & Lütge, 2014; Hall, 2015; Teranishiet et al., 2015). However, as Reichl (2014, p. 110) points out, it is 'potentially reductive to argue that literature for young adult readers has special generic features that lend themselves well to transcultural learning processes', and that rather 'we could argue, young adult novels tend to have the potential for empathic understanding that is a result of the fictional world being in one way or another reconcilable with the learner's world'.

Children's literature (used as an umbrella term) can develop students' intercultural competence through the roles, or functions, that literary texts can play. According to Bredella (2013, under *Literary texts*), literary texts encourage inter- and intra-personal understanding, 'make learners aware of their prior knowledge, their expectations and stereotypes', and provide windows into others' experience. In reading literature, students are presented with otherness (Lütge 2014, p. 98) in the context of storyworlds. These encounters encourage reflection and seeking understanding (Reichl, 2014, p. 110) that is simultaneously bound to the context of the storyworld and reverberates in the students' situated life context. Baumbach et al. (2009, p. 7) observe that through the use of storyworlds, literary texts 'serve as models of thought, feeling and action, as conceptual and emotional fictions many people live by'. It is through these functions that children's and young adult literature provides numerous affordances for developing students' intercultural competence in the ELT classroom. Storyworlds have been discussed by many other authors as well, such as Bland, Oziewicz, Delanoy, Wehrmann and Kalogirou (in Bland 2018b) in the context of ELT.

From the perspective of values in education, teacher education and training should guide student teachers and in-service teachers toward understanding intercultural competence as an educational value (see Turunen 1992 for a framework on values). Working in educational contexts at any level requires sensitivity on the part of teachers to understand how values are fundamental to how teaching works and to the nature of pedagogical and educational goals. This sensitivity is developed when teachers and teacher educators define for themselves how they understand foreign language learning, knowledge formation, humanity, literature, or intercultural competence, as Kaikkonen (2001, p. 67) notes above. This reflective practice develops teachers' thinking toward being more analytic and precise (Jaatinen, 2007; see also Anderson, 2020). When teachers' knowledge and understanding develop, their practices develop. Heggerness (2019), for

example, found that teachers are better able to encourage students' intercultural learning when they are themselves aware of the dialogic opportunities of children's literature.

The foundational premise for this paper is that 'With literary texts we can combine both a focus on language and a focus on wider educational goals', as Bland (2020, 71) outlines. Knowledge, however, is 'always contextualized, a part of quite specific relationships, cultures, and situations (Jaatinen, 2007, p. 21; see also Kramsch, 1993)'. This study investigates how the nexus of literature and intercultural competence as part of these wider educational goals is understood by the authors in question.

Research Context, Participants, Data and Methods

The context of the study is Finnish upper secondary education. According to the Finnish National Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education, the aim of secondary school education is to strengthen the general knowledge and abilities that students accrue in their comprehensive education, to construct their identity, understanding of humanity, world view and their place in the world (FNAE Finnish National Agency for Education, 2015). To gain the matriculation examination certificate, students need to complete 75 courses over two, three or four years. These studies prepare students for tertiary education (FNAE, 2015). Schools formulate their detailed curricula based on the broader county curricula, which in turn are based on the national curriculum (Luukka, 2019, p. 199). Teachers have autonomy over how they teach, assess and which teaching materials they employ. These materials can include literary texts outside the coursebook. The general upper secondary curriculum was updated during the study. Starting from August 2016, students (aged 16 to 19) in general upper secondary schools follow the new curriculum. Coursebooks are written by teams of highly professional ELT practitioners and revised frequently according to updates to the curriculum. The coursebooks are not revised or reviewed by any government body.

One notable change from the 2003 curriculum to the 2015 one was revising the course titled 'Culture' from being a second-year course to being a first-year course, titled 'Cultural phenomena'. In Finnish general upper secondary schools, grades are identified with numbers one to three. First year students are usually aged 16 to 17 years old. Moving the place of the course in the curriculum has influenced the inclusion of literary texts into ELT. In an interview study with upper secondary teachers, I found that the interviewees tended to contextualize the use of

literature to this course on culture, and were concerned that moving the course to being a first-year course meant that students would not have the English language skills necessary to read literature (Luukka, 2021). Teachers frequently have students read longer texts, usually a novel, outside of class in the context of this course (see Luukka, 2019, p. 205 for kinds of texts teachers select). In Finland, the 2003 and the subsequent curricula are based on the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001; see also Council of Europe, 2020), and intercultural competence as an educational aim is therefore inscribed in the curricula. The Finnish educational system is discussed in greater detail in Niemi et al. (2016), and explored in the light of purpose, values and talents in the collection edited by Kuusisto et al. (2021).

The data was collected through interviews, as interviews allow the conversational exploration of the participants' ways of understanding. The data collection took place in the spring of 2017; two participants were female and one was male. In Finland, coursebook authors are frequently teachers themselves, and indeed all interviewees were teachers of English as a foreign language with at least two decades of experience. Two authors were teaching at the time of the interview, and one was in an administrative role at their secondary school. Participants were invited to take part in the study because all had authored multiple coursebooks or coursebook series that have been used in Finland to teach English as a Foreign Language, with new coursebooks based on the updated curriculum underway. The participants had also worked most or most recently in general upper secondary schools, though they were qualified to teach ELT at all educational levels from adult learners to early years of primary. It was also important that the authors had experience of including literature in their ELT practice, so that they could reflect on the practice and the subject could be discussed in a non-polarizing 'coursebooks versus literature' way. One of the interviewees had partaken in an earlier survey (Luukka, 2019), in which they indicated having 33 years of experience in ELT. Another author related their experience through commenting on the changes that had taken place in their school over the last two decades. Each participant identified as a reader. The interviews focused on the authors' conceptions of literature and intercultural competence, but also on choosing samples and pieces of literature to use and on providing reading recommendations in the coursebooks.

The setting and style of interaction was kept collegial and conversational, and the interviewees developed their answers throughout the semi-structured interview by returning to points they had made earlier in the interview (see Appendix 1 for protocol). The interviews were

recorded and transcribed verbatim at a basic level, omitting coughs and cut-offs that do not add meaning. The interviews were conducted and analysed in Finnish, and I have translated the illustrative examples for this article.

The process of analysis followed the steps laid out by Merja Lehtomaa (2018) and are based on Lauri Rauhala's philosophical understanding of humanity and culture (e.g., 2009) and Juha Perttula's (2018) practical applications of it. I first transcribed the audio recorded interviews (Step 1) and read each interview to gain a sense of the whole. While reading (Step 2), I made notes about the themes each person talked about; I noted, for example, what the interviewees consider intercultural competence to include. These themes broadly followed the semi-structured interview questions I had prepared (Appendix 1), but also included other themes, as is characteristic of research interviews, including 'Reference to what young adults are like in terms of acquiring intercultural competence' and 'School as a context for developing intercultural competence'. I then coded the interview transcripts to parse what interviewees said about each theme (Step 3). This coding has been used to lift example quotations from the data. In Step 4, I examined the themes discussed by each interviewee across the whole group: for example, do all the authors make a reference to what intercultural learning entails? What are they saying about the theme? In answering these questions, (Step 5) I grouped the themes and coding related to the themes into networks in my own words. For example, the network of meanings included 'intercultural competence as a challenging term to define', and 'intercultural competence as knowledge, particular skills or abilities and attitudes'. Due to the wide range of themes the participants raised, not all themes were in direct relation to my research questions. I first examined how the authors understood *literature* and *intercultural competence*, and then considered how literature was seen to contribute to intercultural competence. In writing the analysis (Step 6), I have used quotations throughout to illustrate and validate my interpretation of the themes and networks.

Results

In this paper, I investigate what role the coursebook authors consider literature to have in developing students' intercultural competence. In the examples below, the numbers in parentheses refer to the number of the interviewee (1–3), which is separated by a colon from the quote number generated by Atlas.ti. The programme allows coding interview data by tagging

words and segments of interviews with identifiers, and grouping quotations to form networks in ways that are meaningful in relation to the research questions. The results are summarized at the top of each section, and the beginning of the Discussion.

Literature as content, format and functions

The authors approached literature from the perspectives of content, formats, functions and questions of legitimacy, as summarized in Table 1.

| Aspects of literary texts | Themes related to aspects of literary texts |
|---------------------------|--|
| Formats and modalities | Visual or text-based narratives on screens Texts in print Audiobooks Genre, if understood as text structures |
| Content | Something students have not yet read Interesting to students, not dry or distant Meaningful |
| Functions | To challenge or provoke young adults' thinking Dramatic, to convey thought, feelings or a message To spark young adults' own creative efforts To pique interest related to a particular theme |
| Questions of legitimacy | Role of publishing houses Publishing texts online Role of public recognition Role of where or by whom text is authored |

Table 1. Meanings attributed to literature in the context of language education

In references to the materiality of literature, the authors approached the concept through a variety of text types. Author 1 noted that not all English teachers in Finland seemed to think as author 1 himself did, that almost anything counts as literature (1:14). The interviewees were unsure if narratives on film counted as literature (1:36) but felt literature could be on a screen or in print

(1:38), because the content was the same either way (1:33). They also thought literary texts could be electronic, though electronic texts could render the text content subject to change more easily, if an author wanted to change or continue the text (1:60). Reflecting on how they understood literature, author 2 took printed texts as their starting point (2:6). Author 3 noted that while literature encompasses audiobooks and e-books, the concept of *texts* is understood much more broadly in the curriculum (3:36). Some text types like film were seen as potentially inspiring students to take on other formats, such as printed texts (2:77).

Institutions like publishing houses were seen as having a role in legitimizing a text as literature. Author 1 reflected on the low barriers to publishing online (1:40), and was uncertain if mere publication online makes a text literature (1:60). Public recognition of authorship was not a requirement in their opinion, though one interviewee related having received peer feedback on coursebooks to the contrary (1:9). Author 1 recounted an episode where the question of whether or not texts from a particular country were literature (1:12) in their coursebook's peer review comments. The author felt strongly that the country of origin did not define a text as literature (1:12). In terms of content, author 1 felt the text should be something the students have not yet read (1:34) and is interesting to them. If the text is dry and the topic distant, it does not motivate students to read. Sometimes students' interests may surprise teachers (1:75). This can stand in contrast to how the authors' peers view the coursebooks (1:21).

Literature as a collection of formats and genres was referenced in multiple places. However, it is difficult to identify precisely what it means that literature was understood as particular genres, because it is not clear if genre was understood as formats, structures or functions of the text. This is because genre research is an expansive field, with numerous schools, approaches and definitions of *genre* (Heikkinen, 2012). Author 1 spoke of a student having found chick lit as a gateway to reading more in English (1:76). Another considered *literature* as a category that contains numerous formats and genres, such as prose fiction and poetry, even nonfiction (2:6). In their opinion, newspapers, periodicals, journals, depending on their content, could be literature, as literature as a concept was rather wide in its scope (2:6). Song lyrics were also seen as literature (2:58). Author 3 considered fiction as the heart of literature, and to include formats like short stories, poetry and drama as literature (3:3), collected essays also (3:4), but popular science was not considered literature (3:3).

The authors' subject pedagogy perspective focused not just on which pieces of literature are included but the functions of the text as well. Texts could be challenging, even dramatic and provocative, as long as the message was meaningful to students. Literature was seen as texts which conveyed a thought, feeling or a message (1:10, 1:17). The thought-provoking quality of literature (1:24, 1:33) was seen as meaningful particularly by author 1. This author hoped literature would spark students' own creative efforts in, for example, writing (1:30) and pique students' interest through an interesting story (1:39). Author 1 also related looking for ways to integrate a 'literary perspective' into the 'otherwise slightly dry' ELT coursebook they were currently writing on higher education and working life (1:7), implying they thought literature enlivens coursebooks. Literature was also seen as providing students an opportunity for introspection and reflection (1:79).

Intercultural competence as knowledge, attitudes and abilities

The authors considered intercultural competence problematic to define. They understood this as knowledge, attitudes and abilities, while maintaining a subject pedagogy perspective on what teaching intercultural competence means for a teacher.

Author 1 considered definitions of intercultural competence as less important than the ability to act within a culture, which should be seen as normal (1:51). Intercultural competence was challenging to explain because the parts of the whole were not clear (1:52). Similarly, literature in language education was challenging if students' conception of culture was narrow (1:102). This, perhaps, speaks for the authors' holistic view of the learners. For author 2, intercultural competence was synonymous with *intercultural awareness*, noting that 'there's a separate concept for "tolerance", but "international", "internationalization". I try to avoid "globalization", it's an unpleasant word. [...] "Cultural awareness" is probably the term I'd use day today' (2:24).

Intercultural competence was associated with different kinds of knowledge. Intercultural competence was described as familiarity with the historical backgrounds of people: 'it's history that shapes the society, which in turn shapes individuals, customs, habits and the like' (2:26). Similarly, familiarity with the works of Shakespeare and Byron were seen as part of intercultural competence (2:52). Intercultural competence was seen as attitudes and abilities, such as taking an interest in others, maintaining an open mind and understanding that something unfamiliar is 'not

worse than in our culture' (3:25). Rather, intercultural competence was the ability to detect diversity and interpret actions from someone else's perspective (2:25).

Reflecting on intercultural competence from the subject pedagogy perspective, author 3 thought that it cannot be categorically taught, 'like taking an interest or having an open mind' (3:21). Teaching might take into account the degrees of formality in ways of addressing others (3:24). ELT was seen as quite demanding from the perspective of intercultural competence, because teachers need to know a great deal about the target culture, and because English as a lingua franca places demands on the ELT teacher (3:21). Author 1, however, also recognized the school context as culturally rich, and found it odd that another coursebook would caution against the mixing Finnish and English (1:53). In this way ELT was seen as different from teaching other languages (3:27). Teaching which focuses strictly on English-speaking countries was no longer sensible, or inspiring (3:28). Recognizing intercultural competence in ELT was seen as drawing students' attention to the perspectives from which interpretations are made (2:11).

Role of literature in intercultural learning

Reflecting on the interface of literature and intercultural learning, the authors thought that literature develops students' intercultural competence by engaging their thoughts and feelings and by empowering them to act in changing contexts. The authors reflected on the role of literature in intercultural learning from a subject pedagogy perspective. They felt literature engages the affective aspect of intercultural competence: 'A good piece of literature can open up a topic very differently from a news piece. The author can describe a topic in a way that really stirs the emotions of the reader' (3:41). Cognitive and affective aspects were referred to in conjunction with one another: 'At least I hope [literature] transmits emotions, thoughts and experiences that you might not otherwise get' (1:55). The authors also referred to curiosity, and one related this to multilingualism: literature in language education aims to '[awaken] students' curiosity toward the other culture or the people in another culture, or the language. (2:29)'.

Literature was seen as developing students' cognitive capacities, that reading literature in English 'increases your understanding. Reading in any language will expand your understanding' (1:102). 'Literature provides a well-rounded education and a wide perspective into history and culture, be it high culture or popular culture' (2:26). Broadening students' world views was seen

as influencing students' ability to take action, also: 'If [reading literature] expands your understanding, it also expands your capacity to operate in changing contexts' (1:56).

In their pedagogic reflection, the authors considered how students develop through reading literature in the context of ELT, what the pedagogical goals are, and what kinds of expectations confront the English language teacher. In terms of goals, language learning was a key objective in the foreign language education context, and literature was seen as helpful in raising students' awareness of language variation and change: 'there are lots of these internet conversation forums where the conversation [among teachers] is along the lines of – how do you use this preposition, when you see people say “in media”, but shouldn't it be “on social media” and can you say “in”? So teachers think about these things. But then we see it elsewhere already, so maybe that awakens us to realize that language changes' (1:125). This view was shared by another interviewee who noted that

what the conservative teachers don't seem to see is that language changes and register becomes more lax in terms of what we can use. Let that serve as an example of how we've tried to use language that's more modern, modern language and not just Shakespeare and Byron, though we could use these old authors for free (2:47).

It was important to raise students' awareness also of language variation within genres, too. 'If you like detective fiction, then don't start with Grisham or Cornwell because the professional jargon is pretty heavy, but rather start with something like Agatha Christie or *The Famous Five*' (2:61).

Literature was also seen to support students' multilingualism and multiliteracy, but simultaneously the authors felt literature needed to be accompanied by nonfiction texts as well. 'I think there are fairly few places where multilingualism is encouraged in contemporary coursebooks. But in the previous book series I worked on, we tried to raise these issues, too, how languages compare and contrast. This is part of cultural education I think.' (2:29). One of the authors described how a student's language skills sky-rocketed after the student started reading romantic novels in English: '[the student] read every single one of them [novels], and their language skills got such a jolt that they did really well in the exams, and their writing developed a lot and everything. I thought it was garbage, but it was garbage in English' (1:75). Author 2 justified the role of literature in future language education because it developed students' multiliteracy skills: 'Absolutely yes [literature has a place in future language education].

Particularly because of multiliteracy' (2:30). In the national curriculum, 'multiliteracy' is understood to encompass learning to read, produce and evaluate a wide variety of different kinds of texts (FNAE 2015).

Contextualizing the place of literature in general upper secondary education, one author noted that 'we try to incorporate the culture-perspective into the coursebook series, but our main objective is teaching language' (2:17). Another author reflected on how students also have found reading literature helpful for developing their language skills: 'I believe that if the students get accustomed to reading novels in English it will develop their language skills in a really multifaceted way, and if they get into the novel it won't feel like work. Some of the students have also said that they've found it helpful for developing their reading and listening comprehension, writing skills and everything, really' (3:6).

Pedagogically, however, literature was seen to require multiple different kinds of texts alongside it: 'if there are numerous different kinds of literary segments included, then the result may be fairly comprehensive learning, but [literature] is probably not enough on its own' (3:33). 'Sometimes, teachers need to consider if they should bring some statistics or other fact-based material alongside the literary material. That a single text fragment on its own is so limited in its point of view that it doesn't tell the whole story' (3:32). Author 3 also related 'encouraging the students to read novels' (3:5), and noted that 'literature can bring something which newspaper texts on the other hand cannot, necessarily' (3:35).

The authors hoped including literature in ELT encourages students to read and sustain an interest in reading (1:57), and that it '[establishes] in students the feeling of competence' as readers (2:33). 'It doesn't matter what you read, as long as it's in English. Read comics, read children's literature, if the language in literature for adults is too hard' (2:61).

In their pedagogic reflection, the authors also discussed selecting literary texts or segments of literature for coursebooks. Author 2 wanted to avoid limiting examples in the coursebook to the United States and United Kingdom: 'Absolutely [intercultural competence and literature are connected]. And that's why we've wanted to use contexts where English is spoken but to avoid the well-worn UK-USA axes' (2:27). In selecting texts, the authors sought to choose texts descriptive of a particular aspect of culture, rather than descriptive of a geographical location where English is spoken. 'A love story can be a love story anywhere, but let's choose a love story where you see the local colour somehow, so there's awareness of culture-specific

knowledge learned there' (2:27). Showcasing diversity to students was highly meaningful: 'We also have immigrant students from Central America and their texts, and from Africa and India and from all around. [...] So we try to pick texts that describe these communities culturally, not so much geographically' (2:27).

Discussion

This study is part of a project examining values and conceptions of literature in contemporary Finnish ELT, which draws its knowledge from teachers, coursebook authors and coursebooks. Here, I have investigated three Finnish ELT coursebook authors' views on the role of literature in developing students' intercultural competence, as coursebook authors' views on the nexus of literature and intercultural competence are still an understudied area in language education research. The authors understood literature as a spectrum of formats and genres that communicate themes that are relevant and interesting to students, and develop students' intercultural competence by captivating their thoughts and feelings and providing them with agency in a changing world. While intercultural competence was challenging to define, it was considered to include knowledge, attitudes and abilities. Throughout the interviews, the authors maintained a subject pedagogy perspective whereby they considered what teaching intercultural competence means for a teacher, how the students develop through reading literature in ELT, what the pedagogic goals are, and what kinds of expectations are set on the ELT teacher.

Literature has had many roles in Finnish ELT (Kuivalainen, 2015). Using literature to develop students' intercultural competence is a good example of the 'modern phenomena' to which Kuivalainen (2015) referred as a function of literature in contemporary Finnish ELT. From the perspective of Perry and Southwell's (2011) definition of intercultural competence, the authors drew attention particularly to its knowledge and attitude components. The skills aspect can be detected in the authors' references to the abilities students might display, though whether skills and abilities are the same warrants discussion beyond the confines of this paper. The findings align more clearly with those of Larzén-Östermark (2008), who found that the teachers she interviewed understood culture through cognitive, affective and action orientations, because the authors here also recognized intercultural competence as influencing students' knowledge, attitudes and abilities. The results also show that the subject pedagogy perspective that the

authors maintained throughout points to the promotion of 'dialogue and understanding (...) and the forging of links based on mutual respect' as pedagogical values (Bland, 2020, p. 69).

As for the intersection of literature and intercultural competence, the authors distinctly recognized that in reading literature, students are presented with otherness (Lütge, 2014, p. 98) that can spark self-reflection and understanding. It is likely that as avid readers, the authors had themselves experienced how readers are presented with 'models of thought, feeling and action, as conceptual and emotional fiction [many may live by]' (Baumbach et al., 2009, p. 7). It remains unclear to what extent these meanings would be transmitted to students if the authors were not readers themselves.

This suggests that literature in language education as an area of subject pedagogy should be included in teacher education and training. Skaar et al. (2018, p. 320) emphasize that if teacher education and training do not foster student teachers' 'relationship with literature and reading (...) future teachers will not have a platform to work from to promote literary fiction'. In terms of teacher education and training and language education practice, this study contributes to the body of research available to teachers that invites teachers and teacher educators to consider how they themselves have understood these concepts and their interrelation. Teacher education and training should cover the many functions literature can have in ELT and the 'mechanics' of how of literature can develop students' intercultural competence.

There are limitations to the study both in assessing the completed study and in planning further research. One is that this study makes very limited references to *how* literature is or may be used to develop students' intercultural competence. Ethnographic methods would provide a richer perspective into how literature is actually used. Examining literature-related tasks in Finnish ELT coursebooks and their relation to developing students' intercultural competence would also be interesting. As this is a small-scale study, the results cannot be generalized to other contexts. Rather, the study has contributed to the body of professional knowledge which teachers and teacher educators may use to reflect on their pedagogical understanding in their respective ELT contexts. As Kaikkonen (2001, p. 67) observes, clarifying the existing understanding of these phenomena enables teachers and teacher educators to work toward the common aim of raising children and young adults who are able to 'encounter diversity, otherness and foreignness in a significant way'.

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Appendix 1

Interview study:

Coursebook authors on the role of literature in developing students' intercultural competence

Aims of the study:

The aim of the study is to produce empirical research on a subject on which we have little as yet. In order to develop the theory and practice related to literature in language education, I want to recognize Finnish teachers' and coursebook authors' experiences and conceptions of the subject.

Views of literature

Let's start with the more general questions on literature and then we'll move on to talk about your experiences on using literature in your language teaching. We'll finish with talking about the kind of connection you consider literature and intercultural competence to have.

1. How would you describe your relationship with reading and literature?
2. What kinds of texts do you consider to be literature? What kinds of texts are not literature?
3. What kinds of things do you think we should be mindful of, when choosing literary texts for language education?
4. How do you think the expanded notion of *a text* in the updated curriculum affects the kinds of texts we bring into the classroom? What do you think about how the expanded notion of the text affects the ways in which we use literature for teaching and learning?

Intercultural competence

5. Let's move on to consider upper secondary school students' intercultural competence. There are several almost synonymous terms for this competence (inter-/transcultural competence/know-how): is there a particular term you prefer?

If yes: Why this term in particular?

6. What do you consider intercultural competence to consist of?

The interface of literature and intercultural competence

7. Do you think reading literature and intercultural competence are connected?
8. How would you describe the connection of literature and intercultural competence? In other words, what part or parts of intercultural competence might a student develop when reading literature?

If there's time:

9. Do you think literature will have a place in language education in the future? Why (or why not)?
10. What do you think poses the greatest challenge at the moment to including literature in language education? And vice versa, what do you think has proved to be the best resource when employing literature in language education?

Is there anything you would like to add or ask?

Thank you for your participation. We will end the interview here.