Developing intercultural competence in adult language learning through the multiliteracies approach

A systematic review

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Abstract

Intercultural communication plays a key role in our complex societies, where migratory flows remain consistent. An approach based on multiliteracies could help these citizens to integrate in a new territory. This study seeks to evaluate and synthesise the literature focusing on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop intercultural competence in adult language learning. A mixed-methods systematic review was conducted following the PRISMA protocol. Web of Science, Scopus and ERIC were searched from their inception up to January 2022. Critical appraisal was performed using the Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool and the results were presented as a narrative synthesis. The results indicate that only nine qualitative studies were eligible for consideration in this systematic review. Moreover, a wide variety of didactic tools were employed to foster intercultural competence through a pedagogy of multiliteracies. However, at-risk-of-exclusion learners were misrepresented. Hence, future lines of research could include learners such as migrants in their study designs, as well as learners' and educators' perceptions. Educational language policies still need to consider the situation of present-day societies along with the promising approach of multiliteracies with regard to intercultural competence in adult language learning.

Keywords: adult literacy, culture, foreign language learning, intercultural competence, multiliteracies, multimodality

Introduction

Developing intercultural (communicative) competence (IC) has emerged as one of the fundamental pillars in foreign language (FL) teaching to navigate

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the complexities of our current multicultural context. In an ever-changing society, the need to communicate with people from different countries and cultures has become a priority (Piccardo 2018). Thus, there has been a revived interest in cultural issues in response to the current social situation marked by transnational, multilingual and multicultural realities (Canale 2016; Feng and Byram 2002; Kramsch and Vinall 2015; Sun and Kwon 2019).

In the collegiate context, a paradigm shift which favours cultural diversity and rejects a monolingual form of language in FL teaching has long been a major issue. Furthermore, educators and learners prioritise language and culture in FL across different levels (Michelson and Dupuy 2014). As a response to these needs, the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies have been adopted in FL programmes (Cope and Kalantzis 2009; New London Group 1996). This pedagogy originates as a reaction to traditional notions of literacy and as a way to represent other modes of communication through which students engage in meaning-making.

Many adult students who are learning a language because of different life circumstances are normally engaged in a sense of self-exploration (Pegrum 2008). In some cases, migrants are among those learners to whom educators are to provide lingua cultural input. Nonetheless, didactic materials produced specifically for adult immigrants are scarce (Rico-Martín and Níkleva 2017). Consequently, adult migrant students who arrive at a later stage of their education are at a disadvantage (OECD 2010). However, a multiliteracies approach could facilitate the integration of these citizens in new territories.

Conceptualisations of intercultural competence

Although a consensus has not yet been reached, diverse conceptualisations can be found in the body of literature on IC. In general terms, IC is defined as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett and Bennett 2004: 149). According to Beacco, Byram, Cavalli, Coste, Cuenat, Goullier and Panthier (2016), IC is "the ability to experience otherness and cultural diversity, making it possible to establish cognitive and affective links between people, as well as to mediate between social groups and their cultures". Byram and Fleming (1998: 9) note that an interculturally competent individual is someone who "has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly". Other characteristics of an interculturally competent person are intercultural attitudes and traits (Leung, Ang and Tan 2014), emotion management and empathy (Holmes and O'Neill

2012), tolerance for ambiguity and a willingness to suspend judgement (Fantini 2000) and sensitivity to changes in cultural meanings (Chiu and Hong 2005). By contrast, a culturally alienated person refers to someone who shows "lack of interest towards the culture to which one aspires to be part of" (Krishnappa 2020: 1262) and who has no cultural empathy (Ridley and Lingle 1996).

The term *intercultural competence* has been widely used interchangeably with terms such as cultural competence, cultural awareness and cultural intelligence (Friedman and Antal 2005; Presbitero 2016). It should be noted that the concept of *interculturality* transcends other more limiting terms such as multiculturality, pluriculturality and transculturality. In this sense, not only does it involve describing a particular situation in terms of cultural diversity, but it also defines an approach and a dynamic process whereby participants are encouraged to be aware of their interdependence. Whilst multiculturalism refers to recognising the multitude of cultures that exist but without a significant exchange between them (European Youth Centre 2016; Moreno 2010), pluriculturality involves the ability to participate in different cultures by acquiring several languages (Beacco et al. 2016). In a way, interculturality and pluriculturality complement each other. Nonetheless, multiculturalism can lead to segregated societies with dominant cultures and to first- and second-class citizens (Cortina 2005: 3). Hence, the challenge is to achieve intercultural, tolerant and inclusive societies (European Youth Centre 2016) in which cultural diversity is perceived not as a threat but as a shared value to be preserved in Europe. With regard to *transculturality,* the Modern Language Association (MLA) defines transcultural competence as the ability which allows students to be "trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture" (MLA 2007: 4).

In short, IC has been broadly defined and linked to a variety of concepts over recent decades. It helps us to approach other cultures by seeing through the eyes of others. Thus, we will approach otherness in a way that is open, tolerant, empathetic and critical in turn.

The pedagogy of multiliteracies

The current constantly changing world of technology and screens requires new literacies. In the case of language learning, the Ad Hoc Committee's report carried out by the MLA with some recommendations on a paradigm shift in FL teaching called for a reform in university FL departments with regard to the elimination of the language-content structure and in favour of "a broader, more coherent curriculum, in which language, culture and literature are taught as a continuous whole" (2007: 3). With respect to the aforementioned report,

Allen and Paesani (2010: 120) point out that "the report failed to address how foreign language departments might bring about the large-scale changes necessary to develop integrated, text-based curricula or which pedagogical approaches might facilitate implementing such curricula".

These calls for change regarding the dominance of approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the field of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) have led to a paradigm shift, one in which students are to be trained to reflect critically on linguistic and cultural diversity (MLA 2007). Likewise, the necessity to rethink the definition of language literacy, which goes beyond the notions of reading and writing, has made it possible to approach learning from other perspectives (Mohammed-Ahmed 2021), involving the acquisition of competences such as linguistic, cultural, situational and visually communicated meaning (Amberg and Vause 2009; Luke 2000).

Already, in the late twentieth century, and as a response to these needs, scholars sought new venues and resorted to the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies, which rejects a traditional approach to print-based literacy with a monolingual form of language and favours a culturally diverse variety of texts with multimedia technology (Cope and Kalantzis 2009; New London Group 1996). The New London Group (NLG) coined the term *multiliteracies* "as a way to focus on the realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness" (NLG 1996: 61). It consists of four curricular components, namely situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice. *Situated practice* involves immersion in a text through students' experience and from different contexts, focusing on textual patterns. *Overt instruction* consists of supplementing immersion by focusing on the explicit content of a text and developing analytical and systematic skills, following the instructors' guidance. *Critical framing* seeks to reflect critically on the text's genre, discourse and purpose from a different point of view. *Transformed practice* aims to engage learners in revising discourse by implementing new knowledge through different modes of communication.

The pedagogy of multiliteracies was revisited by Cope and Kalantzis (2009) by way of their Learning by Design project, which developed and reformulated its original components to reflect the knowledge processes of *experiencing, conceptualising, analysing* and *applying*. Furthermore, the NLG originally aimed to respond to the sociocultural challenges and demands of the new technological conditions on education. These new technologies have resulted in meaning-making practices by means of a variety of multimodal texts. Moreover, an alternative to classical schooling is proposed with a student-centredness approach and in which individuals play an essential role as active agents in search for

equity as well as global progress (Kalantzis and Cope 2016). Hence, this approach provides an answer to the educational needs of the present day.

Implementation of intercultural competence in the FL curricula

Developing IC among FL students means communicating with others, as well as empathising with and understanding each other's culture (Byram 1997). Following Kramsch (1993), IC prompts the learner to experience a "third place" from which to negotiate and mediate between different cultures. Thus, an intercultural approach to language learning should "undermine narratives of citizenship that promote monolithic, homogenous national identities as the sole possible sense of belonging" (Starkey 2007: 56). In order to achieve this, different theories, models and frameworks have emerged. As a theory of language, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) offers a description of language as social semiotic and which considers culture in terms of language-encoded social practices taking place in different situational contexts (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). As a model in the FL classroom, Byram (1997: 53) emphasised the significance of "critical cultural awareness" which is the "ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries". In this sense, Byram (2014) proposed the concept of "education for intercultural citizenship in the foreign language classroom", which enables students "to create a sense of transnational identification with learners in another country, challenge the common sense of each national group within the transnational project and develop a new transnational way of thinking and acting" (Porto, Houghton and Byram 2017: 4).

In the collegiate context, different proposals based on multiliteracies pedagogies have been made (Allen and Paesani 2017), as well as literacies-based models (Byrnes, Maxim and Norris 2010; Maxim, Höyng, Lancaster, Schaumann and Aue 2013; Paesani 2017). With respect to frameworks on IC, a *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (Council of Europe 2016b) was developed to offer guidance on how to facilitate democratic and IC in primary and secondary schools, as well as in higher education and vocational training institutions across Europe. In addition to this, the *CEFR for Intercultural Digital Literacies* (Council of Europe 2016a) offers some guidance on everyday communication and interaction through multimodal texts which encompass moving images, music, gestures and so forth. Besides this, it also incorporates emotions and the management of soft skills.

Furthermore, a *Guide for the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* (Beacco et al. 2016) has been

developed to facilitate implementation of the values and principles of plurilingual and intercultural education in FL teaching. Additionally, an intercultural education should pay special attention to establishing communication and affective bonds among people from different cultures, seeking to undermine the usual ethnocentric attitude towards cultural otherness (Zembylas 2023). The ultimate goal would be to help FL students to build up a cultural repertoire through a wide range of educational resources so that they can function as cultural mediators in multicultural contexts. Moreover, developing IC should also involve encouraging learners to reflect upon their cultural repertoire, the connection between languages and cultures and how best to benefit from their language learning experiences (Beacco 2016).

The lack of social interaction with speakers of the target language has normally hindered a more comprehensive learning approach. Although educational materials and training programmes have normally promoted views of language and culture as independent and static elements in the curricula (Michelson 2017) with a lack of attention to intercultural values, several study designs and models on IC in an FL have attempted to complement and support syllabus-building by presenting different didactic tools (Byram 1997; Pegrum 2008; Piasecka 2013).

Scholars in the field of FL teaching view the pedagogy of multiliteracies as a way to bridge the gap between the curriculum for beginners focused on oral communication and the curriculum for advanced learners focused on literature and academic literacies, thereby separating language, content and culture (Allen and Paesani 2010; Byrnes, Maxim and Norris 2010). As a consequence, a growing interest in the integration between language and cultural content through the multiliteracies approach has emerged in university FL programmes (Byrnes 2006; Paesani, Willis and Dupuy 2016). In the same vein, learners' beliefs and expectations with regard to FL education prioritise a shift in curricular practices across all levels (Michelson and Dupuy 2014). Thus, both educators and learners of FL position language and culture as essential constructs to be regarded as competing priorities.

The development of IC and the pedagogy of multiliteracies share common ground with regard to their goals. Whereas IC aims to prepare learners to negotiate between cultures, the pedagogy of multiliteracies aims to help learners to become global citizens and active meaning-makers through multimodal texts from a variety of linguistic and cultural sources (Kalantzis and Cope 2016).

Rationale

Nowadays, there is growing concern as to the importance of developing IC among individuals from different countries to facilitate their coexistence and interaction. Since the development of the CEFR, there has been an ongoing appeal for the integration of both language and culture learning. A manual for developing intercultural competences in a variety of contexts has been piloted by UNESCO (Deardorff 2020). Likewise, reports conducted in the United States by the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) have recommended teaching language, literature and culture from a more holistic approach.

Whilst an extensive body of literature has been developed over recent decades around the importance of teaching IC in a FL, fewer studies have drawn on the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies. Warner and Dupuy (2018) noticed a lack of professional training for language teachers. This scenario is even more urgent in the current multicultural context for at-risk populations (Deardorff 2020). Although the fastest way to social and cultural integration for migrants is the acquisition of good communication skills, there is still a gap in the educational system with regard to the training of future educators who teach adult migrants (Níkleva and Contreras-Izquierdo 2020). More recently, the Council of Europe launched the *Literacy and Second Language for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants* [LASLLIAM] (Council of Europe 2022) project to offer member states some guidance on language teaching provision and assessment, considering migrants' specific needs. Not only is the focus placed on acquiring a language as a practical means of communication, but also as a means to developing individual and group cultural identities.

In light of the above, this study seeks to analyse the current empirical studies on the development of IC in adult learning through the pedagogy of multiliteracies, with a particular focus on at-risk-of-exclusion learners. Reviewing the existing literature on this topic will give insights into further research considering adult at-risk learners of additional languages.

Objectives

Our primary aim is to evaluate and synthesise the literature that has focused on the multiliteracies approach to develop IC in adult language learning. Hence, we intend to address the following research questions:

- (RQ1) Which didactic tools are used to develop intercultural competences of adult learners in FL learning through a pedagogy of multiliteracies?
- (RQ2) How are the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies

implemented in the FL curricula to develop intercultural competence in adult learning?

- (RQ3) What are adult learners' and instructors' perceptions towards implementation of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop intercultural competence?
- (RQ4) How are values and feelings represented in the development of intercultural competence through the pedagogy of multiliteracies?
- (RQ5) Are adult at-risk learners of additional languages represented in the study of intercultural competence from a multiliteracies approach?

Methods

Study design

In this review, we adopted a systematic methodology to examine a corpus of empirical research on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop IC in adult language learning. We followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff and Altman 2009), which provides guidance on the process of conducting a systematic review and appropriate reporting standards. In addition, critical appraisal of study quality was conducted using the Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool [MMAT] (Pluye, Robert, Cargo, Bartlett, O'Cathain, Griffiths, Boardman, Gagnon and Rousseau 2011), which is designed to facilitate concurrent critical appraisal of quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods primary research in systematic reviews (Pace, Pluye, Bartlett, Macaulay, Salsberg, Jagosh and Seller 2012).

Eligibility criteria

Studies were considered eligible for review if they met the following criteria:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles, books or book chapters
- Articles focusing on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop intercultural competence in adult language learning
- Articles including adult participants in their study designs.

The following exclusion criteria were applied to ensure that only relevant articles were retained for the systematic review:

- Articles that did not focus on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop intercultural competence in adult learning

- Conference proceedings
- Conceptual articles
- Articles including primary-and-secondary-school students as participants in their study designs.

The articles included in this systematic review met the following criteria:

- Published in peer-reviewed journals
- Studies including both quantitative and qualitative analyses
- Adult learning
- Multiliteracies approach to FL learning
- Intercultural competence.

Search strategy

We conducted the literature search using the following key word combinations on the Web of Science, Scopus and ERIC databases from their inception up to January 2022: "multiliteracies" AND "foreign language" AND "culture". These databases were chosen because of their accessibility and worldwide recognition. These search terms were used in "title, abstract, keywords" for Scopus and in "all fields" for ERIC and the Web of Science. When conducting the search, the filter box was used for "peer-reviewed" articles in ERIC. As regards document type, all conference proceedings were excluded. Duplicates were also removed. We decided to use broad terms rather than more specific terms due to the novelty of the topic studied. Following the guidelines on literature search (Cooper 1998), the broad conceptual definition of culture was considered at an earlier stage of this systematic review. Further considerations were made on the lack of relevance of certain articles at later stages. Since year limits were not established, all the related research was recovered. The retrieved papers were imported to Mendeley using the BibTex format. This allowed us to delete the duplicated papers, adjust, and export it to a spreadsheet.

Selection process

For every retrieved article, the title, abstract and keywords were confronted with the eligibility criteria. This phase involved the reading of each abstract of the retrieved articles in a non-blinded standardised manner by two researchers, independently. In cases where there was no consensus, the articles were retained for more careful analysis within the phase of full text analysis.

Data collection process

Several rounds of filtering were performed. First, both authors worked independently on titles, abstracts and keywords, determining whether to include or exclude each article. Second, both researchers worked together and shared their results. Any disagreements were resolved by discussion to the point of consensus. After this process, a total of nine articles that met all the criteria was compiled, as shown in Figure 1.

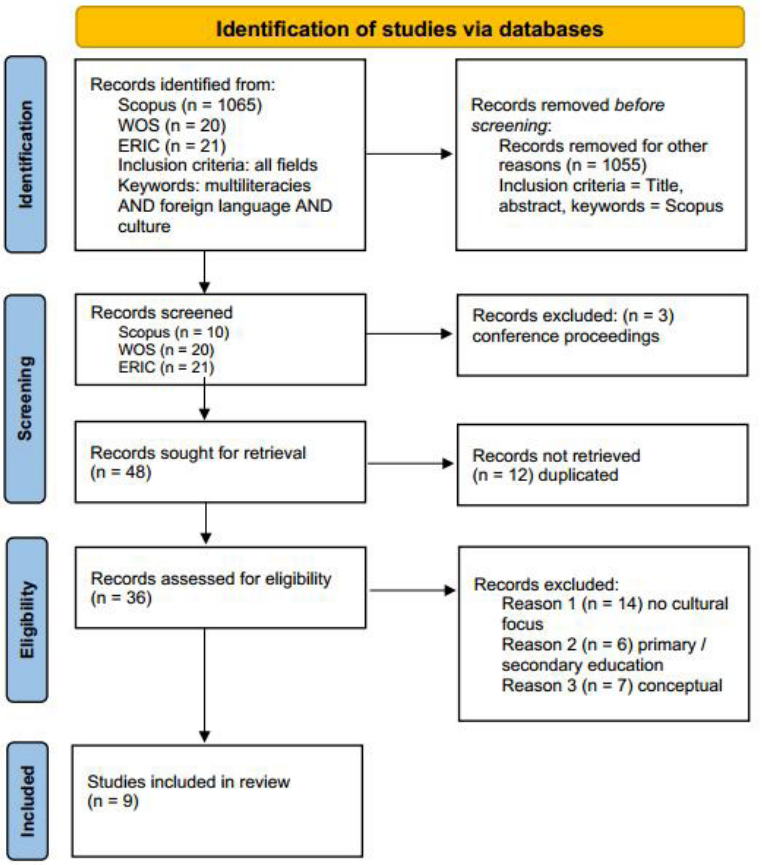


Figure 1. Flow diagram for study inclusion adapted from Moher et al. (2009)

It is worth mentioning that other relevant articles were identified, but many of them were excluded because they did not report empirical research. Data extraction was completed and checked by both authors.

In addition, to address the research questions, we categorised the articles (n = 9) into different areas. We focused in particular on the following dimensions: 1) research focus; 2) theoretical foundation; 3) didactic tool employed; 4) learning contexts; 5) countries, languages and participants; 6) learning activity; 7) data collection; and 8) findings.

Data analysis

The Mixed-Methods Appraisal Tool [MMAT] (Pluye et al. 2011) was used to assess the methodological quality of studies in the systematic review. This tool was selected as it can be used with quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies, and to ensure standardisation of assessment across studies. The validity and reliability of the MMAT were assessed (Pace et al. 2012) and the tool found to be appropriate for the appraisal of studies in qualitative systematic reviews.

Both authors participated in the coding process. They read the selected articles and coded the content of articles according to the above coding scheme. If there were any differences in coding, the researchers re-examined that article to resolve differences, and then finally completed the coding phase.

Results

Study selection

The searches on the Web of Science, ERIC and Scopus yielded a total of 1,106 records. 1,055 items from Scopus were excluded during the search process, including the filter "title, abstract, keywords". This left us fifty-one potentially eligible studies, which underwent full-text examination. Of these, three records were excluded as they were conference proceedings. Next, twelve items were removed as duplicated. Consequently, thirty-six records remained to be assessed for eligibility. Of these, fourteen records were excluded as they did not focus on culture, six were excluded as their participants were primary-or- secondary-school students and seven were excluded because they did not include an empirical study. Finally, nine studies were included in the final review and a summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of studies included in the final review

Study	Countries, participants, languages	Learning contexts	Study design	Research focus	Theoretical foundation	Didactic tool	Learning activity	Findings
Amgott (2020)	United States, N=12, French	University	Qualitative; digital multimodal reflections and vlogs	Analyse students' reflections on their linguistic and cultural experiences and how they leverage different modes to communicate.	Multilit-eracies, multimo-dality, translan-guaging	Vlogs (iMovie), Flipgrid	A curriculum based on the pedagogy of multiliteracies.	Digital multimodal composing can enhance learners' linguistic and transcultural competencies while studying abroad.
Fukunaga (2006)	United States, N=3, Japanese	University	Qualitative; photographs, individual interviews; participants' reflection papers about the interviews	Identify Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) students' perspectives on anime and to explore how three students made use of their anime knowledge while learning Japanese.	Multiliteracies	Anime (Japanese animation)	Photographs on important objects in students' homes and neighbourhoods and interviews on Japanese popular culture.	Anime students are simultaneously developing foreign language literacy skills, taking up a critical stance toward media, and constructing identities within anime culture.
Linares and Blocker (2021)	United States, N=9, French	University	Qualitative; pre- and post-surveys, classroom observations; fieldnotes with transcriptions of classroom discussions	Socialise US FL learners to literacy practices from the target culture by means of authentic texts (to reflect on cultural differences).	Multiliteracies	Academic texts	Critical analysis of French academic texts.	The immersion into academic literacy practices can offer students new perspectives and tools as critical readers and writers.
Michelson (2017)	United States, N=30, English	University	Qualitative; students' reflections on learning (European Language Portfolio)	Analyse the capacity of a curricular project to engender both development of learners' symbolic competences, and perspectives on language and culture learning that account for variability and multiplicity of identities, social practices and representational forms.	Multilit-eracies, global simulation	Textbooks	Fictitious character and socialisation into second language and culture (LC2) discourses through critical, reflective engagement with authentic texts.	Fostering of perspective taking and awareness of the interrelationship between culture and language, but also the persistent nature of discourses and ideologies about the object and goals of FL study.

Study	Countries, participants, languages	Learning contexts	Study design	Research focus	Theoretical foundation	Didactic tool	Learning activity	Findings
Porto (2019)	Argentina, United Kingdom, N=99, English, Spanish	University	Qualitative; Conversational data / chat / email conversations documentary data (leaflets, posters, reflections logs, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters)	Promote intercultural citizenship and foreign language development simultaneously.	CLIL, Intercultural citizenship education	Multimodal texts / Skype	Online intercultural communication exchange	Development of procedural knowledge by using the foreign language with a genuine need, engaged in multiliteracies practices and development of the plurilingual competence within a translingual orientation.
Rivière (2017)	Spain, France, Switzerland, N=24, various languages	Adult education	Qualitative; Semi-structured interviews	Analyse how plurilingual readers get access to books in different languages through or despite language inequalities on both global and local scales.	Sociolinguistic, cultural sociology and multiliteracy approaches	Books	Interviews about reading practices.	Printed and digital books in dominant languages circulate more easily, and through more visible and formal channels than books in dominated languages. However, a wider range of means of access to books, and the active participation of the readers themselves in the circulation of cultural goods enable book-reading practices in less disseminated languages.
Ryshina-Pankova, Barthold and Barthold (2021)	German speaking countries, (N= not mentioned), German	University	Qualitative; didactic sequence	Provide pedagogical guidance on how to work with narrative texts considering the Systemic Functional theory and multiliteracies.	Multiliteracies / Systemic Functional Theory /CLIL	Narrative texts	Didactic sequence based on authentic narrative texts.	Instructional tasks based on the SFL analysis provide learners with a critical lens to examine how variation in the narrative structure and patterns of language use construe particular aspects of regional cultures and point to conceptualisations of human-nature relationships and gender roles that differ from traditional fairy tales.

Study	Countries, participants, languages	Learning contexts	Study design	Research focus	Theoretical foundation	Didactic tool	Learning activity	Findings
Su, Aryanata, Shih and Dalsky (2021)	Indonesia, China, N=9, English	University	Qualitative; interviews (transcripts)	Develop and improve learners' (including teachers) intercultural communicative competence and multiliteracies related to linguistic competence and intercultural understandings.	Cultural linguistics, exploratory practice and team learning; multiliteracies	Online interviews, collaborative online word processor	Online intercultural interviews with teacher guidance.	Acquisition of academic knowledge and skills related to the major field of study; practice of academic English; improvement of the intercultural communicative competence.
Xiong and Peng (2020)	China, United States, (N= not mentioned), Chinese	University	Qualitative; content analysis	Analyse how cultural values are represented in two sets of widely used Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) textbooks published in mainland China (New Practical Chinese Reader, NPCR) and the US (Integrated Chinese, IC) respectively.	Critical social semiotic approach to culture	Textbooks	No learning activity. Study based on content analysis of textbooks.	IC is more effective in the design of image-text-pedagogy and creates more potential cultural learning opportunities for the reader to negotiate meanings and knowledge in a critically reflective way, although the reflective questions could be made to involve more actions.

Quality assessment

An overall quality score was assigned to each study using the MMAT scoring system (Pluye et al. 2011). Studies could be awarded a score of unclassified, 25, 50, 75 or 100%. Within this systematic review, six studies were rated 100%, two studies were rated 75% and only one study was rated 50% as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Total MMAT scores

MMAT criteria	No. studies
25%	0
50%	1
75%	2
100%	6

Summary of studies

Next, we display a synthesis of results and characteristics extracted from the variables collected and introduced in the data collection process. In all, nine qualitative studies were included in the systematic review (Table 1). There was a variety and combination of methods for qualitative data collection. Some studies employed interviews (Fukunaga 2006; Rivière 2017; Su et al. 2021). Other authors analysed participants' outcomes in didactic sequences (Linares and Blocker 2021; Michelson 2018; Porto 2019; Ryshina-Pankova et al. 2021). In addition, Linares and Blocker (2021) and Porto (2019) used observational methods. Fukunaga, (2006) and Linares and Blocker (2021) examined participants' reflections. Finally, some authors chose text analysis (Amgott 2020; Fukunaga 2006; Xiong and Peng 2020).

On the other hand, data were mainly collected from participants studying in higher education contexts (n = 8) and one study was conducted with adult learners. Nearly half of the studies were conducted in the USA (n = 4). Four studies were conducted with multinational samples. Su et al. (2021) collected data from participants in Indonesia and China. Porto (2019) collected data from participants in the UK and Argentina. Xiong and Peng (2020) collected data from participants in the USA and China. Rivière (2017) collected data from participants in Spain, France and Switzerland. Finally, Ryshina-Pankova et al. (2021) conducted their study within a German context.

As regards the target language, there was a variety of languages: French (n = 3), English (n = 2), Spanish (n = 1), Chinese (n = 1), German (n = 1) and

Japanese (n = 1). In addition, Rivière (2017) used a combination of languages in her study.

As previously stated, all the studies aligned with the pedagogy of multiliteracies. In addition, the majority of studies contextualised their research within a variety of conceptual frameworks. Su et al. (2021) drew on the principles of cultural linguistics, exploratory practice and team learning. Michelson (2017) aligned with global simulation. Porto (2019) chose a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach combined with intercultural citizenship education. Xiong and Peng (2020) discussed a critical social semiotic approach within the concept of culture. Ryshina-Pankova et al. (2021) took the systemic functional theory. Amgott (2020) used multimodality and translanguaging approaches. Finally, Rivière (2017) drew on sociolinguistic and cultural sociology perspectives.

Study characteristics and results

Subsequently, we display a synthesis of results to address the questions stated initially.

(RQ1) Didactic tools used to develop IC of adult learners in FL learning through a pedagogy of multiliteracies

The studies employed a variety of didactic tools to develop IC in FL learning through a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Whilst some authors used different types of texts, several authors employed additional tools. On the one hand, Linares and Blocker (2021) chose academic texts, Porto (2019) used multimodal texts, Xiong and Peng (2020) employed images and texts in textbooks and, finally, Ryshina-Pankova et al. (2021) used narrative texts. On the other hand, Su et al. (2021) selected online intercultural interviews and collaborative word processor, Michelson (2017) used students' portfolio, Amgott (2020) employed vlogs and Flipgrid, Fukunaga (2006) chose animation and Rivière (2017) used books.

Consequently, there is no predominant tool but a wide variety of them in the development of IC in language learning through a multiliteracies approach.

(RQ2) Implementation of the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in FL curricula to develop IC in adult learning

The principles or components of the pedagogy of multiliteracies are implemented into the instructional activities of the studies which were considered for the systematic review to a greater or lesser extent. Su et al. (2021) focused on the principles of cultural linguistics, exploratory practice and team learning to

facilitate learners' IC. However, the principles of the multiliteracies approach, such as cultural diversity, digital literacy, use of translanguaging and linguistic diversity, are vaguely mentioned. Michelson (2017) followed the four curricular components of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in order to develop instructional activities. The study conducted by Linares and Blocker (2021) is based on *available designs*, *designing* and *redesigning* as formulated by the NLG. Although an explicit account of the components of the pedagogy of multiliteracies is not provided, the instructional activities found in Porto (2019)'s study took some principles of this framework into account, such as translanguaging, multimodality or digital competence, with the final objective of transforming meaning. Whilst Xiong and Peng (2020) described the multimodal nature of texts in Chinese textbooks, they made no reference to the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies. Ryshina-Pankova et al. (2021) highlighted how specific components of SFL within a multiliteracies approach facilitate the teaching of narrative genres in the FL classroom. Amgott (2020) focused on the components of the pedagogy of multiliteracies, multimodality and translanguaging to explore how students develop their IC while studying abroad. Although a comprehensive account on the multiliteracies approach is non-existent, Fukunaga (2006) highlighted some important aspects such as the critical stance that students take with regard to a particular use of language to describe concepts, the possibility of developing visual literacy or the multiple meanings extracted from the texts. Rivière (2017) considered some aspects of the multiliteracies approach such as the situatedness of language and literacy practices, focusing on issues of power, discourse and ideology as she analysed how plurilingual readers have access to books in different languages.

Consequently, the studies implemented the pedagogy of multiliteracies in instructional activities heterogeneously and drew inspiration from complementary theoretical approaches.

(RQ3) Adult learners' and instructors' perceptions towards implementation of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop IC

More than half of the articles (67%) include learners' and instructors' perceptions towards implementation of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop IC. Michelson (2017) provided a description of learners' and instructors' perceptions on the significance of studying culture as a relational process through the multiliteracies approach in the FL classroom. The study conducted by Linares and Blocker (2021) offered a reflection on a change in the curriculum with respect to cultural immersion and literacy in additional languages. Xiong and Peng (2020) considered the representation of culture in

Chinese textbooks through images and texts. Fukunaga (2006) reflected on the importance of considering a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies in FL teaching, suggesting that teachers should encourage students to reflect on its implementation. Although some studies acknowledged the current challenge with regard to the integration of content and language for successful teaching of multiple literacies, they failed to provide a full account of learners' and instructors' beliefs (Amgott 2020; Ryshina-Pankova et al. 2021).

Therefore, learners' and instructors' perceptions towards implementation of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop IC are a perspective that has not been explored in depth.

(RQ4) Representation of values and feelings in the development of IC through the pedagogy of multiliteracies

More than half of the articles (67 %) include a description of how values and feelings are represented in the development of IC through a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Michelson (2017) considered values and feelings in the development of IC by adopting fictitious persona. The study performed by Linares and Blocker (2021: 1041) provided a description of how students reflect "to become engaged and empathic citizens in a multicultural world". Porto (2019) included a description of students' attitudes, prejudices and feelings as part of the instructional activities. Ryshina-Pankova et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of narrative texts to evoke a wide range of emotions with which learners could easily relate. Amgott (2020) described how students share emotional experiences by participating in cultural exchanges through their vlogs. Fukunaga (2006) pointed out that students have less anxiety about learning an FL when they are culturally involved, for example, through anime when studying Japanese. As a result, affect is misrepresented in the corpus analysed.

(RQ5) Adult at-risk learners of an additional language represented in the study of IC from a multiliteracies approach

Adult at-risk learners are mostly misrepresented in the articles which constitute the present systematic review (Amgott 2020; Fukunaga 2006; Linares and Blocker 2021; Michelson 2017; Porto 2019; Ryshina-Pankova et al. 2021; Su et al. 2021; Xiong and Peng 2020). Only the study conducted by Rivière (2017) took migrant adult learners into account. This author demonstrated the difficulty in having access to books in dominated languages, whereas books in dominant languages such as English tend to circulate through larger formal channels and are more varied.

Discussion and conclusions

This study sought to evaluate and synthesise the literature focusing on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop IC in adult learning. A total of nine articles met the inclusion criteria for the systematic review, of which eight studies met the MMAT quality assessment score of 75% or above. This suggests high quality research in this area.

Some studies included in the systematic review used interviews, participants' outcomes in didactic sequences, observational methods, participants' reflections and text analyses as their main method of data collection. Whilst the findings evidenced that the majority of studies were performed in the USA, other studies included Indonesia, China, the UK, Argentina, Spain, France, Switzerland and Germany.

The target language of the majority of studies was French, although languages such as English, Spanish, Chinese, German or Japanese were also included in other studies. Whilst the principles of the multiliteracies approach represented the primary concern for the systematic review, some studies considered other frameworks which were aligned with this one. Most of these frameworks revolved around culture, namely cultural linguistics, intercultural citizenship education or cultural sociology.

Next, the discussion of results is organised by the main research questions formulated in this systematic review. With regard to the types of didactic tools, a variety of texts have been used to develop IC among adult learners from a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Among these texts, we found academic texts, multimodal texts and narrative texts. In addition, other tools were collaborative word processors, students' portfolios, vlogs, animation and books. However, auditory or audio-visual input by means of music or music videos were nowhere to be found.

The next research question focused on implementation of the principles of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop IC in adult learning. This pedagogy is characterised by the incorporation of multimodal experiences as well as the promotion of cultural diversity. Although these principles were considered in the instructional activities of the studies which comprise the final analysis, a profound application of this pedagogy has not been described. Few studies followed a thorough explanation on how to integrate the original curricular components and the knowledge processes of the multiliteracies approach into didactic sessions. In addition, implications of the results for practice or future research are non-existent. To this end, we found a guide in the *Common Framework of Reference for Intercultural Digital*

Literacies (Council of Europe 2016a), since its key dimensions are intercultural communication, digital skills, multimodality and transversal skills.

The third research question allowed us to further explore learners' and instructors' perceptions towards the implementation of the pedagogy of multiliteracies in the FL curricula to develop IC in adult learning. Although some studies included learners' or instructors' perceptions, this perspective remains underexplored, especially as regards teachers' perceptions. This is of great interest considering that there exists a lack of instruction for pre-service teachers in higher education with respect to the implementation of a multiliteracies approach (Warner and Dupuy 2018).

With regard to the representation of values and feelings in the development of IC through a pedagogy of multiliteracies, there are different references in the studies. Despite the importance of the affective domain to facilitate the development of IC in language learning (Holmes and O'Neill 2012), affect is misrepresented in the corpus analysed. Nevertheless, some studies included, albeit briefly, affective factors such as empathy, attitudes, prejudices or feelings. Regarding emotions, some studies represented them by means of students' reflections towards their cultural exchanges.

The final research question focused on the representation of adult at-risk learners of an additional language in the study of IC through a pedagogy of multiliteracies. Despite our multicultural context (Cortina 2005) and the urgent situation with regard to migrant people, only one study was identified for this systematic review. Accordingly, we could state that adult at-risk learners of additional languages are misrepresented. Considering that the primary drive of adult at-risk learners of additional languages, especially migrants, is their integration into multicultural and digital societies, they must be provided with different resources which imply the development of IC. Hence, further studies on the development of IC through a pedagogy of multiliteracies should take into consideration adult at-risk learners of additional languages.

In conclusion, this study identified that research on the pedagogy of multiliteracies to develop IC in adult learning remains scarce. Further research is required to consider the affective domain in their study designs, as well as the inclusion of at-risk-of-exclusion learners, such as adult migrants or refugees. Despite this, this work contributes to existing knowledge on the multiliteracies approach in adult language learning. Hence, language education policies could open up to a promising approach which takes a wide variety of literacies and the reality of our current and complex societies into consideration.

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Résumé

La communication interculturelle joue un rôle clé dans nos sociétés complexes, où les flux migratoires restent constants. Une approche fondée sur les multiples littératies pourrait aider ces citoyens à s'intégrer dans un nouveau territoire. Cette étude vise à évaluer et à synthétiser la littérature axée sur la pédagogie des multilittératies pour développer la compétence interculturelle dans l'apprentissage des langues chez les adultes. Une revue systématique à méthodes mixtes a été réalisée en suivant le protocole PRISMA. Des

recherches ont été effectuées sur Web of Science, Scopus et ERIC depuis leur création jusqu'à janvier 2022. Une évaluation critique a été réalisée à l'aide de l'outil d'évaluation des méthodes mixtes et les résultats ont été présentés sous forme de synthèse narrative. Au total, 9 études qualitatives ont été incluses dans l'examen. Les résultats montrent que l'approche des multilittératies a été mise en œuvre pour favoriser la compétence interculturelle dans l'apprentissage des langues par les adultes en utilisant une variété d'outils didactiques. Cependant, les apprenants à risque d'exclusion n'ont été pas suffisamment représentés. Par conséquent, les futures lignes de recherche pourraient inclure des apprenants tels que les migrants ou les réfugiés dans leurs conceptions d'étude, ainsi que les perceptions des apprenants et des éducateurs.

Mots cléfs: alphabétisation des adultes, culture, apprentissage des langues étrangères, compétence interculturelle, multilittératies, multimodalité