COMMUNICATING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN GERMAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

–

AN ANALYSIS OF GERMAN AND AMERICAN TEXTBOOKS

by

KATHRIN SUSAN KOEHLER

(Under the Direction of Brigitte Rossbacher)

ABSTRACT

Intercultural competence is often seen as an uncomplicated, natural byproduct of foreign language classes, whereas really it is its own objective without which communication would not be possible, no matter how high the language proficiency. Effective communication requires proper development of a learner's understanding of another culture's perspective and worldview. This thesis reviews the challenges in intercultural communication and carries out an analysis of German and American textbooks of German on the quantity and quality of activities they include that address intercultural communication. The thesis identifies four objectives as key characteristics of intercultural differences that help develop the student's intercultural competence and communication. It identifies visible differences in the textbooks' approaches that can be attributed to a higher cultural homogeneity between America and Germany than between Germany and its main countries of immigration. It also outlines those elements of the textbooks that seem most suitable to develop intercultural communication skills.

INDEX WORDS: Pedagogy, Language Learning, Intercultural Communication

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KATHRIN SUSAN KOEHLER

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KATHRIN SUSAN KOEHLER

Major Professor: Brigitte Rossbacher

Committee: Martin Kagel
Marjanne Goozé

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

A NEW APPROACH ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING:

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In times of a shrinking globe and ever increasing contact between different cultures, the world is more challenged than ever to promote and integrate diversity in all aspects of life, and especially in communication. Through the means of modern communication we are constantly faced with "otherness" that we have to understand, interpret, and to put into perspective (Schulz 172).

Communication is a natural, omnipresent and seemingly automatic aspect of our everyday life. Only in situations in which a communication goal is not being reached do we realize how highly complex and prone to misinterpretation the basic rules of people's interpersonal relationships are. This is especially true for intercultural communication, where people from different cultural backgrounds and communication habits negotiate meaning. (Bennett, A current perspective 7)

Beginning with our birth, our culture determines who we are as it shapes and conditions us. We are taught when to speak and when to be quiet, what certain facial expressions mean and how much distance to keep in between ourselves and our conversational partners, which gestures are acceptable and which are not, how to address family members, co-workers, teachers, elders and superiors. We learn which behavior is accepted in public, when to make eye contact and how long to wait for our turn in a conversation.

All these things have to be learned in order to ensure a permanent and secure place within society, which often determines no less than one's own well being and mental integrity. Since we learn socially acceptable behavior from birth, these rules, values and behaviors are mostly hidden in the subconscious. Often we are not aware of a certain rule until we witness the violation of it, like a socially unacceptable behavior in a certain situation. All communication takes place within this framework of culture. Intercultural communication is even more complex than communication between people of the same culture. Culture in a way can be seen as a permanent obstacle for intercultural communication. (Savignon 9-10; Bennett 1998, 3-4)

In an increasingly globalized world with decreasing distances, there is a growing need to enable students from different cultural backgrounds to successfully communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds to overcome these obstacles. In the language classroom today students need not only learn how effectively and correctly to master the language of another country. They also need to learn how to function and communicate with the people of that country. This requires the knowledge of behavior and customs of the society, which is an important part of culture.

All cultures have universal traits such as communicating with a verbal language consisting of a limited set of sounds and grammatical rules for constructing sentences, using age and gender to classify people (e.g., teenager, senior citizen, woman, man), classifying people based on marriage and descent relationships and having kinship terms to refer to them (e.g., wife, mother, uncle, cousin), raising children in some sort of family setting, having a concept of privacy, having rules to regulate sexual behavior, distinguishing between good and bad behavior, making jokes and playing games, having art or having some sort of leadership roles for the implementation of community decisions.

Different cultures have developed their own specific ways of carrying out or expressing these traits. The contact and collision with these different ways of doing something can only be overcome by tolerance, empathy and compassion and being willing and able to see through someone else's eyes. (O'Neil, What is culture? 2013)

One of the main resources for the teaching of a foreign language is still the language textbook. Textbooks need to react to the current trends in foreign language teaching in order to provide true understanding for another culture and language. This thesis seeks to compare American and German language textbooks for German in order to examine how today's students are taught and prepared for the clash of intercultural differences and if the books offer any methods of resolution. I will analyze how the textbooks deal with the new challenges of intercultural differences, if the books follow any formal standards, and if so, who set these standards and how they are being implemented.

The thesis will explain the evolution of foreign language teaching and look at the two main approaches nowadays, which are the *communicative competence* approach and the *intercultural competence* approach. Furthermore, it will look at three central intercultural competence models to determine how to understand works within the context of intercultural communication. It is the aim of this research to analyze the integration of intercultural communication-related topics in language class text books in order to gain perspective and have mutual compassion for and understanding of different cultures.

The analysis of the theoretical evolution of intercultural competence sets the framework for the textbook analysis, which follows in the latter part of the thesis. Six textbooks will be analyzed according to their underlying concepts and standards. The textbooks will be evaluated

with the help of four learning objectives reflected in a current element of German integration

policy called *orientation courses*. These courses are measures taken by the German government.

By law immigrants are required to pass a certain number of language and *orientation classes* that

confront them with central aspects of German society namely German history, politics and

culture. These *orientation classes* are conducted with special textbooks that center not on

language, but rather seek to facilitate integration of immigrants into German society through the

study of the three aforementioned topics (history, politics and culture). The cultural part of those

textbooks can be seen as a "pure" form of teaching German culture. By contrasting the context of

the *orientation classes'* textbooks to the context of the language classes' textbooks in this study,

it will become apparent what aim the publishers follow in their concept of the textbooks, what

they seek to prepare the students for and how they try to achieve this goal.

The challenge for this analysis lies in determining a specific area of intercultural

difference, comparing it with another culture's ways of handling it and explaining how it is being

addressed and if an instrument to overcome these differences is being offered, all within the

framework of a language class textbook. While the weight of intercultural communication in a

language classroom can certainly not be 100%, these *orientation class* textbooks (e.g. *45 Stunden*

Deutschland) can give an idea of how much intercultural communication could be addressed in

the language classroom and in which way. This study will use these books as a means of

evaluation to see to what extent topics and exercises similar to the ones in these books find their

way into the German language class textbooks. The analysis will look at 6 textbooks of German

(3 American and 3 German textbooks), and will examine if, how, and in what intensity the

textbooks address the topic of intercultural communication.

The German textbooks are:

Em neu, 1st edition, *Hueber 2008*

Mittelpunkt, 1st edition, *Klett 2007*

Berliner Platz 2, 1st edition, *Langenscheidt 2010*

The American textbooks are:

- *Kaleidoskop*, 8th edition, *Heinle 2013*

- *Mittendrin*, 1st edition, *Pearson 2013*

- *Anders gedacht*, 2nd edition, *Heinle 2011*

The relatively new approach of including intercultural communication in the language classroom is relevant because of today's increasing need to overcome anxiety and fear of the unknown when it comes to other cultures. If publishers devote a larger part of the textbook context to addressing intercultural communication, students could learn to feel empathy for the other culture and will have an easier time putting themselves into someone else's shoes, which is beneficial far beyond the language classroom. This thesis hopes to contribute to that.

CHAPTER 2

PAST THEORIES AND APPROACHES ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Language methodologies have undergone significant changes throughout the past centuries and in recent decades, often in reaction to changing perceptions of the purpose of language learning or shifts in national priorities. The Grammar-Translation Method in the early 19th century, for example, focused on developing the skills necessary to read texts in their original language. The Direct Method developed by Francois Gouin in 1880, by contrast, had speaking ability as its focus, resulting in a radical shift toward exclusive use of the first language (L1) in the classroom and the inductive teaching of grammar. The Audio-Lingual Method of the 1960s was spurred by a national emphasis on the need to develop strong aural and oral skills for military purposes in the US. Strongly influenced by structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, this method focused on accurate pronunciation, constructed dialog, memorization and often minimal attention to meaning or context. (Richards and Rodgers 1-13)

2.1 Communicative competence and intercultural competence

The two didactic aims that have dominated the past 30 years are *communicative competence* and *intercultural competence*. This chapter will provide the background about the two concepts and their evolution.

Communicative competence

The notion of 'communicative competence' was introduced by anthropologist and linguist Dell Hymes in the 1960s to emphasize that the knowledge of grammatical rules (syntax,

morphology, phonology) is not sufficient for communicating and speaking a language. Hymes described the term as "knowledge of a learner or a speaker of a language," which includes not only grammatical but also socio- and psycholinguistic aspects, like appropriate behavior and manner. (Hymes 275) Today the term *communicative competence* comes up in a lot of scientific disciplines, like pedagogy, didactics, sociology, psychology and economic science. This term has its origin in the 1970's, when general discontent grew over the methods of language learning at that time. Audio-visual and audio-lingual methods produced a certain mechanization of language classes in the shape of language laboratories and speech repetition classes (Sauvignon 16-17).

The 70's brought about a great shift in social priorities to a more interpersonal focus in the social sciences. Education towards communicative ability and the ability to interact with each other quickly gained popularity. The focus shifted away from objective to subjective views. This can be seen as a reaction to the very automated and forceful methods that left out the subjective view of the learner.

Communicative competence was the first step away from rigid paradigm and towards the view that grammatical knowledge is not an end in itself, but only serves as an instrument to communicate. As a result, the curricula should not focus as much on grammatical progression but more on providing means to actually communicate, that is to say bring meaning across instead of focusing primarily on proper use of grammar. (Richards and Rogers 44, 59) Today it is widely accepted that communicative competence should be the central goal of language teaching, rather than grammatical competence, which had been the priority of language classes in the decades before.

Intercultural competence

Due to the imprint of the culture in which we grew up, we perceive a foreign culture from the perspective of our own culture. A process of reflection where the student learns how to see through "someone else's eyes" will foster an understanding of a foreign perspective, which helps with the understanding one's own position and perspective as well. Therefore the main aims of language learning should be the willingness to challenge one's own point of view, to increase tolerance, empathy, and a sensible handling of maintaining, broadening and evolving one's own identity, while at the same time diminishing negative stereotypes.

In the 70's the theory of *fluency before correctness* came about, which stated that the instructor would try not to disrupt the flow of communication to point out lexical or grammatical mistakes. Today it is widely agreed that true communication cannot be acquired by learning all about artificially constructed situations like "at the supermarket," "in the hotel," "at a party". Rather the students should develop communication skills that help them communicate on multiple levels in a pragmatic way, like "show interest," "share information," "express doubt" or "express sympathy."

But language evolves out of cultural factors and with language we describe the world around us and create mental images that can differ considerably from culture to culture. For example, Germans and Americans voice their disagreement or rejection clearly and directly while the Japanese do not. They will only hint at rejection, denial or cancellation without actually ever saying "no," which would be considered socially unacceptable and rude (Bennett 1998, 6).

Usually only the very superficial part of culture, like folklore and language is visible for outsiders such as immigrants or people with a migration background, not the deeper layers of culture like values, attitudes, and concepts, which lie below the obvious surface. (Roche 222) But since culture is a highly dynamic construct that changes constantly, it has been very difficult to find consensus on how to define it. One thing is certain though, that with a definition of culture as only the obvious parts of culture, as something static like food facts and folklore, stereotypes and clichés are not being abolished.

2.2 Theoretical models of intercultural competence

In order to assess the key elements of intercultural competence, the following sections will explain the three most prominent models of intercultural competence.

2.2.1 Bennett's Model of Intercultural sensitivity

The approach to achieve intercultural competence through foreign language teaching requires a deeper understanding of one's own culture. In 1986 Milton Bennett developed a now classic scale called the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*. Bennett's scale ranges from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelative one, where the language learner goes through six stages of dealing with difference. The scale goes from denial of difference, to defense of difference, to minimization of difference, to acceptance of difference, to adaption to difference, ending with integration of difference.

Table 2.1   Milton J. Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*:
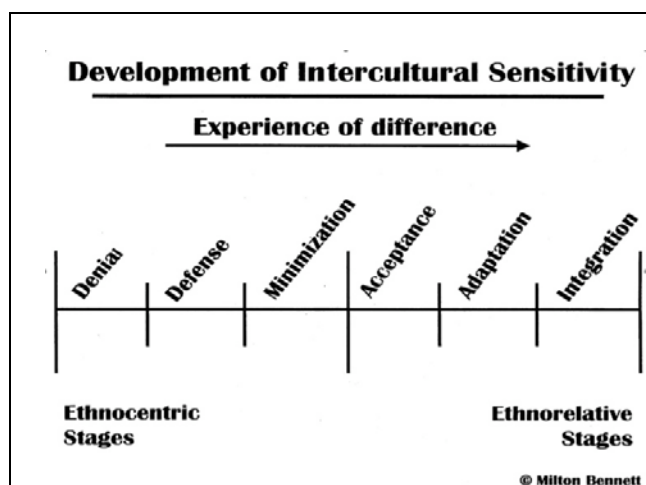
According to Bennett, the ultimate goal is not to assimilate to the other culture, but to reach what is called *the third space*, a form and awareness of otherness, where old and wrong perceptions of the other are abandoned. In this third space, the individual's belonging to one's original culture is still intact and one can move between cultures. (Goebel and Hermann-Guenter 822-23)

Bennett states the belief that "deep down we all are the same" is not an adequate response to cultural difference. Even though characteristics of cultures may have much in common at times, he sees this as not being relevant to the real issues of intercultural communication: "Attitudes of universalism fail to address the culturally unique social context of physical behavior that entangles such behavior in a particular worldview. Failure to consider this context leads people to assume that knowledge of the physical universals of behavior is sufficient for understanding all other people". (Bennett 1993, 43) Another very appealing aspect about Bennett's model is that it accounts for time as an important factor for the development of intercultural competence, which involves passing through multiple stages.

2.2.2 Kramsch's notion of the third space

In her book *Culture in Language Teaching* (1993) Claire Kramsch explains that learners need to locate themselves in a place which "grows in the interstices between the cultures the learner grew up with and new cultures he or she is being introduced to" (Kramsch 236). This definition has since been coined as *the third space*. She states, that "we have to explore the cultural dimensions of the very languages we teach if we want learners to be fully communicatively competent in these languages" (Kramsch, 218)

2.2.3 Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Byram defines culture as "the beliefs and knowledge which members of a social group share by virtue of their membership" (Byram 39) Byram states that intercultural communication and understanding does not have to start with a positive view of the target culture: "Attitudes which are the pre-condition for successful intercultural interaction need to be not simply positive, since even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding" (Byram 34). Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence can be seen as a representative model of what elements the process of intercultural learning should aim to develop in students. First, the model (*summarized below*) presents a comprehensive approach that deals with the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and critical awareness which have been identified to make up intercultural competence. Secondly, Byram's model offers not only objectives for each of the components, but also suggests modes of assessment for each part. Finally, the model has already been put into use extensively in foreign language classrooms. As such, it has become a common point of reference in the literature on intercultural learning, thereby confirming to a great extent its relevance and practicality.

Elements of Byram's 1997 model included the following principles:

- "Attitudes of curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (50).

- "Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general process of societal and individual interaction" (58).

- "Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own" (61).

- "Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (61).

- "Critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (63).

2.3 Summary

One thing all three models have in common is the notion that a learner of another language has to be open to take up a new perspective and look at things through the lens of the target culture to allow for differences, without rejecting the language and culture of the L2. The analysis of the textbooks will show the extent to which they encourage this point of view.

CHAPTER 3

STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The German textbooks of German all refer to the CEFR (Common European Framework of References for Languages) as the standard to which they adhere, whereas the American textbooks of German abide by the ACTFL "Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century" or short, the *Standards*. Even though only *Mittendrin* literally refers in its introduction to the "Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century" (preface, xv), *Anders Gedacht* and *Kaleidoskop* are published by Heinle, and as a major US textbook publisher for foreign languages one can assume that their authors abide by and comply with those guidelines. In the following paragraphs these standards as well as their origin will be explained.

3.1 CEFR, Common European Framework of Reference

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment,* short CEFR, is a collection of guidelines and rules used to define objectives and achievements of learners of foreign languages. It was developed in the early nineties by the Council of Europe as part of the "Language Learning for European Citizenship" project, with the integration of immigrants into European society in mind. Its main aim is to enable a more standardized and regulated consensus of which learning, teaching and assessment methods should be used in language teaching in all the European countries. In 2001, the European Council Resolution decided to add a system of validation of language ability to the CEFR, about which there is wide consensus today.

It consists of six reference levels and can be seen as *the* European standard for the grading of people's language abilities, comparable to the TOEFL-test but independent of any particular language. (*Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen.*)

The approach of the CEFR sees language users as social agents who develop general and particular communicative competences, while trying to achieve their everyday goals, which as mentioned above can be traced back to Dell Hymes. The CEFR divides a learner's competences into :

- *knowledge* (descriptive knowledge),

- *skills* and *existential competence* with particular communicative competences in linguistic competence,

- *sociolinguistic competence,* and

- *pragmatic competence.*

This is a very similar model to that of Byram (see above). The full document of the CEFR consists of nine chapters that define its aims, objectives, and approach; introduce the reference levels; establish categories; consider the process of language learning; examine the role of tasks in language learning; and discuss the purposes of assessment. The CEFR states in its second chapter on its approach: "The *general competences* of language learners or users consist in particular of their *knowledge, skills* and *existential competence* as well as their *ability to learn*." (Council of Europe).

Chapter 5, called *the user/learner's competence* is especially relevant for this thesis, since it explains each of those components in more detail; it categorizes in detail the user/learner's general communicative competences and breaks down the communicative competences that a learner of a foreign language should acquire. Chapter 5 lists these *general communicative*

competences, which are *declarative knowledge (savoir)* which means knowledge from

experience and formal learning; *Skills and know-how* (*savoir-faire*) which means the ability to

carry out procedures; *existential competence* (*savoir-être*), which means the sum of individual

characteristics, personality traits, and attitudes; a*bility to learn* (*savoir-apprendre*), which

mobilizes *existential competence, declarative knowledge,* and *skills,* and draws on various types

of competence. The *ability to learn* may also be conceived as "knowing how, or being disposed,

to discover *otherness*" – whether the other is another language, another culture, other people or

new areas of knowledge.

In its chapter on the adopted approach the CEFR also states that communicative language

competence consists of three components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence.

Linguistic competence is not the focus of this thesis, but sociolinguistic and pragmatic

competence are. According to the CEFR, sociolinguistic competence

> refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social
>
> conventions (rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes,
>
> classes and social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the
>
> functioning of a community), the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language
>
> communication between representatives of different cultures, even though participants
>
> may often be unaware of its influence. (Council of Europe)

According to the CEFR, pragmatic competences

> are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language
>
> functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges. They
>
> also concern the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text
>
> types and forms, irony, and parody. For this component even more than the linguistic
>
> component, it is hardly necessary to stress the major impact of interactions and cultural

environments in which such abilities are constructed. All the categories used here are

intended to characterize areas and types of competences internalized by a social agent,

i.e. internal representations, mechanisms and capacities, the cognitive existence of which

can be considered to account for observable behavior and performance. At the same time,

any learning process will help to develop or transform these same internal

representations, mechanisms and capacities.

To sum up, the CEFR defines what the objectives in communicative competence should

be today. These consist of descriptive knowledge (*savoir*), skills (*savoir-faire*), ability to learn

(*savoir-apprendre*), existential competence (*savoir-etre*) and sociolinguistic and pragmatic

competence.

The German textbooks of German refer to the CEFR for the *common reference level*,

meaning the level of language competency. Since none of the three German textbooks have more

than one page of introduction (*em neu* doesn't have any) there is no detailed mention of the

CEFR other than the reference to the level of competency. Even though there is no explicit

mention of the objectives that are codified in the CEFR and if they are being integrated into the

textbook, the later analysis of this paper will determine if the standards mentioned in chapter 5 of

the CEFR find their way into the textbooks.

3.2 ACTFL Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century

In the United States the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*

(ACTFL), an organization formed in the 1960s has developed guidelines for foreign language

teaching. Just like the CEFR, part of those *Standards for Foreign Language Teaching* (from now

on *Standards*) provide proficiency guidelines that seek to standardize the assessment of the

learner's language abilities. The *Standards* also describe the "what" (content) of world language learning and form the core of standards-based instruction in the world language classroom. The ACTFL standards appear very structured and easily understandable. In 1996 ACTFL together with 22 professional organizations, defined the so-called *5 C's* in its *Standards*, which describe the knowledge and abilities a student should acquire: *Communication, Culture, Comparison, Connection,s and Communities*. The first C for communication includes the necessity to make yourself understood through language in informal, formal, and professional situations. The C for culture describes the need to tolerate and understand certain ways of doing something differently to how oneself has come to know it. The C for comparison describes the need to compare what you know to what you are being introduced to in language and culture. The C for connections expresses the necessity to keep yourself connected to the information and news of everyday live and to the means that facilitate this. The C for communities illustrates the need to be connected to some kind of community, meaning to be in contact with people around you, be it in school, after school, in the gym, cooking course, book club or the like. Each of the 5 C's has several standards which describe them in greater detail. (Phillips and Brown 278)

<center>1. Communication</center>

The communication standard stresses the use of language for communication in "real life" situations. It emphasizes "what students can do with language" rather than "what they know about language." Students are asked to communicate in oral and written form, interpret oral and written messages, show cultural understanding when they communicate and present oral and written information to various audiences for a variety of purposes.

> Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics (Phillips and Brown 251-56) .

These are also referred to in terms of three communicative modes: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational.

2. Cultures

Cultural understanding is an important part of world languages education. Experiencing other cultures develops a better understanding and appreciation of the relationship between languages and other cultures, as well as the student's native culture. Students become better able to understand other people's points of view, ways of life, and contributions to the world.

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied (Phillips and Brown 256-59).

3. Connections

World languages instruction must be connected with other subject areas. Content from other subject areas is integrated with world language instruction through lessons that are developed around common themes.

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures (Phillips and Brown 259-61).

4. Comparisons

Students are encouraged to compare and contrast languages and cultures. They discover patterns, make predictions, and analyze similarities and differences across languages and cultures. Students often come to understand their native language and culture better through such comparisons.

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own (Phillips and Brown 261-64) .

5. Communities

Extending learning experiences from the world language classroom to the home and multilingual and multicultural community emphasizes living in a global society. Activities may include: field trips, use of e-mail and the World Wide Web, clubs, exchange programs, and cultural activities, school-to-work opportunities, and opportunities to hear speakers of other languages in the school and classroom.

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment." (Phillips and Brown 264-68)

In addition to the 5 C's the *Standards* describe the so called 3 P's. These stand for **p**erspectives, **p**ractices and **p**roducts. *Practices* are patterns of social interactions, behaviors. They represent the knowledge of "what to do when and where", and how to interact within a particular culture. *Perspectives* refer to philosophical perspectives, meanings, attitudes, values, beliefs, ideas that underlie the cultural practices and products of a society. They represent a culture's view of the world. *Products* are the tangible or intangible creations of a particular culture. They reflect a culture's perspectives. Tangible products are for example paintings, a cathedral, a piece of literature or a pair of chopsticks. Intangible products include such things as an oral tale, a dance, a sacred ritual, a system of education or a law (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project, 50).

Looking at both the CEFR as well as the *Standards*, it becomes clear, that there is a strong emphasis on being able to relate to the target culture and to be able to assess one's own position in the world. It becomes more and more visible that in order to communicate successfully across cultures, one has to challenge one's often subjective world view, where one's own customs and habits many a time appear to be the only or the best way to do something. The following analysis will bring to light if the books neglect the standards to which they claim to adhere.

CHAPTER 4

"PURE" INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE: GERMAN ORIENTATION CLASSES

In order to look at what amount of intercultural communication could *theoretically* be taught in a foreign language class and what pure culture classes might look like, it is helpful to examine the integration measures which Germany has taken since 2005 in an effort to improve integration. The last big wave of immigrants came to Germany, when it invited nearly 6 million people for employment purposes to raise its ailing economy between 1955 and 1991. Today Germany's immigrants or people with a migration background make up 10% of its population and the initially planned principle of rotation, where the immigrants would return to their countries of origin, has failed. Until the 1970s it was very difficult for children of immigrants to graduate from German schools.

It has since then become compulsory for children of immigrants to attend school. The difficulties that arose with that directive have been manifold. It has proven insufficient for a proper integration into society of children as well as adults to only focus on their language abilities. The deficits that are most often criticized, besides language deficiency are knowledge of traditions and customs, behavior and attitude, and, in general, knowledge of cultural convention. This means that language classes need to address these differences and need to promote and foster understanding and tolerance for these differences. (Reviere 150)

In order to start with this process of integration as early as possible, the German government in 2005 introduced special compulsory integration courses for immigrants who aspire to live permanently in the Germany. The courses are compulsory for those immigrants who do not have a job or attend another school that has a comparable curriculum.

Part of the integration course is a so-called orientation course. This orientation course

follows the language course. Its curriculum was developed by the BAMF (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*). The integration courses aim to integrate people from non-German cultures into German society and enable them to communicate and interact at the center of society, culturally and with regards to the use of language. An integration course consists usually of 600 hours of language classes and 60 hours of orientation classes, which consist of three modules: German *politics*, *history,* and *man and society*. For the purpose of this study it is relevant to look at the third module of *man and society*, since it has a focus on intercultural competence and communication.

In this module the participants are supposed to recognize the importance of mutual tolerance and learn about the peaceful coexistence of people in Germany. They are supposed to acquire and expand their intercultural competence in their everyday communication, which plays a major role in the perception of opportunity in Germany. The knowledge imparted in this module should provide participants with a positive view of diversity in all areas of social life and it should promote self-assessment and orientation within German society.

The participants are taught about coexistence in Germany and the organization of everyday life based on their needs. The development of strategies for the prevention of intercultural misunderstandings has a high priority in the orientation courses, accompanied by the acquisition of cultural knowledge about Germany. Only through the development of intercultural competence can the acquired knowledge be used and applied in everyday communication.

The representation of diversity has precedence over the supposed mediation of cultural standards. This way participants are being provoked to reflect on the principle of tolerance and democracy. The participants are supposed to develop a better assessment of their own behavior and conduct within German society (BAMF - Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - Inhalt und Ablauf).

Key objectives for the participants to recognize in this module are: the principles of freedom and tolerance as an important basic value for peaceful coexistence in Germany; becoming aware of the regional diversity and the diversity of religions and confessions in Germany; becoming aware of the ongoing cultural change; being familiar with the basic rules of everyday coexistence and being able to reflect these in terms of their lives in Germany (Kilimann and Kotas and Skrodzki 6-7).

These objectives are being targeted in the following four areas of German society:

1. Coexistence of people in Germany in different forms of families, gender equality and relations between generations. The participants learn about different forms of family and coexistence in Germany. Participants are supposed to reflect on the role of family and the different ways of living together in terms of equality and anti-discrimination (Kilimann, Kotas and Skrodzki 58-65).

2. Education and training. Here the participants are supposed to recognize the importance of education and lifelong learning for personal development and professional success in Germany, as well as the German principle of equal education for men and women. They are supposed to reflect on the responsibility of the family for educational success of the children and

the impact of different parenting styles (Kilimann and Kotas and Skrodzki, 66-69).

  3. Intercultural coexistence in everyday life, meaning cultural competence and dealing with intercultural misunderstandings. Participants are supposed to be made aware of cross-cultural differences and similarities in terms of norms, rules and values of German society. They should reflect on causes of cross-cultural misunderstandings. Also they should learn about appropriate behavior and communication methods in conflict situations. Examples are the perception of time and time-lag; social norms for invitations and visiting people's homes; compliance with rest periods, order, and cleanliness (Kilimann and Kotas and Skrodzki 70-75).

  4. Religious diversity. The participants learn about tolerance and freedom of belief. They should obtain an overview of the distribution of the different religious denominations, including Christianity (Catholic/ Protestant), Islam, Judaism, and more about the separation of church and state and about the distribution of faiths in the different regions in Germany. They are supposed to be made aware of the principle of religious freedom and tolerance in the peaceful coexistence of religions in Germany (Kilimann and Kotas and Skrodzki 76-79).

  Having identified these four cultural targets or objectives as being at the "heart" of culture and as being the central prerequisites to fully integrate into the German society, this analysis will now look at the German textbooks with these objectives in mind. First it is necessary though to look at the standards to which the books claim to adhere, in order to see the authors' motivation or goal deciding what material to include in their language class textbooks.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS - INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN TEXTBOOKS

In the following chapter, the thesis will examine the textbooks for their inclusion of intercultural competence. Since the textbook is still the main resource for teaching material in a language classroom, publishers are under pressure to keep up with the times and with cultural changes, to abide by official standards, and to include the newest technologies.

The books will first be introduced in an overview on their unit structure, approach, chapter composition, price and, additional material that they provide. Then the process of analysis will be explained in further detail, followed by the actual analysis, and finally by a summary of the results.

5.1 Introduction to the textbooks

Table 5.1   The table below provides an overview on the books used in this study;
1-3 = German textbooks, 4-6 = American textbooks:

Text book:	Introduction:	Approach:	Structure of units:	Additional material:	Editors/Publishers	Price	Other
1. Mittelpunkt	No/hardly any introduction	Lernziele sind aus den Kannbeschreibungen des gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens (GER) abgeleitet	Lernziele/Kannbeschreibungen, Spachhandlungen/Grammatik	Gesondert zu kaufen: Arbeitsbuch mit Audio CD, 3 Audio CDs, Lehrerhandbuch	Klett	24,99 €	Webpage only has additional products on it
2. Berliner Platz 2	No/hardly any introduction	Das Buch orientiert sich am Rahmencurriculum für Integrationskurse Deutsch als Zweitsprache. Der Kurs endet mit der Niveaustufe B1 des gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens (GER)	Im Alltag, Kommunikation, Grammatik, Aussprache, Deutsch verstehen	2 Audio DVDs zum Arbeitsbuchteil, Gesondert zu kaufen: Arbeitsbuch	Langenscheidt	19,95 €	No additional web page
3. Em Neu	No/hardly any introduction	Ziel ist das Erreichen des Niveaus B2 des gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens (GER).	Lesen, hören, schreiben sprechen, Wortschatz, Grammatik (gemischte Reihenfolge)	Gesondert zu kaufen: Arbeitsbuch mit Audio CD, 2 Audio CDs, Lehrerhandbuch, Übungsgrammatik	Hueber	17,99€	There is a website with limited additional Info, Lehren und Lernen categories with some invalid webpages
4. Mittendrin	long intro with explanation	Mittendrin and the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) National Standards. The 5 Cs are integrated throughout the Mittendrin Program. (explained)	Einführung, Dialekttipp, Lese- und Hörtexte, Grammatik, Immer weiter, weitere Themen	**Instructor's resources:**instructor's resource manual,testing program, testing audio CDs, MyGermanLab, **student resources:** text audio CDs, students activities manual = answer key and audio CD, companion website, MyGermanLab	Pearson	$181.40	Extensive online webpage with additional material, 24/7 technical support, instructors resources and learners resources
5. Anders Gedacht	long intro with explanation	All German, contextualized grammar, insider's perspective, authentic materials	Sprech- und Schreibanlässe, Lesetexte, Hör- und Sehtexte, Internet-Aktivitäten, Strukturen	(instructors) Audio CD, SAM student activities manual, SAM audio program, text audio CDs, book companion website	Heinle	$123.50	Extensive online webpage with additional material, 24/7 technical support, instructors resources and learners resources
6. Kaleidoskop	long intro with explanation	Cultural practices, putting oneself in someone else's shoes, engage cross-cultural interpretation, analysis and comparison. All-German approach, content based learning with contextualized grammar – integrative textbook, inductive learning strategies, student-directed learning	Doppel Kapitel in Erster Teil, Zweiter Teil. Lektüre Teil: Kulturlesestücke, literarische Werke Grammatik Teil: n/a	Premium website, text audio CDs, SAM audio program, AIE (annotated lecture instructor CD-ROM with audio testing), instructor companion website, Student activities manual, short films on DVD in instructors edition	Heinle	$180.95	Extensive online webpage with additional material, 24/7 technical support and extensive instructors resources

Table 5.2   Chapter arrangement in the textbooks:

German textbooks: American textbooks:

Em	*Mittendrin*
1. Menschen	1. Norddeutschland
2. Sprache	2. Berlin
3. Orte	3. Thüringen
4. Konsum	4. Wien
5. Zukunft	5. Bayern
6. Beruf	6. Sachsen
7. Liebe	7. Zürich
8. Medien	8. Baden-Württemberg
9. Gesund Leben	9. Nordrhein-Westfalen
10. Mobilität	10. Hessen
Mittelpunkt	*Anders Gedacht*
1. Reisen	E. Das Reisen
2. Einfach schön	1. Das Fernweh zur Zeit Goethes
3. Nebenan und gegenüber	2. Die Grünen und grüne Ideen
4. Dinge	3. Multikulturelles Leben
5. Kooperieren	4. Die Comedian Harmonists
6. Arbeit	5. Stationen der Geschichte
7. Natur	6. Umgang mit der Vergangenheit
8. Wissen und Können	7. Kunst und Künstler
9. Gefühle	8. Das Leben im anderen Deutschland
10. Arbeiten international	9. Lola rennt
11.Leistungen	*Kaleidoskop*
12. Sprachlos	1. Freizeit
Berliner Platz 2	2. Kommunikation
13. Das steht dir gut!	3. Deutschland heute
14. Feste, Freunde, Familie	4. Familie
15. Miteinander leben	5. Musik
16. Schule und danach	6. Die Welt der Arbeit
17. Die neue Wohnung	7. Multikulturelle Gesellschaft
18. Mobil in der Stadt	8. Junge Erwachsene
19. Das finde ich schön	9. Stereotype
20. Komm doch mit!	10. Umwelt
21. Arbeitssuche	1. Grammar
22. Alltag und Medien	2. Grammar
23.Politik und ich	3. Grammar
24. Bei uns und bei euch	4. Grammar
	5. Grammar
	6. Grammar
	7. Grammar
	8. Grammar
	9. Grammar
	10. Grammar

5.2 Procedure of analysis

I will first analyze the German language textbooks, both the German and the American

ones, for the number of exercises on intercultural communication they use and how they

prioritize them. Instead of just looking at the book's context and searching for all kinds of

exercises on intercultural communication, this analysis will use the orientation class material as a

grid to quantify and qualify the number of exercises on intercultural communication.

Above I defined four objectives from the orientation classes as being central to

intercultural communication in Germany, namely varieties of family structures, education,

intercultural coexistence, and religion. These learning objectives are taught to foster the

intercultural communication by the participants and are supposed to help with a better

understanding of peoples in multicultural societies. The analysis will therefore use those same

objectives as a means of comparison and examine the textbooks to see if those learning

objectives can be found in the language textbooks on the market, and if so, in what way and what

intensity or quantity.

<div align="center">5.3 Analysis</div>

<div align="center">5.3.1 em neu</div>

The introduction of *em neu* is very short and only briefly mentions the CEFR without

explaining in what way it upholds its standards. The book states in its introduction :

> Wenn Sie alle Lektionen in Kurs- und Arbeitsbuch erfolgreich durcharbeiten, können Sie am Ende eines Kurses das Niveau B2 erreichen, das im Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmen für Sprachen als vierte von sechs Stufen beschrieben ist." (8)

This demonstrates its abidance by the CEFR. The introduction also states that the used texts resemble

the current reality outside of the classroom, for which the book claims to provide training.

It also states that the exercises are designed to enable the reader to learn how to master practical tasks,

such as professional conversations and business calls (8).

1. Coexistence in the family and other communities

Chapter 7 in *em neu* is called "Liebe" (101). It deals with the topics of love and relationships. It covers the issue of courtship and nonverbal signals such as body language. It also addresses a wide range of relationships and lifestyles, and how they are usually expressed in Germany.

On the first page of the chapter, a photo is shown of a man and a woman sitting on a bench in 19th century Germany. Below the picture are three statements from people from three different countries about which gender generally makes the first move towards personal contact in their country. This is can be seen as intercultural communication, because the students have to compare their own view with what is customary in Germany and it encourages looking at the situation from a different point of view. Furthermore the chapter addresses words such as "Lebensgefährtin" and "Geliebter," "Exfrau/mann" and "Liebhaber" (104) which indicate a relatively liberal approach to relationships between the genders, where a marriage is not necessarily required in order to be in a romantic relationship.

In an exercise in this chapter the students hear statements about marriage and are asked to connect them to different people introduced earlier (106).

Among the statements there are utterances such as:

> Ehe und Familie sind heute mit des persönlichen Interessen schwer zu vereinbaren; Das Eheleben kann schnell einsam werden; Mit Mitte zwanzig war ich einfach noch nicht bereit für eine feste Bindung; Es ist möglich, dass Ehepartner in Freundschaft auseinander gehen.

and

> Man muss nicht unbedingt heiraten, wenn man mit einem Partner zusammenleben möchte.

In this chapter, the students are then confronted with a questionnaire that includes situations such as:

> Auf einer Fete flirtet er/sie hemmungslos mit seiner Exfreundin/ihrem Exfreund:
> A) Ich strafe ihn/sie durch Nichtachtung
> B)Ich weiche keinen Moment von seiner/ihrer Seite und verscheuche jede Konkurrenz
> C) Ich werde rasend eifersüchtig und stelle ihn/sie noch an Ort und Stelle zur Rede
> D) Ich lasse ihm/ihr seinen/ihren Spaß und amüsiere mich anderweitig (108).

This also represents some very liberal views on personal relationships.

These statements lend insight into what forms of relationships are acceptable in German society since they appear to be coming from typical Germans. In the first exercise (106), the students are told to choose which statements they liked the best and which most resemble their own, perhaps diverging opinions about the German views on marriage and relationships.

<center>2. Education and learning in Germany</center>

Em neu has a chapter called "Beruf", but it only marginally deals with education and learning. Even though this chapter does not address education as far as school goes, it offers detailed information about professional education and the stereotypes that come with certain jobs. The first page of the chapter shows a young woman carving wood like a carpenter, which is traditionally a male occupation. The students are supposed to comment on what is different about this picture from what they might be used to. Here the idea of change in traditional male/female roles is being introduced from the very beginning, which can be considered a liberal approach to gender roles. Also, *em neu* prompts its readers constantly to express their own opinions on the presented topics (96) . Also, the book provides examples of how to complete job applications, write a curriculum vitae (21), and demonstrates what is customary behavior in the professional world in Germany, for example what one needs to wear for various occasions or jobs (87, 90, 97).

3. Intercultural coexistence

In the chapter "Zukunft" (75), there is a section that deals with the perception of time and time-lag. A list of statements is given that describes situations in which people arrive for appointments anywhere between 3 minutes and 25 minutes late. The students are being asked to explain how the people in their country of origin would assess these situations. This encourages them to check and compare thier own perception with that of another culture, in this case with Germany's.

Apart from the above-mentioned section there is no specific exercise that addresses intercultural coexistence. However the entire book overflows with the subject of intercultural coexistence and includes constant cross-cultural references, as well as numerous self reflections and prompts to explain what is customary in the student's home country. (11,28,31,45,75,106,111,119,140, 143).

4. Religious diversity

Even though *em neu* touches on many of the objectives emphasized in the orientation classes, religious diversity is not one of them. The textbook completely skips the subject.

Summary

Em neu includes three out of the four objectives from the orientation classes in its units. Overall it has a strong emphasis on comparison with the L1 culture and encourages deep discussion of the differences between the L1 culture and German customs. Religion as well as homosexual relationships, which are important subjects in the orientation classes, are left out completely.

5.3.2 *Mittelpunkt*

The introduction of *Mittelpunkt* is as short as that of *em neu* and only briefly mentions the

CEFR, without explaining in what way the textbook upholds its standards. The book states in its

introduction that "alle Lernziele und Inhalte leiten sich konsequent aus den Kannbeschreibungen

(Niveau B2) des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmens für Sprachen ab." This shows its

adherence to the CEFR.

1. Coexistence in the family and other communities

Mittelpunkt does not have a chapter that specifically deals with relationships. The chapter

"Kooperieren" has an exercise called "Eine Talkshow mit dem Thema *Heiraten – Ja oder Nein?*"

(62), which, among others portrays a person who has already been divorced three times. In the exercise

the students are being asked with which of the following sentences they identify the most, followed by

four statements by people who either oppose or encourage marriage. Another exercise deals with

German divorce statistics (64) and another with the life of a single German woman (65). However, all

of this lacks the integration of an explicit intercultural aspect, since students are not being asked to

compare, judge or discuss how this might be handled differently by another culture, especially the one

of their L1.

Mittelpunkt also has a chapter called "Gefühle" (104), in which different emotional scenarios

are being presented and where the students are supposed to voice their own feelings about certain

situations or comment on the portrayed people's emotions and their reactions to them. It the texts

different emotions are described, among others for example jealousy within a relationship or anger,

after a woman has been left by her husband (114). This section indicates that these are scenarios

happening frequently in Germany today.

2. Education and learning in Germany

Mittelpunkt has two chapters, "Arbeit" (68) and "Arbeiten international" (116) that deal to a certain extent with education and learning. "Arbeit" only talks about job profiles and typical professions in Germany, and does not give any cause to discuss international issues. One text called "Arbeit in der Welt" sounds like it might ask for or promote international views or comparison to another country or culture, but it only deals with the economy with regards to a "shrinking" globe. It gives no challenge to assess one's own view or compare it to that of another culture. Follow-up questions to the text fail to elicit the student's opinion. "Arbeiten international" sounds like it would address intercultural issues and it does. Yet because it does not discuss education in Germany, it will be discussed below.

3. Intercultural coexistence

On the first page of the chapter "Arbeiten international" the book shows people from different ethnicities as they interact and asks the students' opinions on statements that promote leaving one's country of origin to explore the world. It is interesting to note, that the majority of people in the exercises of this book have very German names and do not reflect much diversity in cultural background. Only very rarely (see below) are the students being asked to give their own opinion or reflect on the situation in their country. Another text in the chapter deals with culture shock (126). Here the book presents the story of a woman (without a name) and her experience with culture shock. At the end, it asks the students if they have ever had experiences with immigrants or a foreign country like the one in the story. On the next page it breaks down the typical phases a foreigner will pass through when being exposed to a new culture.

Mittelpunkt also has a chapter called "Nebenan und Gegenüber" (32), which deals explicitly with coexistence. It explains different definitions of coexistence and in great detail describes the

German's problems that occur among neighbors in multiple-party houses. It summarizes the prerequisites for successful communication and it includes exercises on the "global village" and "international neighborhood" (38, 39). Yet the chapter does not address explicit problems or benefits of intercultural coexistence. *Mittelpunkt* also has a chapter called "Kooperieren", which portrays a wide range of conflict situations. This chapter teaches strategies about how to compromise and find solutions, the strategies have no international component but rather deal with inner German problems only, such as conflicts with your neighbor about noise.

<div align="center">4. Religious diversity</div>

Not surprisingly *Mitttelpunkt* also fails to incorporate the issue of religion in Germany into its exercises, devoting not a word to the subject. The same goes for homosexual relationships and alternative family relationships.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In comparison to *em neu*, *Mittelpunkt'*s effort to establish an atmosphere of intercultural discussion and communication seems quite half-hearted due to the lack of pictures, stories or exercises that address cross-cultural interaction. Overall, *Mittelpunkt* fails to weave in intercultural differences or deal with them in a systematic way.

<center>5.3.3 *Berliner Platz 2*</center>

The introduction of *Berliner Platz 2* is very short and only briefly mentions the CEFR without explaining in what way it upholds its standards. The book states in its introduction:

> Das Buch orientiert sich am Rahmencurriculum für Integrationskurse Deutsch als Zweitsprache. Der Kurs endet mit der Niveaustufe B1 des gemeinsamen europäischen Referenzrahmens (GER) (3)

Just like *em neu* and *Mittelpunkt,* this statement confirms the book's adherence to the CEFR.

<center>1. Coexistence in the family and other communities</center>

Berliner Platz has a chapter called "Feste, Freunde, Familie." This chapter explicitly portrays different alternatives to traditional marriage (24). Non-married women with children, interracial families, non-married couples, and divorce are mentioned and portrayed. Gay or homosexual relationships are again not mentioned. The students are being asked to state their own perception of what they feel is a family and whom they regard as part of the family. As far as intercultural differences go, in this section for example a dog is mentioned as being part of one German family, which might be different in many other cultures where dogs may have other purposes than just being a family member, which is the way most Germans look at dogs and cats (as can be seen in this chapter, where   *the cat/dog   sleeps/sits   on/next   to their owner on the sofa/ at the table*) (80).

<center>2. Education and learning in Germany</center>

Chapter 16 in *Berliner Platz* is called "Schule und danach" . Here one would expect the textbook to address the way in which Germany handles its education, who has to attend what school at what age, who is responsible for the students' progress and how this might differ from other cultures. Indeed this chapter does exactly that. The chapter explains in detail the German education models, which compulsory forms of school every resident of Germany has to go through and what options are available after the minimum of education, which is dictated by the

German government (40). Every form of school, from *Kindergarten/Vorschule* through *Grundschule, Gesamt-, Haupt-* and *Realschule* is mentioned, all the way to *Gymnasium*, *Fachoberschule, Berufsschule* and *Universität*. Also all the different options after the completion of each form of school are explained in this chapter. On the following pages, the book encourages the students to talk about their education and explicitly the educational system in their country of origin, which the textbook anticipates to be different from the German system. It also features numerous people who have very different educational backgrounds, ranging from the minimum requirement of a *Hauptschulabschluss* to students who went to the military after school to students who attended university after their *Abitur*.

3. Intercultural coexistence

Berliner Platz has several chapters that address intercultural views. "Feste, Freunde, Familie" (18) for example, as well as "Miteinander leben" (28) and "bei uns und bei euch" (136). "Bei uns und bei euch" is a very good chapter as far as intercultural communication and differences go. It explicitly states as its "Lernziele" (136): "über gutes und schlechtes Benehmen sprechen, über Einladungen sprechen, über Höflichkeitsregeln sprechen, interkulturelle Vergleiche machen."

It presents the student with typical scenes in German society that might draw ire in other societies or scenes that present an action that is regarded as being very rude to Germans, but that might be absolutely acceptable in other societies. Examples of acceptable behavior in Germany are public display of affection like kissing and hugging. Examples of unacceptable or rude behavior are texting or talking on the phone on a lunch or dinner date or at the movies, yawning without covering your mouth, picking your nose, spitting in public, being late for a date, or an appointment, belching or chewing with an open mouth. Examples of recommended behavior include: offering to take your shoes off in someone else's house, helping older people by offering your seat, helping women with kids carry the

buggy, letting people finish talking without interruption, or bringing flowers on a date, and bringing a gift for someone else's birthday. It also asks the students if they have ever made a cross-cultural mistake, such as: bringing alcohol to someone's party and finding out they don't drink alcohol, or being 30 minutes late for a dinner date without being aware that it would upset the other party (137). Another exercise asks people for their perception of time. It asks specific questions about how students perceive a certain statement, like "Eine Stunde lang Abendessen ist kurz" or "eine Frau mit 45 Jahren ist jung" to assess people's perception of time, which might be quite different across cultures (139).

Also in the same chapter, the book addresses women's rights among others, when it presents this statement: "Die Frauen haben sich auf vielen Ebenen gleiche Rechte erkämpft. Sie verlangen Respekt und Anerkennung und lassen sich keine Vorschriften machen. Manche Männer müssen lernen, dass eine Frau "Nein" meint, wenn sie "Nein" sagt." (142)

This might be an absolutely normal statement for members of German society, but for other cultures it might be uncommon or even provocative. Its purpose is to demonstrate the level of equality women have in German society. Another example of intercultural communication in this book is the portrayal of people from different countries. The pictures show a variety of people of different skin colors (22, 29, 46, 65,173, 196, 219). The names and stories are about people such as for example *Aynur from Turkey*, *Feridun from Turkey*, *Sabaheta from Bosnia*, *Christian from Ecuador* or *Min-Ah from Korea* (29,141).

4. Religious diversity

Berliner Platz also shies away from mentioning religious diversity. Even though it has more

pictures of people who are non-ethically German and challenges students more than any other textbook

to think in intercultural dimensions. It also has no pictures or stories of people engaging in religious

actions to explain the fundamental rule of freedom of religion in Germany or its multiple

denominations and faiths.

Summary

Berliner Platz presents a large amount of exercises that contain intercultural difference to

promote intercultural communication. It openly addresses cultural differences and stereotypes. It

promotes a liberal view on different family types and voices a lot of different views of people

from other countries. It features a large variety of people from foreign countries who give their

opinions. It asks for the student opinions and what they are used to from their countries of

origin. What makes the book believable in its effort to promote intercultural communications is

that it features people from different cultures throughout the book, not just in one chapter as in

other books. Just like the previous books, however, it fails to mention homosexuality or religion.

5.3.4 *Kaleidoskop*

The introduction of *Kaleidoskop* is much more extensive than those of the German textbooks.

Though it does not specifically mention the ACTFL *Standards*, it does explain in its preface in great

detail how the program components work together. It shows how the single components of the book are

designed to help the student obtain a deeper understanding of the German language and culture so as to

successfully help them function in German society.

The book states in its introduction:

> Teaching cultural practices, putting oneself in someone else's shoes, engage cross-cultural interpretation, analysis and comparison. All-German approach, content based learning with contextualized grammar – integrative textbook, inductive learning strategies, student-directed learning.

This statement shows the book's adherence to the ACTFL standards.

1. Coexistence in the family and other communities

Kaleidoskop has a chapter called "Familie" that details many modern family combinations. It explains the changes that German society has undergone in the last decades and how these have reshaped the situation of the family (75). It quotes different people, who express a range of views of what they seek in life and of what they want in terms of family. Some people are not intending to get married at all, some are single parents, some have children but are not married and some are living in patchwork families with stepmothers and stepsiblings. The book features people's opinions of what they think is an ideal family. It briefly addresses divorce and more complex issues such as the German *Mutterschutz*, *Elternzeit* and *Elterngeld*. The book addresses the students directly and asks for their personal opinions and how they view the German situation (77). It also asks students if they would consider staying at home or working parttime for the sake of the children and if they could imagine for the husband or male part to stay at home, while the woman works (75, 82). Even though *Kaleidoskop* addresses numerous topics mentioned in the orientation classes as far as family combinations in Germany today go, it does not mention *intercultural* family combinations like for example *Berliner Platz* did. Like the other books analyzed here, American and German, it does not address homosexual relationships.

2. Intercultural coexistence

Kaleisdoskop has a chapter called "Multikulturelle Gesellschaft" that addresses in great detail the fact that Germany is an immigration country. It mentions in the first sentence of that chapter that of 82 million people living in Germany, 16 million have their origin in another country, which equals 19% of the population. The book goes on to address the role women have in German society and how this often differs from the role women have in the immigrants' countries of origin, explaining that this can lead to problems for immigrant women. The book explains which group of immigrants is the largest in number and where they come from (148). It features a matrix about famous people in Germany that have a foreign background (144) It devotes a large part of the chapter to Wladimir Kaminer's *Geschäftstarnungen* (153-59), and it includes a long interview about Pinar Erincin, a Turkish-German actress (142-43). However, it lacks a certain kind of accessibility, since most of the immigrants featured are celebrities and therefore hard for the students to identify with, since their stories can hardly be seen as representative. *Berliner Platz,* for example, presented foreign people throughout the book without making their foreignness an issue. It just had them in the book without addressing the fact that they were from different countries

3. Education and learning in Germany

Chapter 6 of *Kaleidoskop* is called "Die Welt der Arbeit" (118 -39) and it explains thoroughly how the German educational system works, from kindergarten to university and its different levels of school, such as *Hauptschule, Realschule* and *Gymnasium* (125, 163). In the chapter "Familie" (78-82) the book briefly talks about the parent's responsibilities for children's behavior in school. It asks of whether it is the parents' or the teacher's responsibility when the children cause problems. However the book does not intentionally make that point, it just

happens to be part of a story in this section where a father has to sit in detention for his son. The chapter does not promote any comparison between other countries and does not ask students to compare with their own country of origin. Overall, the objective of education and learning is covered somewhat superficially in *Kaleidoskop* and without an explicit focus on intercultural difference.

4. Religious diversity

Kaleidoskop does not specifically address the topic of religious diversity. As we have seen above, it addresses in chapter 3 quite extensively the topic of migration and of young people with a migration background. Here the book even discusses integration versus assimilation, but at no point discusses religion.

Summary

Eventhough *Kaleidoskop* has a very detailed chapter about intercultural coexistence called "Multikulturelle Gesellschaft," it is remarkable that all the other chapters lack any mention of any other person from a different cultural background. *Nele, Greta, Anna, Annika, Tim, Florian, Rainer* are the typical names of people featured in this book, not people from other countries, which makes one question the openness of the German culture that the reader was led to believe exists in the chapter "Multikulturelles Leben". The fact that *Kaleidoskop* is an American textbook, the majority of whose readers most likely come from the United States, a western society with customs not all too different from Germany's, might be the reason for the lesser emphasis on immigrants and intercultural communication, as there might be less potential for conflict for the student due to similar cultural views and backgrounds. Nevertheless, so far *Kaleidoskop* is the only textbook that has at least a picture of women with a headscarf in it (141).

This might *hint* for the first time at the existence of different faiths in Germany, even though it does not address any of them directly.

5.3.5 *Mittendrin*

The introduction of *Mittendrin* is much more extensive than those of the German textbooks. It explicitly mentions the ACTFL *Standards* and explains in great detail how the book complies with the 5 C's of the *Standards*. The book states in its introduction: "Mittendrin and the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) National Standards. The 5 Cs are integrated throughout the Mittendrin Program". The book thus explicitly demonstrates its compliance with the ACTFL *Standards.*

1. Coexistence in the family and other communities

Mittendrin is full of geographic facts and figures, German history, and up-to-date information. Students are presented with seemingly endless information about German culture. The book presents in extreme detail the different cultural varieties in Germany. It looks at every region and its differences and specialties. In fact it is so detailed that even a native German would likely not know the majority of the information being presented. However the book lacks any discussion of intercultural communication or of anything that is not German. The reader sees and hears so much about food, castles, architecture, traditions and folklore but nowhere does the book mention that Germany has any immigrants or that there is more to German culture than just GERMAN culture. The book seems systematically to exclude the fact that Germany has immigrants or people with a migration background and that they might shape German society as well. The book claims to be "mittendrin." By failing to address Germany's large number of immigrants the question arises where those people are and why they are not presented as "mittendrin" (=at the centre of) in German society. In excluding the 10 million immigrants, the

book does not uphold its claim to be "mittendrin". More than the mere prompt to describe one's own family in the context of Thomas Mann's family (25), the student does not learn anything about the German family and its variations nowadays.

2. Education and learning in Germany

Mittendrin also lacks any proper mention of intercultural differences in connection with education. It randomly mentions that the high school diploma is called "Matura" in Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and in Poland and that in Germany it is called the Abitur and allows you to go on to a university (39). Apart from this seemingly random information without further context, the book does not mention education at all, neither the German nor the American side. The book mentions that BMW offers numerous internships every year and raises the question if and why people should do an internship before working (171) . Again there is no context dealing with education, rather the text came up as part of the things for which Bavaria is famous. It is astonishing though, how detailed the information of the book is, which is informative if you actually *go* to Germany. If one does not then the countless descriptions of restaurants could become tiring and one has to question the value that this could possibly have for the average American learner.

3. Intercultural coexistence

Again *Mittendrin* includes a very limited amount of information on the matter of intercultural coexistence. Apart from one small text called "Gespräch mit Batu" about a German with Turkish roots, there is no discussion of intercultural coexistence (66). And even this exercise lacks any kind of further context or explanation of why this dialog is relevant. *Mittendrin* appears more than anything like a travel guide with lots of detail about specific regions in Germany.

Since many of its readers might not get to visit Germany, the value of the mass of information about regional facts and numbers is highly debatable.

4. Religious diversity

As with all the other points of intercultural competence, *Mittendrin* also does not mention any aspect of religion. Examples would be varieties that exist in Germany or the freedom to pursue ones religion or the tension that exists due to religious differences. It does not address anything close to religion or belief and the problems it can cause or does cause in multicultural societies.

Summary

Mittendrin is jam-packed with information about literature, fine music, fine arts and historical facts about palaces, castles, museums, music festivals and universities in the whole of Germany. The flood of information is so overwhelming, that one has to fear that the students might grow tired of all the depersonalized and sometimes seemingly random information. Students would likely benefit more from a comparison of German and American strategies to solve problems concerning gender equality or tolerance for alternative families, than from learning about the holy Elizabeth of the Wartburg or the *Landshuter Hochzeit* and other information not even German natives know or need to know unless it is their personal field of expertise. *Mittendrin* seems to follow the classic and somewhat outdated techniques of teaching the students only the three f's of food, facts, and folklore, doing so in such quantity and detail that it appears more like a travel or gastronomy guide than a language course textbook.

The parts at each end of the chapter that are called "Zur Diskussion" only call for a repetition of the introduced facts, such as listing all the *Sehenswürdigkeiten* mentioned throughout the chapter. The book seems out of touch with the latest learning techniques but up-

to-date with its information about Germany. The original texts that the book uses (ZEIT-articles, literature from Ilse Aichinger, Thomas Mann, Max Frisch, Erich Kästner, and others) seem rather difficult for the language ability level the book is designed for. The book lacks a healthy balance of classic and pop culture and has a strong focus on high culture. In my experience this is an unrealistic balance for the majority of students.

In comparison to the German textbooks and, in particular, to the German orientation course material, *Mittendrin* takes a very different approach to how it teaches culture. It stays mainly on the surface of what we have defined as intercultural communication, teaching merely facts about the culture rather than how to get along in it.

*Mittendrin'*s extensive focus on Germany is already visible on the first page, where you find a map of Germany. In comparison to *Anders Gedacht,* at least *Mittendrin* has a map. But in comparison to *Kaleidoskop*, which has a map of the whole world and all other countries on its first page, a map of Europe, a map of Germany, and a map of all of Germany's neighbors on the following pages, you can see the different approaches to intercultural contexts already at the very beginning. Also, the book titles are an indicator. *Mittendrin* is in the middle of Germany and focuses on the country only. *Kaleidoskop* (which means "seeing beautiful forms" in Greek) displays multiple views of a multicultural and diverse Germany. *Mittendrin* looks at Germany through a microscope, and *Kaleidoskop* through a kaleidoscope.

5.3.6 *Anders gedacht*

The introduction of *Anders gedacht* is also a lot more extensive than those of the German textbooks. In contrast to *Mittendrin,* the introduction does not mention the *Standards*. Instead it explains how the book offers an insider's perspective with an all-German approach. It states that it uses contextualized grammar and authentic materials in order to provide in-depth knowledge of cultural practices, products

and perspectives of German speaking countries. The mention of the "3 P's" of the *Standards* shows the

books adherence to the ACTFL *Standards*. (IE 4-7)

The book states in its introduction:

> *Anders gedacht* leads students in study of another people's world view and unique way of life and patterns of behavior as expressed through contemporary culture. Through intense work with visual materials, students experience and analyze the similarities as well as the differences between their own culture and those of the German-speaking world. …Students are encouraged to reflect on how and why their ancestors came to North America and how they understand their own cultural identities. (IE-5)

1. Coexistence in the family and other communities

Anders gedacht follows an explicit "all German approach, with inductive learning

strategies and a different pedagogy" (IE 4-7). The authors state that they want to encourage

students to think differently, to change their point of view so as to engage in cross-cultural

interpretation, analysis, and comparison. They state that the students will learn about the lives of

native speakers of German. (vii). The book aims to give a view of what German society looks

like today. It does not mention the German family at all though. Maybe it does not see German

and American family constellations as being different enough to mention. It also does not

mention what challenges Germany's multicultural society faces in terms of family values, of how

modern, liberal family values might clash with more traditional views from immigrant families.

The chapters are called "Das Reisen, "Das Fernweh zur Zeit Goethes," "Die Grünen und grüne

Ideen," "Multikulturelles Leben," "Die Comedian Harmonists," "Stationen der Geschichte,"

"Umgang mit der Vergangenheit," "Kunst und Künstler," "Das Leben im anderen Deutschland,"

and "Lola rennt." It seems somewhat contradictory to claim to give a whole and in-depth

overview, a new view on German society and then miss that chance by devoting an entire chapter

to a single zeitgeist-dependent item like a movie "Lola rennt" (from 1998) or a music group such

as in the chapter "Die Comedian Harmonists." To sum up as far as family portrayal goes, *Anders*

Gedacht fails to mention it at all. Not even the chapter "Multikulturelles Leben" has any mention of family or variations thereof. The book is so specialized on specific items that it fails to give an overview of German society, which it had declared to be its most important goal (IE-4,5).

2. Education and learning in Germany

An analysis of the book reveals that the book really is *anders gedacht*, (which means *thought differently*.) For just like with the first objective (1. Coexistence in the family and other communities*), Anders Gedacht* also fails to mention absolutely anything at all about the German educational system.

3. Intercultural coexistence

Anders Gedacht has a chapter called "Multikulturelles Leben." Just like *Kaleidoskop, Anders Gedacht* also has a picture of women with head scarves in it (95,97), yet does not mention religion or faith.

The chapter "Multikulturelles Leben" starts with something unusual. The title on the top of the page is called *Migration*. Below you see a picture of a group of Turkish women at a celebration in Berlin and above the picture the book asks the student to define the word "guest". The sentence below it says: "Die meisten Menschen bekommen gern Gäste. Definieren Sie den Begriff *Gast*". It seems very odd to ask to define the word "guest" in this context, because the word, of course, hints at the word *Gastarbeiter,* which was used for the immigrants in the 50's. At the time, the term implied that the immigrants would return to their home countries once their work was done, which as history has shown of course did not happen. What is irritating about it is the statement: "most people like to have guests." It has an accompanying picture of the women below it. You can not help but ask yourself if the book is mocking the relation between the immigrants and the word "guest", which means that guests leave, whereas the immigrants in

Germany did not. The book gives a detailed account of how many immigrants from various countries live in Germany (100). Also it explains how and under which circumstances a non-German citizen can obtain German citizenship (104).

The book then features a German-Turkish rapper named Aziza-A, who raps about "honor-killings". The book presents a very controversial part of the song in the book (109). The exercises that follow the song deal with the addressed honor-killings and ask the students about their opinion on honor. It asks how common honor-killings are in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. At this point you have to ask yourself what intention the authors have with this strategy, which cannot be described as encouraging cross-cultural communication. Instead, it promotes stereotypes and plays with fear rather than engaging in a constructive way of discussing difference.

The next pages feature an exercise that asks the students to define a long list of words where the word "black" has a negative connotation. Then it goes as far as to ask the students to replace the word "black" with other negative adjectives that mean the same. I perceive this exercise as culturally insensitive. Going through this list in an ethnically diverse class without extensive preparation of the topic could lead to serious misunderstandings about language and culture. This exercise is set up as a preparation for the film *Schwarzfahrer* by Pepe Danquart.

This Oscar-winning short film depicts a young Afro-German male who sits down next to an elderly white German woman in a Berlin streetcar and proceeds to be subject to her racial prejudice, her primitive and crude opinions about immigrants. It should be noted that the combination of pooling words with negative connotations in the preceding exercise and this short film could be quite problematic from a didactic perspective. However, the short film itself, if taught with more extensive preparation than *Anders Gedacht* offers, can be seen as a constructive

tool in the teaching of intercultural communication since the film depicts a broad range of ethnicities and generations that seemingly disagree with the prejudiced views expressed by the old woman.

<div align="center">4. Religious diversity</div>

Eventhough *Anders Gedacht* has a chapter called "Multikulturelles Leben", it does not explicitly mention religion or different faiths, even though you get the idea the book suggests that "honor-killings" are not something usually performed by Christians.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Just as with "Lola rennt" and "Die Comedian Harmonists" the book has two more chapters called "Grüne Ideen" and "Das Leben im anderen Deutschland," which also deal exclusively with zeitgeist-dependent works. The book includes hardly any grammar, which is the *anders* in *Anders Gedacht,* and has the students deal with the grammar in the *Übungsbuch* by themselves.

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

<u>German textbooks of German</u>

The results of this study show that even *within* the German textbooks of German there are considerable differences in how the textbooks treat the topic of intercultural communication. Whereas *Berliner Platz* and *Mittelpunkt* present numerous immigrants as characters in their books, *em neu* hardly ever addresses the topic of intercultural communication directly. It does, however, challenge the students more strongly than the other two German textbooks of German to cross-evaluate German customs and cultural traditions with what they are used from the country of their L1. It constantly asks for the student's opinion and personal experience in their country of origin.

One has to question why the subjects of religion and homosexuality are so systematically excluded from the textbooks. The reason for this is likely the economic worry about the consumer base. Publishers do not want to risk losing any customers by including sensitive or provocative issues that could alienate potential readers. This is most likely due to a general avoidance of controversial topics, to promote a more positive image of the target culture and in order to avoid offence of the consumer. Topics that tend to fall under this category of avoidance are for example: politics, religion, sex, narcotics and alcohol. In the orientation course material no economic interest blocks the publication of the controversial issues, since it pursues necessary, government controlled information rather than profit and because explicit confrontation with those controversies in a controlled environment is the very purpose of the course. The inclusion information about the existence of the protestant and catholic faith as well as the Muslim faiths would do no harm to sales volumes for the textbooks of German. It would

give the students a more realistic picture of German culture. It would still be up to the teacher to

decide how deep she wants to go into the subject after presenting the facts.

By avoiding the subject they leave the responsibility to the teachers, or, respectively, the

state educators for the orientation courses. Since those topics are highly controversial, the

publishers might be correct in not going into too great detail about them. In my opinion, they

should at least include matter-of-fact and neutral information about the topics, such as

information about the existence of homosexuality and that it is not in any way regarded as a

problem or crime by the government. Facts or statistics about the different faiths in Germany and

their distribution could also be included.

<div align="center">American textbooks of German</div>

The American textbooks of German incorporate a lot less information about German customs in

the textbooks. This circumstance can be attributed to the fact that they arguably do not differ too

greatly from the American customs, other than little things like *free ice cubes and refills* vs. *no*

ices cubes and no refills or *hostesses at a restaurant* vs. *being expected to find a table on your*

own. Just as with the German textbooks, it would be useful and informative to address the

different faiths that exist in Germany, as well as the fact that homosexuality is absolutely

accepted and in compliance with the law and with society. *Kaleidoskop* appears to be the best

American textbook of German. Due to its overall portrayal of Germany, ranging from food and

folklore over intercultural differences to education and family constellations.

From the point of this study, with the focus on intercultural communication, both

Mittendrin and *Anders Gedacht* broadly fail the parameters established for the analysis. Whereas

Mittendrin presents nothing short of an all German travel guide with no mention of intercultural

topics whatsoever, *Anders Gedacht* seems to emphasize in its information about intercultural differences the word *differences* rather than promote understanding and openness.

The analysis of the textbooks has shown that there are considerable differences in the number of exercises dealing with intercultural communication in both the German and American textbooks of German. The German textbooks seem to incorporate a higher ratio of explanations of German customs and which actions and dealings are acceptable and which are not. Also, they seem to feature more immigrants, especially those who are not celebrities, but regular people too. The American textbooks seem to focus more on traditional German culture than on Germany as an intercultural society.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

This analysis set out to identify the degree to which the textbooks directly or indirectly address the issue of intercultural communication and how they try to achieve a deeper understanding and acceptance of intercultural differences. It was discovered, that due to Germany's unique situation as a country of increased immigration, the German textbooks of German incorporate a more apparent and direct approach to intercultural communication, with numerous exercises designed to address intercultural differences and with apparent regard to the objectives used by the orientation classes and recommended by the European Reference Framework. In many of the exercises, students are asked to look at a given standard within German society and are then asked to compare it to their own way of handling it or the way people in their country of origin do. By doing so, they are forced to look at the situation from the perspective of "the other" (meaning the Germans) and to understand the different ways a culture's practices can be experienced. This analysis also identified the way American textbooks handle the objectives. It was shown that the element of intercultural difference is not as significantly emphasized in American textbooks of German as it is in the German ones. It has been suggested that this is due to a large overlap between American and German cultural practices, where the topics of family, education, intercultural coexistence, and religion are more similarly handled than in comparison to the cultural background of the majority of Germany's immigrants' countries of origin.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that the area of intercultural communication continues to offer fertile ground for further research and analysis. Especially the question whether more sensitive subjects like religion and sexuality can, should or even must be included in the textbooks in order to give the students a more realistic view of customs and values of the country and prepare for practical communication should be researched further. Furthermore, greater investigation is needed into the question of how teachers can maximize the ability of intercultural competence of the students, what resources and techniques are most suitable to enhance intercultural communication, to lower the barrier of personal insecurity and self-consciousness in communication.

Much like Bennett, I believe the aim of intercultural communication should not be uniformity, but a balanced existence of unity and diversity. The aim is not assimilation but respect and understanding for another culture. We should aim to promote consciousness of culture in foreign language students in order to build broad and strong intercultural relationships. By producing good foreign language textbooks that challenge students to reflect about themselves and "the other" in the language classroom, intercultural communication can be a part in the creation of these important and constantly intensifying relationships.

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