



The Intercultural Reflection in Lecturing German as a Foreign Language: Analysis of Textbooks

Shadan RAMADANI

University of Tirana, Foreign Languages Faculty, German Language Department

ABSTRACT

Intercultural reflection in didactics is a topic that is so complex as well as important, which is becoming part of debates in academic circuits more and more each day. For this reason this study has in the center of it, the coverage and analysis of the issue, but in the teaching and learning context as a foreign language in Macedonia. Certainly, in this field there are many studies done, which have given special contribution, but there is always space for new thoughts and analysis. Learning German language has already become a necessity in the Balkans, especially in Macedonia, therefore the intercultural aspects in the teaching processes of German language have a greater importance. Though this research I have tried to emphasize the intercultural aspects in textbooks as a primary source of learning German language in Macedonia. The description and analysis of the textbooks as an essential part of intercultural competence and intercultural reflection constitute the purpose of this study. Furthermore, the focus of the study is to understand if there is an intercultural content in German language textbooks in Macedonia. How should teaching change in this level? Can the differences between cultures pass through intercultural competence, which is encouraged in teaching? Intercultural reflection raises many question marks when it comes to language progress, as well as the contact with the way of living and the way of thinking of the country, whose language you learn, in our study case, German learning. Such studies are important, as well as the learners, who will achieve to get integrated and accept a specific culture easier. Also, the teachers, who based on their professional aspect, will have a guide in order to deliver more knowledge to the learners.

Keywords: Language, Culture, intercultural communication, teaching, textbooks.

1. INTRODUCTION

During recent years, the intercultural competences are increasingly sought and encouraged from the students. Since the '90s of the 20th century there have been more and more scientific researches, dealing with interculturality. I believe that the initial euphoria of intercultural communication, specifically the intercultural learning has decreased. Critical approaches have questioned the basic concepts of intercultural learning, among others "mine" and "others". Throughout this paper, I intend to treat interculturality in the teaching German as a foreign language from a theoretical and practical perspective. This paper analyzes the role of intercultural learning from different perspectives in teaching a foreign language. By the traditional views of the 90s, some critical approaches of learning in recent years have been addressed and are completed throughout the reflections from teaching German as a foreign language in non-German speaking countries.

To better combine the theory and practice, the following intercultural aspects in the textbooks of German as a foreign language will be analyzed.

2. INTERCULTURAL LEARNING ASPECTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1 The development of an intercultural approach in teaching foreign languages

Since the 1990s, cognitive, communicative and intercultural approaches can be distinguished within the foreign language didactics. These facts are rarely presented in teaching practice or textbooks in their original form. Firstly, I will try to explain in details the development of different approaches to a foreign language didactics. It should be mentioned that there are no significant new developments in this field. According to the cognitive approach, from which we are separating, in the foreground is placed the mediation of factual and numerical data, in the political structure, civilization and the culture economy of the intended language.

1970s and 1980s can be seen as periods of developing the factual approach. On the other hand, in this period, elements of the communicative approach in the textbooks of German as a foreign language have taken place. A review over the modern German textbooks show that even nowadays in intercultural teaching there are still elements of factual approach inside the German as a foreign language textbook.

The intercultural approach, originated from the communicative approach of the 1980s, aimed first and foremost on cultural development respectively understanding the unknown. With the intercultural approach, the term (non-real) "native speaker" is questioned and the concept of "intercultural speaker" is used instead. In this case, we must remember the rules, conventions, values and attitudes of foreign culture, which: "in bestimmten Situationen das Richtige sagt, keine Tabus verletzt und den anderen angemessen versteht / in certain right situations do not violate any taboos and the other reasonably understands" (Bredella, 1999).

Foreign language learners should not require language correctness, but they must learn to communicate in intercultural situations.

Finally, it can be concluded that cultural comparison is increasingly devoted to a special importance and through the aimed language culture we should not only speak but also understand. Through this we understand that foreign language teaching should develop the skills, strategies and dexterity in relation with the foreign culture and society (Weimann & Hosch, 1993).

It is worth pointing out some important elements of intercultural learning and teaching:

Reflection over his or her foreign culture

Sensitization and awareness of the intercultural perspective

Acquisition of knowledge in relation to its own and foreign culture.

Tanning clearly defines "Wissen über eine fremde Kultur [Wirtschaft, Politik, Geschichte] im Sinne herkömmlicher Landeskundeseminare / the knowledge over foreign culture (Economy, Politics, History) in the meaning of regional studies" (Tenning, 1999).

Representatives of intercultural teaching and learning see the foreign understanding as a dialect between the inner and outer perspective.

Interculturality in the sense of the word is reflected in a way in which the foreign language teaching students stay between the two cultures. Because interculturality is clearer when its set between one space and from that cultural position can consider another culture (Kaikkonen, 2005).

In this case, students are positioned and have another new third position, respectively between their and others position (Bredella & Delanoy, 1999). In my opinion the middle-gaps are individual, which means that not all students can be found in the same space as the students' cultural backgrounds and backgrounds are different, depending on the individual.

2.2 Images (stereotypical) of Cultures in Teaching Foreign Languages

While in the first years of the Second World War, foreign imagery, stereotypes and prejudices were considered as worryingly factors, now they have already become an object of teaching. Since the 1970s, the problem of relations between our culture and foreigners has been intensively discussed (Bredella & Delanoy, 1999).

However, foreign language teaching as a source of stereotyping (Löschmann, 1998) has been very little explored. Moreover, till now the influence of stereotypes, foreign images and prejudices in the teaching process as well as in practice has not been thoroughly analyzed.

Thus, Bausinger and Kaikkonen divide them into auto-stereotypes and heterosexuals. The role of stereotypes in teaching foreign languages is a very interesting research question, which leads to an answer both from the critic's viewpoint as well as from the intercultural teaching representatives' viewpoint.

Surely there can be no image of a country that would be completely objective and realistic. According to the intercultural approach critics behind subjective and stereotypical images, there is no objective and real country (state) (Altmayer, 2006a).

However, it should be mentioned that in the teaching a foreign language and in the general literature there are many stereotypical representations of the foreign culture and our culture. However, stereotypical representations such as in teaching practice are rarely addressed (Beller & Leerssen, 2007).

My researches on the German as a foreign language textbook in different countries (such as Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania) have resulted that these textbooks generally have similarities to the concept of their foreign and local cultural content and views. During the teaching process, students are preoccupied at the highest level with their thoughts, behavior and actions within their culture, language, and society.

In this way, they can often join a foreign society and with the culture they belong to can analyze their way of thinking. Behaviors, actions and cultural conditions are often perceived and compared with auto and hetero-stereotypes. With stereotyping, reduced representations of others can be created, which in their complexity are transmitted in a clear and narrative form.

Legacies are eased and clearly presented (Witte, 2006).

Creating stereotypes, generalizations and prejudices are complicated within the expansion of knowledge about the foreign. On the other hand, they provide widespread knowledge on the foreign culture, leaving little space for uncontrolled creation of stereotypical images. So, in this aspect, exchange in teaching practice is also important. Although the distinction between the foreign and the local in foreign language teaching is essential, however in my opinion it should include both intercultural competence and communication with the outside world, whether foreign or not, since the students' abilities to communicate and act are equally important to both foreign and their culture.

2.3 Linguistic Content and Civilization Reports (Landeskunde) in Intercultural Teaching

In general, it can be said that the term civilization (Landeskunde) stands as a part of intercultural German studies and German as a foreign language, which except the geographic reports and historical developments, also examines the cultural phenomena of a society (Hiltraud, 2006).

Civilization and intercultural teaching are concepts closely related to one another. Civilization in general is information about those countries where the learned language is spoken (Erdmenger, 1996).

In scientific debates about intercultural teaching some issues about the contents of civilization in the teaching of foreign languages have been treated very little. Discussions usually focus on determining the definition of civilization (Landeskunde) and affect very little the teaching process. In my opinion, the main question that should be raised during the transmission of civilization first of all should be: What is transmitted and how? Roche and Melody think that in discussions about civilization there is a broad unity on the affiliation of the language and culture (Roche & Roussy-Parent, 2007).

While Hans-Jürgen Krumm strongly support the opinion that:

Nur wenn Sprachenlernen als ‚Kulturlernen‘ begriffen wird, lässt sich Landeskunde als integraler Bestandteil von Sprachunterricht im Sinne eines interkulturellen Lernens entwickeln, erhält Deutschunterricht über die Zielsetzung der kommunikativen Verwertbarkeit hinaus die damit keineswegs gering geachtet werden soll - wieder eine zusätzliche Dimension: Kulturaufmerksamkeit (cultural awareness) zu entwickeln und zum Umgang mit Verschiedenheit beizutragen / Only when language learning is understood as a learning of culture then civilization as an integral part of language teaching can be developed in the sense of intercultural learning. Teaching German again takes on an additional dimension over the objective of communicative usability, which should not be removed from the attention: to develop cultural awareness and to contribute to the treatment of differences. “ (Krumm, 1998).

This additional dimension is necessary for teaching foreign languages, starting from this fact the involvement of civilization is more than indispensable. Later on, the question whether civilization should be seen as a separate part and be divided from language teaching may be asked.

This division can be done both by the teachers as well as by the learners. Although the communication and intercultural approach to teaching and learning in the cultural context should be an integral part of teaching languages, this seems to be a utopia. The essence of civilization in practicing intercultural teaching, I think that more attention should be paid to scientific discussions. Teaching and studying German in countries where German is not spoken is characterized by a foreigner's perspective, where viewpoints of the German language and culture are re-shaped by another language and culture.

These foreign-oriented philology are defined in different ways in different countries. Wierlacher in his book "Civilization Studies" (Wierlacher & Bogner, 2003), in France is called 'Civilization allemande' and in English-speaking countries 'German Studies' (Vaillant & Wierlacher, 2006). "Civilisation allemande" includes artistic and cultural life, where apart from cultural heritage, lifestyle and social code, common values, ideas and representations, rituals also include the political and state organization of the mentioned country.

This also includes the social political life in its historical dimension, which is in a marginal situation in the cultural science (Miard-Delacroix & Vaillant, 2006).

The foreign perspective affects especially the non-German speaking countries in the selection of the materials and subjects when teaching the foreign language. In general, it is not possible to expect that

the selected topics to give one hundred percent an objective reflection of German-speaking countries and thus to be treated and practiced in teaching German as a foreign language. On the other hand, the question arises whether the above-mentioned view can be created. This should not be exaggerated, but the discussions about finding a correct answer and problematize this issue in Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and so on are enough.

To discussing the selection of the contents of civilization is essential to eliminate prejudices and as an objective to be understanding in the cultural and linguistic definitions and in teaching foreign languages. However, it should not be forgotten that the main purpose of German studies for foreign countries should be the preparation and training from the experts in the field of German-speaking culture. This can be justified by the fact that in public often is discussed about globalization and European identity (Schilling, 2004).

Recently, just as before national structures in public and in the media, exist and that is not just because of the language. That means that the lack of the European identity is closely related to the European public shortage. In this context, it is understandable to be accepted that these national frameworks should be present in teaching the foreign languages.

This fact does not necessarily have to be appreciated, but it must be said that at the same time it forms the basis of the civilization contents. Efforts to overcome national boundaries in teaching a foreign language affect the meaning of civilization as a representation of national features.

For instance, Altmayer suggests a model, which is based on four main categories: "space", "time", "identity" and "value orientation" (Altmayer, 2006a). The topics are assigned to each category. In interlinking the linguistic content and civilization, the question arises over the topics to be discussed and selected in such a way that in teaching the intercultural communication to be also possible. This cannot be developed by itself because one of the communicating partners speaks a foreign language.

Thus, it does not necessarily depend on the ethnic origin of the participants, but on the quality of the discourse that is being developed. From these contact points, other basic issues arise: Intercultural communication can also be developed without assistance in the mother tongue.

So, this is not always in harmony with the communication of foreign language (Edmondson & House, 1998).

It can be said that any person can develop and confess his cultural interpretation (such as culture, mentality, stereotyping) with a group of students or in his engagement with literary texts or civilization. Communicating these interpretations and opinions creates an intercultural communication. Thus, it becomes clear that the undervalued role of civilization becomes increasingly important in teaching, because civilization with its content enables the intercultural communication (Lüsebrink, 2005).

In conclusion, it can be said that intercultural teaching in principle is a didactic principle and a pedagogical aim, which can be integrated into teaching curricula (Betternabb, 1998).

Thus, the civilization of the German language, as a foreign language can take the function of the guide and reveal new perspectives too.

Intercultural teaching offers a viable situation through civilization, in such a way to encourage students' abilities on cultural comparing. This is also demonstrated by experiences in foreign language teaching, where comparisons are made about the similarities and differences between the learning

language and their country, such as phrases, vocabulary, culture, education system, and health care. Teachers usually help to distinguish between their own culture and the foreign culture.

3. INTERCULTURAL TEACHING IN GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK

After elaborating the following theoretical part, the civilization information will be reviewed and analyzed in the selected textbooks in intercultural aspect. In this analysis, an object of research will be situations of intercultural aspects in textbooks where different culture representatives in real or fictional communication situations will face with texts that include contents such as: specific cultural assumptions, Mentalities, stereotypes, etc (Hu, 1999).

Dialogues from textbooks, literary texts and other types of texts will be taken into consideration as well as images. Of a particular interest are especially the family confrontations within the texts and the views on the culture of the learning language.

As a research object in this paper, four volumes of A1 and A2 levels are used, which are used for beginners' teaching and a bit more advanced. These textbooks are dedicated for different age groups and are used in almost all private sector schools in Macedonia.

So, the following volumes that will be taken are: Schritte 1 International A1 / 1 Kursbuch und Arbeitsbuch, Schritte 2 International A1 / 2 Kursbuch und Arbeitsbuch, Schritte 3 International A2 / 1 Kursbuch und Arbeitsbuch und Schritte 4 International A2 / 2 Kursbuch und Arbeitsbuch Arbeitsbuch.

After the 90s, teaching a foreign language in Macedonia has taken a pragmatic direction of everyday use.

3.1 Structure of the Schritte International Textbooks.

These volumes are textbooks, which are intended for young people and adults. Schritte International consists of six volumes. The first two volumes, Schritte 1 and 2 International, orient the students without knowledge to level A1, which means preparation for elementary use of the foreign language. While Schritte 3 and 4 International prepare students at a slightly more advanced level of learning, while Schritte 5 and 6 International are the most advanced level of this process. After each level the students are equipped with the Start Deutsch 1 (A1), Start Deutsch 2 (A2) and Deutsch (B1) certificates, according to the European Union reference framework.

The first and second parts of the textbooks include the course section with seven chapters and the exercises part with different assignments. Each book contains a questionnaire, with which each student can evaluate his learning development. Questions in the questionnaire affect all language skills such as reading, listening as well as speaking and writing. At the end of each volume there is a grammatical table and a list of words. The second volume also offers a list of irregular verbs, stations to repeat one exam from the Start Deutsch 1. Each chapter is divided into many parts, each followed by a story with pictures and listening as well as grammar dictionary. Chapters A to C treat the new material while assignments serve to embody the new structure. At the end of this part is given a game exercise or an event to communicate with intercultural elements.

On each chapter parts D and E serve to practice listening, speaking, reading and writing from everyday situations. Furthermore, a systematic overview of important structures and phrases is provided. Themes of society for countries as Germany-Austria-Switzerland are presented to the end of the

interlude chapter (Zwischenspiel). Inside the integrated part of exercises phonetic and grammatical exercises are given to encourage independent learning or training on writing and exam preparation. Each volume is equipped with CD-audio listening. Within the textbooks in principle is used only the German language as an intended language to be taught

3.2 The Intercultural Dialogues within the Textbooks.

As mentioned above, in literature the idea that the separation between the local and the intended culture will be artificial is supported. Within the foreign languages learning textbooks have elements which deliberately make the distinction between the foreign and local culture more visible. It can be said, that there are differences but also similarities between the local and the intended culture and this will be illustrated by the following examples within the German as foreign language textbooks.

On the volumes 1 & 2 of Schritte International, the main protagonist is the person called Timo Arhonen, who comes from Finland and will live in Munich. He lives with his friend Anton and in the meantime, he will learn the foreign culture in different everyday situations. Since the beginning of the story he will meet a parrot called Koko. Afterwards, on the first meeting with his friend from Germany he will meet Anton's friend Corinna, who comes from Austria but lives in Munich:

„Timo: Wer ist das Anton? Ist sie das? Ist das Corinna? Who is she Anton? Is she the one? Is she Corinna?)

Anton: Was? Ja, ja das ist Corinna. (What? Yes, yes she is Corinna.)

Timo: Wow! Sie ist hübsch! (Wow! She is really beautiful!)

Anton: H-hmm. (Hmmm)

Timo: Wohnt sie auch in München? (Does she live in Munich too?)

Anton: Ja, ja. Sie wohnt in der Baaderstrasse. (Yes, yes. She lives in Baaderstrase).

Du, sag mal, Timo ... (Tell me Timo...) “ (Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Spest, Bowermann & Reimann, 2006)

Timo surprised shows the photograph of his family and grandmother, who also comes from Austria:

Photography B: Das ist meine Grossmutter Klara. Klara ist in Öserreich geboren. She is my grandmother Klara, she is born in Austria)

Photography C: Das ist meine Familie. Das sind meine Eltern. Mein Vater heisst Marko, meine Mutter heisst Hanna. Das ist meine Schëester Eva./ (This is my family. These are my parents. My father is called Marko and my mother is called Hanna. She is my sister Eva.)“ (Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Spest, Bowermann & Reimann, 2006)

Afterwards of the story he faces some dialectical words, which are differently spoken in Germany and Austria. In Germany, potatoes are called Kartoffel meanwhile in Austria meanwhile in Austria Erdäpfel: Man sagt „Erdäpfel“ in Österreich¹and the text continues further in international comparison: Ich glaube „shugar“ heisst auf Deutsch „Zucker“.²

¹ See. P. 29.

²See. P. 29.

Except for the food specialty „Kartoffelsalat mit Gurke / (Potato salad with cucumber)“³he also learns the way of life of a foreign culture and reflects making a comparison between his apartment in Finland and Corinna’s apartment in Germany:

Corinna: Na? Wie gefällt dir meine Wohnung? / (Do you like my apartment?)

Timo: Die Wohnung gefällt mir sehr gut, Corinna. Sie ist wirklich sehr schön. / The apartment? Yes I do like it very much, Corinna. That is really beautiful)

Corinna: Oh, Danke! Aber sie ist leider auch sehr teuer. / Oh, thank you! Unfortunately, it is really expensive.)

Timo: Meine Wohnung in Helsinki ist nicht so schön. Aber sie ist billig. / My apartment in Helsinki is not that beautiful, but it is cheap!)“⁴

At the end of chapter six „Frei? Zeit? Stress? Jedes Wochenende das gleiche Problem! / Free? Time? Stress? Every weekend the same problem)“⁵he learns that washing the car is considered as a typical Saturday commitment for German men’s, just like watching sport in the evening. This illustrates a stereotypical image. However, the truth is that cars in Germany, Austria and Switzerland have a higher standard than in other cultures. With their branded vehicles a specific image should follow, thus Mercedes presents exclusivity, BMW presents sport and VW is seen as a family vehicle. This presentation continues even further.

In Schritte 2 International in a letter is described the way how the youths celebrate New Year’s Eve in Germany:

(...) In Deutschland feiern junge Leute Silvester meistens mit Freunden oder auch mit der Familie. Um 24 Uhr trinkt man Sekt, es gibt immer ein Feuerwerk und viele Menschen gehen auch auf die Strassen. Gestern war ich nach Mitternacht mit ein paar Freunden in einer tollen Disko! Wir haben fast vier Stunden getanzt und heute tun meine Füße total weh!

Was hast Du an Silvester gemacht? Wie feiert Ihr Silvester? (...). / In Germany the youths usually celebrate the New Year’s Eve with friends but also with their families. At 24:00 o’clock they drink champagne, there is always a fire truck present and many people go out and celebrate. Yesterday after midnight I was with some of my friends in a disco. We have danced almost four hours and today my legs hurt really bad. What have you done on New Year’s Eve? How do you celebrate the New Year’s Eve?“ (Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Spest, Bowermann & Reimann, 2006)

From this letter the students learn the foreign language respectively the German one. From them is asked to answer the letter and thus they can reflect through the letter by describing the way of how the New Year’s Eve is celebrated in their country:

Anworten Sie auf die Karte und schreiben Sie über folgende Punkte: Dank für Karte. Glückwünsche zum neuen Jahr. Silvester: wie gefeiert (...). Zu Besuch kommen. Grüsse. Answer the postcard and write as follows: Thank you for the postcard. Happy New Year. New Year’s Eve: how did you celebrate (...) Come on a visit. Hello)“⁶

³ See. P. 37.

⁴ See. P. 41.

⁵ See. P. 66-67.

⁶ See. P. 145.

Next some cases will be presented that very often take the attention of the story's protagonist: the social behavior in a foreign city, health and fashion. During his stay in Germany, Timo tries to get to know better with Anja, through which he begins to understand the German culture. The photos also reflect the unique German culture, which wakes special interest in the students in Macedonia: Lernen – ein Leben lang (Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Spest, Bowermann & Reimann, 2006), Interjektionen⁷, Fahrradkurier (Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra, Spest, Bowermann & Reimann, 2006), Da tanzt die ganze Stadt⁸, zu Besuch beim Märchenkönig⁹ so and Mode¹⁰.

Throughout the student's perception from the perspective of the characters in the texts the intercultural aspect is clearly shown. However, the selection of information is mainly characterized through his culture. The influence of his culture is reflected on the viewpoint of the foreign culture.

In the volumes 3 & 4 of Schritte International volumes, another protagonist named Maria from South America is presented. Since the beginning of the story she will be socialized with the German family where she will be residence and work as a babysitter thus facing the German culture:

Kurt: Er war schon einmal verheiratet und hat einen Sohn. / (Kurt: He was once married and has a child.)

Susanne: Sie war schon einmal verheiratet und hat eine Tochter. Sie lebt jetzt mit Kurt zusammen. Bald bekommen sie ein Baby. / (Susanne: She was once married and has a daughter. She now lives together with Kurt. Soon they will have a baby.)

Larissa: Ihre Eltern leben getrennt. Sie und ihre Mutter leben jetzt mit Kurt und Simon zusammen. / (Larissa: Her parents live separately. She and her mother live together with Kurt and Simon)

Simon: Er ist der Sohn von Kurt. / (Simon: He is Kurt's son.)“ (Hilpert, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra & Tomaszewski, 2006)

Since her first meeting she tells the difficulties she had during her journey, „Der Bus zum Flughafen hat ein Rad verloren. / (The tire of the bus going to the airport went off.)¹¹ moreover, she talks about her first hospitable impressions Deutschland finde ich interessant. / (Germany is interesting.)¹²

Throughout the story, she learns that in Germany the garbage is separated and selected before thrown away. According to the textbook we can understand that in her country, she can throw the wastes all together meanwhile in Germany not ,, (...). In Deutschland muss man den Müll trennen. / (...In Germany, you should to select the wastes) “. ¹³

During her stay in Germany, she meets a boy of her age through which she will be familiar with the German culture better (...) und so kann Maria Sebastian kennenlernen. / (and thus, can Maria with Sebastian meet) (Hilpert, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra & Tomaszewski, 2006).

The intercultural or multicultural confrontations are offered on many cases within the textbooks. I believe that everyday cultural confrontations are especially presented on the 3 & 4 Schritte volumes than they are on Schritte 1 and 2. In this paper, I have tried to specify some of the most important

⁷ See. P. 76-77.

⁸ See. P. 26-27.

⁹ See. P. 56-57.

¹⁰ See. P. 65-66.

¹¹ See. P.9.

¹² See. P. 10.

¹³ See. P. 19.

cases

3.3 Images on the Youth's Life and the Intended Culture

In Schritte International 3, Tania a 21 years old student shows us a morning view in the chapter where she prepares to go to University „Ich trinke meistens Kaffee zum Frühstück / (I usually drink a coffee in the morning)“ (Hilpert, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra & Tomaszewski, 2006):

Am Morgen muss bei mir alles schnell gehen. Aufstehen, duschen, anziehen ..Zeit zum Frühstück? Die habe ich leider nur selten. Lieber schlafe ich ein bisschen länger. Ehrlich gesagt stehe ich fast immer zu spät auf. Manchmal habe ich ein bisschen Zeit, dann esse ich ganz schnell im Stehen ein paar Cornflakes mit Milch. / (In the morning, I must do everything fast. Wake up, shower and get dressed .. Time for breakfast? Unfortunately, I rarely have it. I better sleep a bit longer. Honestly, I always wake up late. Sometimes I don't have enough time, I eat cornflakes with milk fast on my feet).¹⁴

But what should not dare to miss in the morning she tells us:

Was am Morgen allerdings nie fehlen darf, ist ein Kaffee. Gott sei Dank kann man den ja jetzt überall kaufen und mitnehmen. Meistens hole ich mir einen auf dem Weg zur Uni. / (Though what I cannot miss is a coffee. Thanks to God now we can buy it anywhere. Often, I drink coffee during my walk to University). “(Hilpert, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra & Tomaszewski, 2006)

On the other hand, she also tells us about the weekend:

Aber am Wochenende, da nehme ich mir viel Zeit. Da treffe ich oft Freunde zum Frühstück. Da gibt es dann fast alles: Käse, Wurst, Eier, verschiedene Brotsorten, Brezeln, Croissant und Mengen von Kaffee und Tee. / (During weekends, I have a lot of free time. Very often I meet my friends for breakfast. There have almost everything: cheese, sausages, eggs, various kinds of bread, croissant, coffee and tea)¹⁵

In Schritte International volume 4 in the Kursbuch section we do not encounter any image of youths. Only in the exercise section we can find some youths telling the problems they face with. Michael, a 15-year-old boy describes the problem he has with both his school and his parents:

Gestern habe ich schon wieder eine Sechs in Mathe bekommen. Jetzt ist klar, dass ich die 9. Klasse wiederholen muss. Das Problem ist: ich habe meinen Eltern ganz oft die schlechten Noten nicht gesagt. Sie glauben, dass ich die Klasse bestehe. (...). Ich habe solchen Angst vor dem letzten Schultag! / (Yesterday I got another six in Math. It is clear now, that I will have to repeat the 9th grade. The problem is that I often did not tell my parents about my low grades. They believe I will pass the year (...) I am really afraid for the last school day (Hilpert, Kerner, Niebisch, Specht, Weers, Reimann & Tomaszewski, 2007)

Meanwhile, Sonia a 17-year-old girl tells us the problem she has with her boyfriend:

Ich weiss nicht mehr, was ich machen soll. Immer wenn ich mit meinem Freund ausgehe, flirtet er vor meinen Augen mit anderen Mädchen. Letzte Woche sogar mit meiner Freundin! Wenn ich dann sauer bin, sagt er, dass er nur mich liebt. Soll ich ihm glauben? / I do not know what to do. Always when I go out with my boyfriend, he flirts with other girls just before my eyes. Last week he flirted with my friend! Then when I get angry he says that he loves only me. Should I trust him?¹⁶

¹⁴ See. P. F. 30.5

¹⁵ See. P. 30.

¹⁶ See. P. 145.

Elisa, a 14 years old girl shows the problem she has with her appearance and weight:

In letzter Zeit fühle ich mich so unattraktiv und dick. Meine Freundinnen haben immer so tolle Kleider an und sehe gut aus. (...). Jetzt gehe ich gar nicht mehr mit ihnen weg, weil ich mich so unglücklich fühle. Noch dazu habe ich auch noch Pickel bekommen. / (Recently I feel unattractive and overweight. My friends always have beautiful clothes and they look great (...) Now, I don't go out with them, because I feel ashamed. Should I count the acnes too?)¹⁷

How the German youths experience foreign countries is a topic that I found to be very rarely used within the textbooks. It was mentioned when Tim writes to his friend Andy describing his experience during the visit in Turkey and offers us these views:

Stell dir vor, ich habe die Adresse meiner türkischen Freunde zu Hause vergessen! In Istanbul haben wir der Flughafen-Polizei unsere Situation erklärt. (...). Wir haben dann erst einmal das Zentrum besichtigt, haben in einem netten Cafe einen Kaffee getrunken und lang diskutiert. Und jetzt kommt das Beste. Weisst du, wer da auf einmal ins selbe Cafe reinspaziert ist? Unsere Freunde! Also so ein Zufall! (...)/ Imagine, I forgot at me home my friend's address in Turkey! In Istanbul, we clarified our situation to the airport's police. After that we visited the city center, drink coffee in a good restaurant and discussed for a long time. The best part is, who suddenly came there for a coffee? Our Turkish friends! Such a coincidence! “ (Hilpert, Niebisch, Penning-Hiemstra & Tomaszewski, 2006)

There is always created the impression that textbooks should offer appropriate contents that motivate the students to face with the issue, of what a student from another culture think of us? If we want to pursue this goal, then the authentic stories of the protagonists within the textbooks are tools used to approach closer with the cultural gap of the German speaking countries.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout my modest research, I can conclude that textbooks make a clear distinction between the source culture and the demanded one. Although, teaching is not developed on the place of the demanded culture, the teacher should apply the practice of teaching on the cultural distinctions of the intended language. As materials can be used for instance the authentic texts and films. Throughout my personal experience, such topics are very attractive on student's eyes and have an authentic perception, thus being subjects of discussions. Throughout the protagonist's stories in the textbooks the student experiences a variety of foreign cultures. The perception of the students based on the protagonist's perspective on the textbooks is an intercultural aspect of learning. However, the selection of information dominates from my own culture.

The present culture in German speaking countries is diversity in the textbooks and it is difficult to be extensively presented. Therefore, the intercultural encounters are easily editable. The presented questions are presented without any major problem such as: Tim in Istanbul. In the culture of foreign languages, man faces with the representatives from the society of the intended culture.

Images of youth's life are created in selected textbooks through youth's confessions from the main culture over the intended one. It can be concluded, that several presentations are influenced by political correctness. By addressing the literary texts it can be seen that the real problems are not offered. Images in the foreign culture often are expressed through dialogues and texts. The new

¹⁷ See. P. F. 145.

textbooks contain more from the intercultural life in Germany and this tendency is increasing. The textbooks, which are used in the private sector in Macedonia, dominate the dialogues, often with didactic situations, which are referred by the students as didactic too.

The protagonists in textbooks in Schritte International 1&2 are of targeted ages meanwhile in Schritte International 3&4 we have protagonists of different ages, compared with the targeted age groups. Otherwise, the textbooks are almost perfect for learning the daily demanded culture. The characters offer opportunities to develop the sensitivity skills and thus easily identifying the foreign and the one that is different. There is an approach based on the principles of intercultural teaching and learning to better overcome the cliché images and to moderate the existing prejudices, thus contributing to the tolerance and coexistence.

While raising students' awareness for a confrontation with the foreign culture it is important when teaching the foreign languages to open different perspectives on the targeted culture language. Mentor's personal experiences as representatives of foreign cultures should generate in practice empathy in such a manner by the student to be perceived as authentic. Through the perception of presented events the students should be able within the frames of the cognitive and emotional process of understanding to be able to create their own opinion and idea of the foreign culture.

Teaching the foreign languages, foreign cultures should be offered on a broad variety, in a manner to open to the students a broad diversity and different perspectives. It has been proven that the possibilities of a foreign textbook and the intercultural intercourse on teaching should be more used to a higher degree. The intercultural competences can be seen as a challenge for creating the textbooks and the implementation of intercultural teaching into the foreign languages teaching. Learning a foreign language is also a way of confronting with another culture. Intercultural teaching and learning and the intercultural communication should undoubtedly be the major components in every form of teaching foreign languages.

REFERENCES

- Altmayer, C. (2006a). *Kulturelle Deutungsmuster' als Lerngegenstand. Zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Transformation der ‚Landeskunde‘*. Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen 35. München.
- Bettermann, R. (1998). *Erkennen, Erleben und Erfahren in Landeskunde*. Nö: Dagmar, Blei & Ulrich Zeuner (Hrsg.) (1998), Theorie und Praxis interkultureller Landeskunde in Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Bochum.
- Bredella, L. & Delanoy, W. (Hrsg.) (1999). *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht: Das Verhältnis von Fremdem und Eigenem*. Tübingen.
- Bredella, L. (1999). *Zielsetzungen interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterrichts*. Nö: Bredella, Lothar - Delanoy, Werner. (Hrsg.) (1999). *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht: Das Verhältnis von Fremdem und Eigenem*. Tübingen.
- Edmondson, W. & House, J. (1998). *Interkulturelles Lernen: ein überflüssiger Begriff*. *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* 9,2. In: <http://www.dgff.de/de/zff/zff-ausgaben/band-9-heft-2-1998.html?cHash=ed45d8d9f729133d35b8265fdc2e332e>.
- Erdmenger, M. (1996). *Landeskunde im Fremdsprachenunterricht*. München.
- Europarat. (2001). *Gemeinsamer europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen. lernen, lehren, beurteilen*. Berlin.

- Hilpert, S., Kerner, M., Niebisch, D., Specht, F., Weers, D., Reimann, D. & Tomaszewski, A. (2007). *Schritte 4 International. Kursbuch & Arbeitsbuch*. Ismaning.
- Hilpert, S., Niebisch, D., Penning-Hiemstra, S. & Tomaszewski, A. (2006). *Schritte 3 International. Kursbuch & Arbeitsbuch*. Ismaning.
- Hiltraud, C. H. (2006). *Konzepte einer Kulturlehre und Kulturwissenschaft im Fach Interkulturelle Germanistik/Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. In: Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache 32. Verlag: Iudicium.
- Hu, A. (1999). *Interkulturelles Lernen. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Kritik an einem umstrittenen Konzept*. Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung 10. 2.
- Kaikkonen, P. (2005). *Fremdsprachenunterricht zwischen Moderne und Postmoderne*. Info DaF 32, 4. In: http://www.daf.de/downloads/InfoDaF_2005_Heft_4.pdf.
- Krumm, H. J. (1998). *Landeskunde Deutschland, D-A-CH oder Europa? Über den Umgang mit Verschiedenheit im DaF-Unterricht*. Nw: Info DaF 25. 5. In: http://www.daf.de/downloads/InfoDaF_1998_Heft_5.pdf#page=3&view=Fit
- Lüsebrink, H. J. (2005). *Interkulturelle Kommunikation. Interaktion, Fremdwahrnehmung, Kulturtransfer*. Stuttgart, Weimar.
- Miard-Delacroix, H. & Vaillant, J. (2006). *Civilisation allemande*. Nö. Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache 32. In: <http://www.iudicium.de/katalog/168-9.htm>.
- Niebisch, D., Penning-Hiemstra, S., Specht, F., Bowermann, M. & Reimann, M. (2006). *Schritte 1 International. Kursbuch & Arbeitsbuch*. Ismaning.
- Niebisch, D., Penning-Hiemstra, S., Specht, F., Bowermann, M. & Reimann, M. (2006). *Schritte 2 International. Kursbuch & Arbeitsbuch*. Ismaning.
- Roche, J. & Roussy-Parent, M. (2006): *Zur Rolle der kontrastiven Semantik in interkultureller Kommunikation*. Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen 35, Tübingen.
- Schilling, K. (2004). *Die Herausforderung der Landeskunde – Lehrererfahrungen und Forschungsperspektiven*. Nö. Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache 30. München.
- Schoch, M. (2011). *Duden*. Deutsches Universalwörterbuch. Mannheim. Zürich.
- Tenning, R. (1999). *Theorie und Praxis bei der Vermittlung von „interkulturellen Kompetenz“*. In: Bredella, Lothar - Delanoy, Werner (Hrsg.) (1999). *Interkultureller Fremdsprachenunterricht: Das Verhältnis von Fremdem und Eigenem*. Tübingen.
- Vaillant, J. & Wierlacher, A. (2006). *Landesstudien*. Nö. Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache 32. München.
- Weimann, G. & Hosch, W. (1991). *Geschichte im landeskundlichen Deutschunterricht*. Zielsprache Deutsch 22. Münster.
- Weimann, G. & Hosch, W. (1993). *Kulturverstehen im Deutschunterricht. Ein Projekt zur Lehrerfortbildung*. Info DaF 20. Verlag: Iudicium.
- Wierlacher, A. & Bogner, A. (Hrsg.) (2003). *Handbuch interkulturelle Germanistik*. Stuttgart, Weimar.
- Wierlacher, A. (Hrsg.) (1985). *Das Fremde und das Eigene*. Prolegomena zu einer interkulturellen Germanistik. München.