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Meeting of Cultures. Intercultural Competence in Education and Upbringing.

Abstract

In the article we can find a hypothesis saying that the aims of education / learning of a native language or foreign languages change and that is why complements should be introduced. Consequently, present aims include: language, communication, social and cultural activities. In the article definitions and ways of building of intercultural competence are discussed. The important elements of the competence are indicated, these elements are: the definite range of knowledge and abilities concerning both native and foreign realities. They include: everyday life (dishes, beverages, meal hours, table manners), conditions of life – standards of life, interpersonal relations, system of values, opinions and attitudes (regional cultures, history and tradition, religion, stereotypes, cultural standards). Program propositions which are possible to introduce into language teaching are presented. Verbal and non-verbal ability to act in native and foreign language contexts, which are everyday-life-culture-oriented, are shown, including the ability to use language strategies. Sociology and culture of everyday life in today education and upbringing complement didactics. I propose the metaphor of interpersonal space to introduce it. For didactics it is a meeting with Other, Stranger, Another. There are four types of characters which inhabit these areas: enemy, stranger, weirdo and neighbour. We can meet all of them during classes. Our activities should aim at tolerance, but it does not mean resigning of diversity and distinctness. Another element included in the program of contemporary culture are contexts of everyday life. They are commonly used in programs and course books. Therefore, we have texts about work, school, leisure, and about the most typical thing which is meeting other people and establishing various relations with them. Still, contexts of everyday life differ at the moment of meeting with other culture. We can enumerate six types of relations which constitute interpersonal space: contacts (meetings), interactions, social relations and ties, social identity and virtual references.

Interpersonal space in action is the basis for building communicational competence and at the same time cultural and intercultural competences, which are part of it. Activity towards one's own culture and the knowledge of activity, values and rules of the target culture were emphasized. The latter includes tolerance, empathy and the ability to solve problems referring to particular, intercultural situations of activity. Didactic propositions using techniques and trainings of creating of intercultural abilities are included in the article.

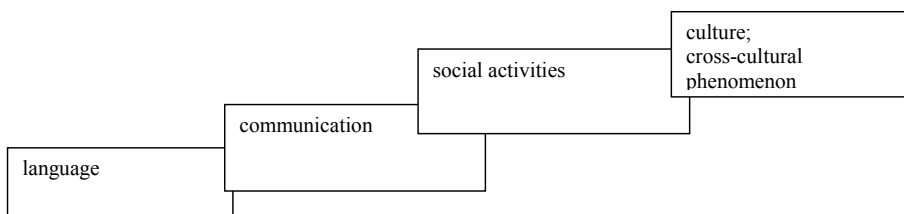
1. The Other, The Stranger, The Second in education and upbringing

The development of a network society and globalization processes place every teacher in a situation of tough choices. We often ask ourselves, how to teach, what to teach? We know perfectly well that in contemporary reality it is not enough to educate a linguistically efficient pupil or student. We face a choice of teaching and educating communications and culture in the first and second language. And, by implication, we touch upon the problem of our own and our fosterlings' identity. We ask ourselves a question, where are the boundaries of the The Other, The Stranger, The Second? Should the category of identity be present in the classroom? As accurately observed by Zygmunt Bauman, identity is not something given, „it has to be acquired, [...] it can not be acquired once and for all, but it has to be acquired over and over again, selecting each time from a different set of possibilities, but without knowing in which direction (Bauman 2004). Contrary to what the author suggests though, the identity of individuals is not discovered, but created (Chymkowski 2004, 100) . Identity understood this way is a reflective interpretation of a certain continuity across time and space (Giddens 2001). Therefore it requires consistent training within cultural and intercultural communication. Another problem to be resolved by the teacher is the relationship: language, communication and culture in the sense of linguistic communication and native culture as well as foreign linguistic communication and culture.

The purpose of this article is an attempt to expand didactic activities within language and culture education by the subject area of culture and sociology of everyday life and to include the notions: competence, intercultural competence within the model of competences acquired in the process of teaching and learning

As a result of globalisation processes and changes in society and culture the purposes of teaching must take into account the area of cultural and cross-cultural activities . Consequently, the current goals of teaching/learning include: language, communication, social and cultural activities.

Diagram 1. The goals of teaching and learning in contemporary didactics



I put forward a hypothesis that the culture of everyday life nowadays constitutes a basis for the introduction of a range of competences, and the concept of competence as used in educational literature actually refers to communicative competence. I

suggest the classification of new competences recorded in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR 2003) and required in teaching, and thus, not only teaching the language but also teaching about the culture, for the culture and through the culture. In questions about knowledge and competence clearly the problem of procedural knowledge appears, but so does the problem of specific linguistic and cultural activities.

Sociology and culture of everyday life in contemporary education and upbringing constitute a supplement of didactics. To introduce it I suggest a metaphor of interpersonal space. For didactics this is a meeting with the The Other, The Strange, The Second. (Sztompka 2009, 40). These areas populate 4 character types: enemy, stranger, weirdo and neighbour. In a classroom we can meet each of them. Our actions should aim at tolerance, which does not mean giving up on diversity and difference, does not mean melting our specific characteristics in the common homogenous pot of the global culture.

Another element in the programme of contemporary culture are contexts of everyday life. They appear widely in programmes and textbooks. This is because we have texts on work, school, leisure and, what is the most typical – meeting other people and establishing diverse relationships with them. However, the contexts of everyday life differ while meeting another culture. We can distinguish six types of relationships that constitute interpersonal space: contacts (meetings), interactions, social relationships and bonds, social identity and virtual reference (Sztompka 2009, 36). Social contact is the simplest relationship. This event assumes copresence in space and mutual awareness of this copresence. In such space we may differ in respect of behaviour, outfit, respecting the distance - that is those elements that arise from our culture. The interaction, however, is more important than the contact, since focusing on actions, both verbal and non-verbal is what matters (gestures, body language, facial expressions,). The basis of interaction is conversation and focusing on the actions of the other person, as we expect well-known principles of interaction, whereas in a conversation with a foreigner these verbal and non-verbal actions may be different. Social ties are connected with emotional factors, personal engagement. Shared experience connects people, but may also bear our differences between them. That is where knowledge how to behave communicatively when we „differ beautifully” is required. The virtual relations in which the meeting of different cultures takes place must also be mentioned.

Interpersonal space in activity is the basis for building communicative competence, and consequently for cultural and cross-cultural competences which constitute its components. The material in respect of knowledge and skills is included in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR 2003). It is worthwhile to append this area with something that constitutes the condition of interpersonal space in our times. „Revolutionary transformation of communication tools has taken place, whereby the act of conversation is no more subject to any space and time limitations. We communicate with others regardless of where we are from (...), language barriers fall (Sztompka 2009, 45) but the barriers

resulting from culture and sociology of everyday life remain. The cultural space in the teaching of the native and foreign language has also found its place in CEFR, which „also defines the cross-cultural awareness of learners. It stems from the knowledge of awareness and understanding of relationships between „the world of the learner” and „the world of the taught language” and marks awareness of existence of regional and social differences within these two worlds” (Gębal 2010, 83). The catalogue of knowledge comprises issues related to everyday life and living conditions, interpersonal relations, system of values and ethical-cultural references, the body language in interpersonal relations as well as paying visits (CEFR 2003, 38).

Competences described in the CEFR require clarification

2. Competences in the CEFR

The notion of competence and strategy occupies a central position in contemporary teaching of the native and foreign language . The CEFR defines competence as „the totality of declarative knowledge, abilities and skills as well as the features of character of a given person, which factors determine their mode of action ” (CEFR 2003, p. 20). Iwona Jankowska defines competence as „knowledge, skills and attitudes, which the language user acquires and shapes throughout their life experience, and which allow them to face the requirements of communication, both in terms of language and culture” (Jankowska 2011, p. 58–59). In other words, competences are subordinated to social activities and culture. The CEFR lists the general competences and communicative competences. Communicative competences include linguistic competence, which covers „knowledge and ability to apply systemic knowledge of a language, such as phonology , morphology , syntax, lexis and semantics regardless of sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects related to the use of language forms” (CEFR , 2003, p 23).

The description was supplemented with spelling and orthoepic competence. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the social dimension of communication. It takes into account determinants of social relations, polite expressions, expression registers, varieties and styles . It also takes into account situations that define specific linguistic behaviour (CEFR , 2003, p 24). Pragmatic Competence refers to the “ functional use of language , the implementation of pragmatic functions (speech acts) with the use of using the standard discussion scenarios and negotiations “ (CEFR , 2003, p 24). Multilingual and multicultural competence was also highlighted in the described document. The authors explain that “ the individual components making up the cultural competence of a given human being (standard, regional , group culture) derived from their individual experience do not exist separately or separately next to each other - on the contrary , they influence each other , are constantly compared and contrasted with each other, forming as a result his/her unit multicultural competence “ (CEFR , 2003, p 17).

Another concept associated with competences are the strategies of language learning. Extending the educational objectives by social activities and knowledge

and cultural skills requires choosing a specific type of effective action . Thus, the “ strategies are measures applied by the language user in order to mobilize and control their own language resources and activate their skills and ways of doing things to effectively perform the task to the fullest or in the most economical manner, in accordance with the stated objective and a given context of communication “ (CEFR 2003 p 61). The strategies of reception, production, interaction and mediation are particularly important.

The typology proposed in the document drawn up by the Council of Europe allows to assign levels of language proficiency, identify general and communication competences, to create diverse programmes and textbooks. It also helps in conducting examinations and compiling test tasks.

3. Terminology stipulations: culture, cross-cultural dialogue, cultural standards

Cultural issues can be considered from the perspective of an entity , in which the focal point is the man and his actions. He is the driving force of the duration of change. I refer here to the theory of Andrzej Zachariasz (2001), whose concept of culture is a reality that is created as a result of human activity through his experiences and actions (Zachariasz 2001, p. 193). Cultural entity experiences culture, but also creates, understands and lives it. Meaning remaining in specific relationships with other meanings becomes the basic element (thus creating systems of meanings). This meaning is cognitive, contains specific information about the subject , and also has an emotional function. So it is accomplished in an action of a specific entity. The elements of so understood culture are stereotypes, autostereotypes and cultural standards, often referred to as patterns or scripts (compare Tabakowska 2001, p. 193; Wierzbicka 1999, p. 164). Implementation of the standards of action „manifests itself in verification of abstract meanings, conceptual operations, creation of private knowledge and private tasks, intellectual taming of changes” (Torenc 2007, p. 30).

The term culture shall be here understood as valuation, beliefs and standards adopted by the society as well as behavioural patterns and patterns of conduct in practice, which address the needs of a certain community. Looking at culture from the point of view of human activity we take into account the knowledge of the standards in a given society. So culture includes standards of human actions and behaviour (Eller 2012, p. 33-69). These definitions mean that we can tentatively accept the concept: culture, consisting of nature, civilization and culture, with such elements as: space, przestrzeń, schemes and patterns of actions, interpretations of values, system of values (Technik... 2006, p. 15). Another concept closely connected with cross-cultural dialogue is cultural communication, which is „a type of conduct that creates social life by making it possible for an individual to participate, identify with and negotiate this life” (Mikołowski-Pomorski 2006, p. 20). It is a socially active factor and is governed by two principles:

a) each conversational community bears traces of culturally defined means and meanings of communicative conduct, and communicates effectively and according to the context;

b) communication is a heuristic, behavioural resource used to perform cultural functions in the lives of individuals and communities (Philipson, 2003, p 35 - 72). If we translated these definitions into the notion of culture in functional terms, then it would include the following elements: social bond, values and expectations, and also realities, patterns of behavior, ideas, institutions. All these elements are subject to interpretation. It is worth noting that the user of a given culture does not always realize all the exponents of their own culture, and even more so the culture of the Other. The surprising element in this kind of thinking is an overall coherence of values ideas and behaviour. In education, we mostly take into account the most common patterns of behavior, values and interpretations in relation to, for example, literary text, and forget about the whole range of indicators that go beyond awareness of those participating in culture. No let us look at the areas, in which there is culture. It may be realities, institutions, traditions, language, everyday lifestyle. These various manifestations and patters are important for interpersonal relations. This collective cooperation in culture, using specific conventions and meanings, forms the basis of cultural standards characteristic for each country.

Dialogue, a meeting is the form of mutual, two-way, reversible communication. It is always accompanied by: the language, social, and cultural context. Dialogue is equivalent, which means that it utilises negotiated forms and content . Dialogue is the interaction, mutuality and understanding . It mostly unites, does not divide. In contacts between people or groups speaking different language and living in different countries we deal with intercultural dialogue. Today intercultural communication takes place in a new space. It is multilateral, global, discovers new patterns and models. Globalisation significantly changes the terms, intensity and the course of the intercultural dialogue.

The suggestion to demonstrate intercultural dialogue and teaching intercultural competence concerns introducing in the world of everyday culture, native and another, second. The aim is to show the multiplicity and diversity, as after all, we are dealing with two or more ethnic groups. Comparative material here may be the analysis of cultural standards and functioning autostereotypes for instance in Albania and other countries, such as Poland.

1. Intercultural dialogue requires the use of cultural standards present in the native and foreign culture for the functioning of the native and foreign language.
2. Intercultural competence should be an important part of education.
3. Intercultural competence requires knowledge of one's own and foreign autostereotype.
4. Stereotypes are an important part of culture. However, they may restrain competition.
5. Modern programmes and projects in the field of culture require symbiosis of language, literature and culture.

Cultural standards are subordinated to the definition of culture and relate to values, norms, rules in the culture, which include communication practices based on

perception, thinking, assessing and acting (Żydek-Bednarczuk 2010). Cultural standards contain rules of the game of social life in culture. Native users of culture and language are not always fully aware of them. For the researcher of intercultural dialogue they constitute the basic knowledge, which will be used to teach intercultural skills. Cultural standards as signs include thinking, action, perception and behaviour (Thomas, 1991; Heringer 2004) .

The contents of cultural standards and autostereotypes form topics and issues implemented within culture. Programme assumptions of an intercultural communication course can be formulated as follows:

1. Developing skills of observation, adaptation, sensitivity and empathy in a situation of meetings in one's own culture and intercultural meetings;
 2. Understanding the similarities and differences between communication and cultural systems in Albania and in other countries;
 3. Creation of an open attitude, which is characterised by a free expression of one's needs and problems , and the ability to view social reality from the point of view of others;
4. Intercultural competence

In order to describe intercultural competence, one needs to pay attention to objectives and effects of education (Żydek-Bednarczuk 2012). Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate across different cultures and establishing and maintaining contacts with representatives of other cultures. Its implementation in the educational process is associated with motivation , knowledge and skills

Michael Byram (1997) presented a model of intercultural competence , which includes knowledge, the ability to interpret behaviour , the ability to observe and real interactions as well as cultural awareness . After an analysis of scientists' considerations and presented models one notices that within knowledge and skills the participant should:

have specific knowledge of their own and the other, foreign culture as well as knowledge of social groups and differences arising in the process of interaction . This knowledge relates to the history and views on it , national remembrance, knowledge about everyday behaviour associated with traditions , customs and everyday life , for instance courteous forms of address, ways of discussing, making commitments and fulfilling them. General knowledge about intercultural communication concerning individual and collective cultures, high and low context cultures, male and female, or linear, flexible and cyclic time cultures is useful here (Hofstede 1966,1996 from: Mikułowski-Pomorski 2006, Hall 2001, 2005). A teacher of both native and foreign language should have such information, since then they will sooner understand the differences resulting from the comparison of the native and the Second culture and will be able to show them to the students;

- acquire the ability to interpret their own culture in the context of the other and their

own culture. It is mostly about finding similarities and differences. The analysis and practical exercises involve the use of media (press, television, film or the Internet). Special attention is paid to troublesome places, the ones that can become a source of a conflict, for instance religious, racial, ideological, ethnocentric;

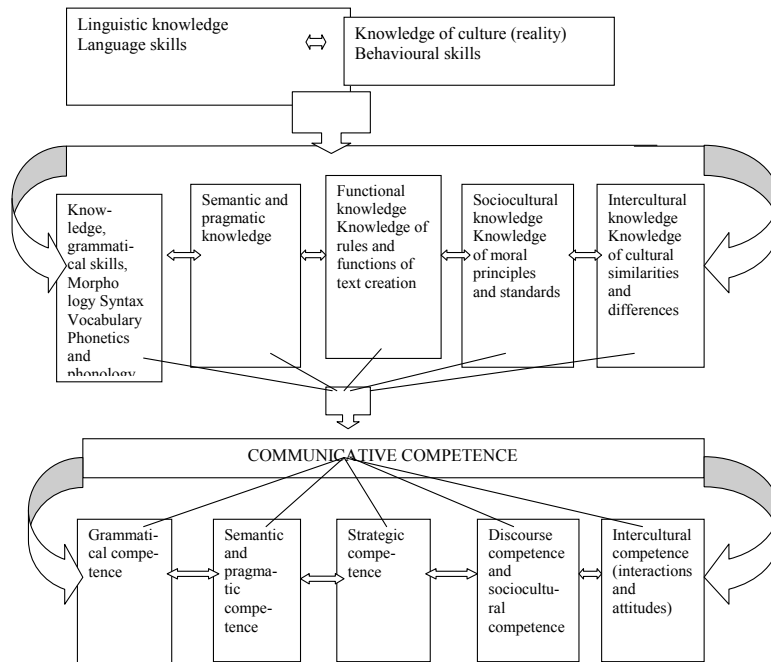
- teach ability to perceive their own attitude and behaviour in the context of both cultures. This regards the issue of observation of reality and making interactions associated with nonverbal and verbal behaviour in different specific communication contexts, such as gestures, interactive behaviour during a conflict situation, responding to hostile and racist behaviour, ritual behaviour;

- develop the ability to consciously approach the otherness and difference (tolerance education) and critical cultural awareness. It is not about acceptance of all behaviour of a foreign culture, but about promoting a culturally relativistic approach and identifying potential areas of conflict.

Good curricula and didactic proposals allow to teach in today's didactics specific knowledge and develop the necessary competences. Intercultural competence remains a blank spot. Its place in the model would fall next to the competence in the native culture. In the description of the skills I would suggest two levels of conveying knowledge and specific competences. The first level concerns supplying the student with knowledge and grammatical, semantic and pragmatic skills. Education at a certain level of proficiency will provide the ability to communicate in the native and foreign language in various communication situations. Education in the native culture is parallel to the language education. As a positive transfer we superimpose on this language and culture area the second level – knowledge and skills of a student in their native language and own culture. The knowledge refers to the following areas: language – within the framework of knowledge on the system, knowledge of the meaning of lexemes and expressions according to the current curriculum in schools and their use, sociocultural and intercultural knowledge concerning information about their own country as well as the second, foreign country.

Communicative competence concerns the degree to which the desired objectives are achieved through communication in a manner appropriate to the context. The basic elements of the communicative competence model are: knowledge, motivation and skills. The context of communication creates a framework in which the interaction takes place. For us, this context is language and culture. Culture consists of fixed patterns of thinking, values and behaviour that define a group of people. It involves convictions and views of people on the world, their spirituality, understanding of the status and hierarchy, use of time and physical space as well as mutual relations. The elements of competence are appropriateness and effectiveness, since they determine achieving the assumed communicative objective. It is the teacher and type of education that determine what knowledge is needed and what skills are optimal. In the presented view communicative competence appears as a linguistic, sociocultural, sociopsychological phenomenon. Yet, they are not autonomous elements. The principle of continuity is applicable between them.

Diagram 2. The model of conveying knowledge and competence in Polish as a foreign language



Didactic process provides knowledge about communication and competence. At the same time it includes the processes of opening up to civilisational, cultural or social phenomena in a broad sense. These educational challenges increased considerably at the time of development of the Internet but also due to mobility of people and meeting various cultures. As a result, the education must be hybridized, open, dynamic, reflecting the needs of the information society. The tasks modern education faces require building new and transforming old communicative and linguistic competences and enriching them with cultural and intercultural competence. These in turn must be supplemented by the teacher's knowledge of intercultural communication.

5. Didactic applications

Taking into account the contents of the CEFR (2003, 95-96) and that included in the curricula we present a catalogue of cultural and intercultural contents. The starting point are sociocultural contents and skills. The canon of intercultural contents was prepared based on the catalogue of sociocultural knowledge by CEFR (2003, pp. 95-96), and theories of intercultural communication (Hofstede 1966, Hall 2001, 2005), culinary styles and metaphors.

Table 1. The canon of cultural (the culture of everyday life) and intercultural contents

Everyday life (food, beverages, meal times, table manners)	Comparison of everyday life in a native and foreign culture. Drawing attention to similarities and differences.
Living conditions – standards of living	Showing life, for instance of students in Albania, Poland and the country of origin of a student . Drawing attention to various education systems. Ethnicity in Albania and in another culture.
Interpersonal relations	Relations between sexes (feminine and masculine cultures, the structure of family relations– role sharing and partnership (native culture and <i>the Other, the Second</i>), relations at work, intergenerational relations, divisions and political and religious relations–application of knowledge of cultural dimensions with division into high- and low-context cultures collectivism vs individualism, masculinity vs. femininity, distance towards authorities.
The system of values, opinions and attitudes	Wealth, regional cultures, tradition and history, national identity, religion, humour, stereotypes and cultural standards, similarities and differences between cultures.
Body language	Proxemics, kinesics, haptics and consequences in behaviour
Social conventions	Time in cultures: linear, flexible and cyclic; punctuality, visits and conventions prevailing in different cultures.
Ritual behaviour	Religious ceremonies, family celebrations, special events - cultural and linguistic behaviour, avoiding uncertainty, neutrality vs. emotionality.

The proposed catalogue of contents for teaching intercultural competence requires adequate preparation of classes. The knowledge of the teacher and lecturer on various dimensions of culture will facilitate the discussion and identifying similarities and differences between cultures. Methods of implementation applied to the activities would include training in four areas of teaching (Bachmann, Gerhold, 1996; Geşbal 2010, 199-207):

1. Training of perception - in the form of free associations with the presented iconic forms and movies, identifying stereotypes and cultural standards (own and foreign), telling the same story from the perspective of behaviour in one's own country, describing the material according to the scheme: description - interpretation - one's own feelings - similarities and differences in native and own culture of the listener.
2. Acquisition of a strategy for interpreting the meaning of statements and situations. Describing one's own associations related to concepts and comparing them with

associations, for instance of Albanians, sensitisation to conflict situations and ways of getting out of them, playing roles in different situations;

3. Ability to compare cultures, empathising with the Strange, the Other, the Second culture, an attempt to produce a third culture and create tolerance to a meeting with the Other, the Second;

4. The ability to communicate in intercultural situations, pay attention to conflict situations, courteous forms of address, non-verbal communication (significant gestures, facial expressions).

The importance of the introduction of knowledge and cultural and intercultural skills has its reasons. Firstly, the approach to didactics changes. The development of many theories and the importance of communicative competence resulted in expansion of the model to yet other competences, also noted in the CEFR (2003). Secondly, the observation of the processes taking place in the world today indicates cultural tendencies associated with globalisation. Mobility of people, standardisation of patterns of life and value systems leads to a situation where an increasing number of phenomena joins rather than divides people, but it is very hard to find a cultural community which would be autonomous. Cultures might rather be represented as overlapping circles. Thirdly, the shift in scientific paradigms in didactics equates language training with cultural and intercultural training.

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