

Perspectives on Intercultural Competence

A Textbook Analysis and an Empirical Study
of Teachers' and Students' Attitudes
- Master's Thesis -

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1. A Current Trend in Foreign Language Teaching – Intercultural Competence and the Intercultural Approach

Trends come and go. This is not only true for subjects related to fashion, music, and art but also applies to academia. The sciences of language study and language teaching are no exception to this and have seen several trends and approaches develop and dissolve in the last decades. All of these previous approaches, such as the *grammar-translation method*, the *audio-lingual method*, or the *direct method*, have had an impact on how foreign languages are taught today.

Recently, two general approaches to teaching foreign languages have developed: The *communicative approach*, with its principal objective of increasing *communicative competence*, and the *intercultural approach*, with a focus on developing *intercultural competence*. Although the two approaches overlap in several areas and share certain characteristics, they also differ in aspects crucial to foreign language teaching, for instance the desired outcome or the type of model speaker. In the academic world, the high number of publications on intercultural competence seems to predict the implementation of the intercultural approach, at least in theory. Concerning the German education system, the decision has already been made. *Interkulturelle Handlungsfähigkeit*¹, that is the ability to communicate and act in intercultural settings, is the prescribed goal according to most of Germany's curricula (*Rahmenlehrpläne RLP*) for the teaching of foreign languages.

This thesis will focus on intercultural competence, although a comparison to communicative competence will be made when appropriate for the line of the argument. Both morphemes are extremely popular and trendy in academic fields relating to the teaching of foreign languages. Although defining intercultural competence and the intercultural approach² will be a part of this thesis, it is not the main objective. Rather than contributing to the debate about terminology, this thesis pursues a hands-on approach and is interested in teachers' and students' attitudes concerning intercultural competence. The thesis concentrates on one of the main resources for language teaching: Textbooks. As the dominant means of instruction in foreign language classes in German schools, textbooks need to react to the recent trends in foreign language teaching and support teachers and students. Thus, the main question that will be answered in this thesis is: How suitable are textbooks for teaching intercultural competence?

¹ It should be noted here that this goal does not exclude communicative competence. In most curricula for foreign languages in Germany communicative competence is one of three competences deemed necessary to achieve *interkulturelle Handlungsfähigkeit*.

² Intercultural competence will be defined below. Research and publications focusing on the topic show a variety of terms used for similar concepts. As not to add to the confusion, the term intercultural competence will be used in this thesis. Additionally, intercultural approach will be used and is understood as the way of teaching that facilitates the development of intercultural competence. For an overview of alternative terminology refer to Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 51.

Several perspectives will be taken into consideration to answer this question. In the first part of the thesis, an overview of perspectives coming from scholars of foreign language acquisition and teaching will be given. I will elaborate on the importance of culture in the foreign language classroom and summarize definitions of intercultural competence. Three models of intercultural competence will be illustrated for the reader. Teaching implications, i.e. resources and methods for teaching intercultural competence, will be outlined. Since the intercultural approach has its share of critics, their voices will be summed up, too. Out of this part of the thesis, the reader should gain a general understanding of intercultural competence. The reader will also learn that results coming from the theoretical perspective only serve language teachers and their understanding of intercultural competence and the intercultural approach in a limited way.

The results of the theoretical part will also serve as a tool for the textbook analysis, part two of this thesis. Taking into consideration what has been summarized in theory, this part takes an analytical perspective. The textbook *Camden Town 4*³, an 8th grade English textbook, will be analyzed according to its underlying concept of teaching culture. With the help of a question catalog, *Camden Town 4* will be evaluated according to topics, resources, methods, and skills. A final evaluation of *Camden Town 4* is additionally provided. In this part, the reader should gain an impression on how suitable an English textbook is for teaching intercultural competence according to the results of a textbook analysis.

The results of the textbook analysis will then be compared to the data collected from an empirical study with teachers and students conducted in June 2011. The study was conducted to gain insight into what teachers and students think about intercultural competence and their textbook. The study also focuses on teachers' and students' preferences in teaching and learning about other cultures, i.e. their preferred topics, resources, and methods. The results of the empirical study will give the reader insight into teachers' and students' attitudes about intercultural competence, how important they find it, and how they would like to teach and learn about culture.

Thus, rather than taking part in research concerning the terminology of intercultural competence, the subject and approach of this thesis takes intercultural competence into the English classroom of a *Gymnasium* in Germany. One tool for English language teaching, the textbook *Camden Town 4*, and teachers and students are questioned about intercultural competence. Trends always need time to establish and it is necessary that, within an academic discourse, they are analyzed and evaluated according to how well they are received and what needs to be done to improve them. This thesis hopes to contribute to that. Empirical research is necessary to evaluate and improve concepts for foreign language teaching. Here, the intercultural approach of teaching foreign languages will be

³ *Camden Town 4* was chosen for the analysis because it is the textbook used by teachers and students who took part in the empirical study.

tested by those people that are directly influenced by it in their teaching and learning of languages: Teachers and students.

2. Theoretical Perspectives – Intercultural Competence in Foreign Language Teaching

2.1. Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom

Culture has always been part of foreign language teaching. In fact, only during a very short period of time after the Second World War, was it common belief shared among foreign language scholars that cultural topics should not be covered in the language classroom. However, for most of the time modern languages have been taught, if and how culture should be part of language teaching has been discussed by many theorists and many perspectives and approaches have influenced the general argument. There are two main reasons as to why the role of culture has changed often in foreign language teaching. The debate was influenced by changes within the general objectives of foreign language teaching at the respective time, which were strongly shaped by political objectives of education and language teaching. Additionally, changes in the understanding of culture and its definition had an impact on how it was taught in foreign language education.

Thus, the history of language teaching influenced what is understood by today's intercultural approach to teaching. Brusch gives a detailed overview of the different concepts of teaching culture within the foreign language classroom in Germany, referring, amongst others, to *Realienkunde*, *Kultur-* and *Wesenskunde*, *Politische Bildung*, *Landeskunde*, and *Interkulturelles Lernen*⁴. All of these concepts have had an input on the role of culture in today's language classrooms.

There are two recent approaches to the teaching of culture in German schools. The intercultural approach is the one that is prescribed by national curricula, national standards (*Bildungsstandards*), and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF)*. However, the traditional approach of *Landeskunde* is still used as well. The two concepts will be compared below. Before, however, it is necessary to provide some information on the other aspect that immensely influences how culture is taught in language classes today: The understanding of culture itself.

To define culture has always been difficult for scientists and there is still no consensus on a definition⁵. Two reasons can explain that. Firstly, culture is relevant to many scientific and academic disciplines. Therefore, many perspectives and theories can be implemented in its definition.

⁴ Cf. Brusch 2009. For A historical overview of the development of intercultural competence within foreign language teaching refer to Brusch 2009 and Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditzfurth 2004.

⁵ In 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 different definitions (cf. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 13). For a selection of some of them, and additionally more recent definition, refer to Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 14-15.

Secondly, culture is a dynamic construct, changing all the time. A definition, therefore, can only grasp its basic outlines. Thus, many definitions have been suggested, and for a long time, culture has been understood as the products of a country, such as music, architecture, literature, paintings, clothes, etc. This understanding of culture is often referred to as *high culture (Hochkultur)* or *Culture* with a capital C. In recent decades, however, the definition of culture as something static and product-oriented has been regarded as insufficient. It does not consider all members of a nation, but merely those that belong to a certain social group. Neither does it regard people's behaviors, attitudes, or values. Cultural artifacts are only those parts of culture that are obvious and observable. As a consequence, another notion of culture has been added to the definition: *culture* with a small c⁶. Hall's iceberg model of culture illustrates the two notions of culture:

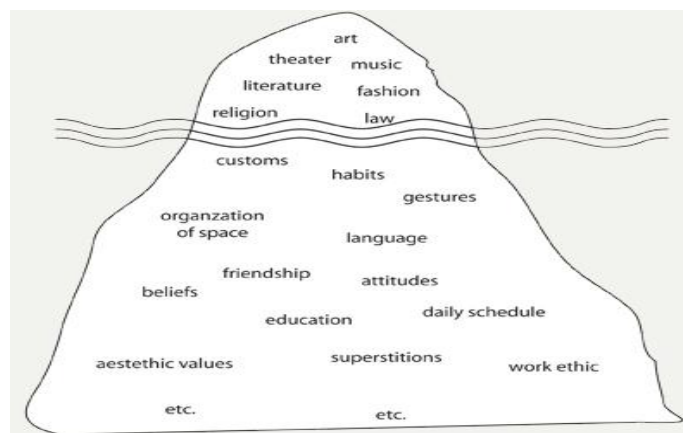


Figure 1: The Iceberg Model of Culture⁷

The metaphor of an iceberg to understand culture has been used by numerous theorists. The visible part is the one that relates to Culture with a capital C, the invisible part represents the notion of culture with a small c. An intercultural approach to foreign language teaching recognizes the relevance of both notions of culture and the relationship of the two. Just like the invisible part of an iceberg, the invisible part of culture is the foundation of cultural representations. Thus, certain values, attitudes, and beliefs of a group of people are displayed in their music, traditions, and literature. Foreign language teaching today is not satisfied with a display of a culture's visible representations, but also wants to tackle its foundation. Culture can only be explained and understood if the connection between visible and invisible is considered a unit⁸. With a

⁶ This notion of culture gave rise to the new academic field of cultural studies. Refer to Volkmann 2002, 24f. for details and its influence on foreign language teaching.

⁷ Illustration in Schadewitz 2009, 38.

⁸ Cf. Vogt 2010, 6.

concentration on the visible representations of culture only, clichés and stereotypes⁹ are reinforced. Students would only experience the otherness of a foreign culture and but not understand its motivations. Consequently, a definition of culture today considers “a whole way of life”¹⁰.

This definition has several consequences for the role of culture in the foreign language classroom. First of all, the concept of national cultures is no longer sufficient. A national approach to culture neglects the multicultural nature of societies and the culture of sub-groups within societies, such as youth culture¹¹. Consequently, topics such as race, class, age, and gender are relevant for the foreign language classroom. Secondly, if culture is the whole way of life, it cannot be considered a static concept anymore. People’s lives change and although a nation’s or group’s past always plays a role in modern life, communication with a person of the 50s will differ from communication with a person of the 21st century.

To summarize, culture today is understood as a heterogeneous, multi-layered, and dynamic construct. Spencer-Oatey acknowledges these features of culture:

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretation of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour¹².

This definition gives an impression as to the task that lies ahead for language teachers. If culture influences the way people from the target group of native speakers think, act, feel, and experience others, the same applies to students in the language classroom. Thus, they see and perceive the behavior of people through their own cultural frame of reference. Very often this perception is channeled through language. Culture is explained via language, and how it is explained is influenced by one’s cultural frame of reference¹³.

Language scholars agree on the importance of culture in language classrooms and it has become one of the main research areas in foreign language study and teaching. This too, is justified by political and societal conditions. Contact between cultures increases via direct and indirect exchange, the transfer of products, and social networks. Different cultures live together, work together, and go to school together. In brief, globalization has found its way into schools and one of

⁹ On the role of clichés and stereotypes in foreign language teaching see Hu 1993 and Weier 2002.

¹⁰ Williams cited in Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth 2004, 110.

¹¹ Cf. Corbett 2003, 19.

¹² Spencer-Oatey 2008 cited in Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 15.

¹³ For more details on the relationship between language and culture refer to Kramersch 1998.

the tasks of education, including language education, is to prepare students for this globalized world. An intercultural approach to language teaching gives one outlook on how this can be achieved.

2.2. A Contrastive Approach - *Landeskunde* versus Intercultural Competence

Just like culture, what is understood by the *intercultural approach* and its desired outcome *intercultural competence* is difficult to define. Partly, this is because several academic fields acknowledge the importance of intercultural competence, and it is not only relevant in foreign language study and teaching. Thus, perspectives and input from areas such as business and marketing, social studies, linguistics, and cultural studies have had an effect on what is understood by intercultural competence today. This illustrates the importance of intercultural competence in our world and shows that it is not only a task to be mastered in the language classroom. On the other hand, the input from several academic fields has also caused a lot of information and opinions on the concept, thus making it more difficult to define. However, I do agree with Deardorff that in “helping students acquire intercultural competence presumes that we know what the concept is”¹⁴. Language teachers who have a general understanding of what they teach will be better off achieving the desired learning outcomes. To give a short overview of the key aspects of intercultural competence, an empirical study conducted by Deardorff will be used. In 2008 questionnaires were sent out to 23 intercultural scholars¹⁵ within several fields of study. In the first part of this study, participants were asked to generate and rate definitions of intercultural competence. The top-rated definition describes intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes”¹⁶. It will be discussed below on what kind of knowledge, skills, and attitudes are implied with this definition. For the moment, however, the above cited definition will be used for a contrastive approach. Some of the key aspects of the intercultural approach will be highlighted and compared with what is often referred to as traditional *Landeskunde*¹⁷ in the German education system. The table below sums up some of the main differences:

¹⁴ Deardorff 2008, 50.

¹⁵ A list of participants is supplied by Deardorff (2008). Although Deardorff claims the sample group to be international, the majority is from the United States. There was no participant from a German University.

¹⁶ Deardorff 2008, 33. Byram, whose model of intercultural competence makes usage of the distinction of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, was also among the intercultural scholars. Byram’s model will be described on page 14.

¹⁷ It should be noted here that there is no consensus on the term *Landeskunde* either. Whereas some scholars use it interchangeably with intercultural competence (cf. Walther 2006), others understand it as one part of intercultural competence (Kiffe 1999). In most cases however, *Landeskunde* is understood as the traditional concept of teaching culture in the foreign language classroom and the predecessor of the intercultural approach. I will use the term in the third understanding unless otherwise indicated.

Table 1 – *Landeskunde* versus the Intercultural Approach

	<i>Landeskunde</i>	Intercultural Approach
What is taught	Declarative knowledge of most prominent Anglophone countries (especially UK and US)	Intercultural competence, students are able to act and react sensitively in intercultural encounters
Understanding of culture	Culture is understood as representations of a nation's cultural artifacts (Culture with capital C)	Culture is understood as a dynamic, heterogeneous, multi-layered concept
Language and culture	Taught separately	Taught together
Desired outcome	Tourist	Traveler/immigrant
How is it achieved	Study and analysis of cultural products	Through training and reflection of knowledge, skills and attitudes
Model speaker	Native speaker	Intercultural speaker

Landeskunde aims to prepare students to be tourists, to occasionally travel to Anglophone countries and spend a few weeks on vacation there. The goal of *Landeskunde* lessons, therefore, is to familiarize students with traditions and customs of the other country and to make sure they can communicate with native speakers. Communicative competence, i.e. skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, are the main focus in the lessons, spiced up with cultural content. According to the concept of *Landeskunde*, knowledge about the target culture is necessary to communicate successfully. This includes having a working knowledge of art, but also an understanding of the political and educational system, as well as history and geography of the target countries¹⁸. Since culture is only considered as declarative knowledge, the methods used are very often traditional. Thus, it is assumed that through study and analysis of cultural products students will automatically learn about the target countries' culture. Consequently, because of the focus on declarative knowledge only, language students often know more about the Culture (capital C) of the target countries than the actual inhabitants. What this approach neglects, however, is a critical phase of reflection and sensitizing¹⁹. Students may learn a lot about Culture, they may even come close to achieve near-native communicative competence, but all of this will not help them to negotiate when they are confronted with intercultural misunderstandings.

Thus, near-native communicative competence and the model of the native speaker are not enough to prepare students for successful communication with native speakers. A native speaker's

¹⁸ For an overview of traditional topics in *Landeskunde* lessons refer to Volkmann 2002 and Erdmenger 1996.

¹⁹ Cf. Mayer 2009, 92.

cultural knowledge is not limited to declarative knowledge. And even if it would be realistic that language students could acquire native speakers' communicative competence, this does not guarantee that communication is successful. Misunderstandings and critical incidents are not exclusively caused by a lack of language skills. Very often they are initiated by cultural differences²⁰. This basic assumption is the core of an intercultural approach to language teaching. Rather than focusing exclusively on communicative competence, the intercultural approach aims to develop intercultural competence. The desired outcome, thus, is no longer a tourist but a traveler or immigrant; for language classes it is most likely someone who lives in an intercultural environment and consequently often has intercultural encounters. The intercultural approach recognizes the importance of both, communicative and intercultural competence, in effective and successful communication²¹. Thus, in the intercultural approach, the socio-cultural aspects of language are emphasized, too. The focus is no longer exclusively on what is said but also on how things are said. Skills like reacting, analyzing, and "interpreting the world and knowing how to behave"²² are considered key elements for successful intercultural communication. Risager sums up the socio-cultural aspects of communication as follows and puts them in a global perspective:

We are all, as human beings, citizens of a world that is connected in so many ways. Intercultural competence is very much the competence of navigating in the world, both at the micro-level of social interaction in culturally complex settings, and at macro levels through transnational networks like diasporas and media communications²³.

The model speaker of the intercultural approach, therefore, is an intercultural speaker²⁴, i.e. someone who has the necessary language skills to communicate. And additionally to that, someone who is able to negotiate, to analyze, to interpret, and to reflect the socio-cultural aspects of intercultural communication and secure intercultural understanding. How this relates to language teaching and how it can be visualized will be explained in the following part.

2.3. Models of Intercultural Competence

In the second part of Deardorff's study several key elements of intercultural competence were rated according to their acceptance or rejection. Deardorff lists 22 items that received an 80-100% acceptance rate by intercultural experts²⁵. The amount of key elements with a high rate of

²⁰ Refer to Volkmann 2002, 11 for an example of ineffective communication caused by a lack of intercultural competence.

²¹ Cf. Porcher 2006, 192.

²² Gudykunst & Kim 1992, 13.

²³ Risager 2009, 16.

²⁴ The concept of the intercultural speaker was suggested by Kramsch and is explained on page 13.

²⁵ The only item which received a 100% acceptance rate was „understanding of other's worldview“. A full list of all items can be found in Deardorff 2008, 34.

acceptance shows that intercultural competence is a highly complex concept with several levels and perspectives to consider. Deardorff's results are useful to find agreement for a definition of intercultural competence among intercultural scholars. For teachers and for the foreign language classroom, however, the results are only of limited use. Key elements of intercultural competence need to be reconsidered for the language learner. Therefore, several models²⁶ of intercultural competence have been developed to pinpoint the key elements of the concept, to make it more accessible, and also to draw attention to what it actually means for foreign language lessons if an intercultural approach is aimed at. Three of these models will be explained briefly. Additionally to an explanation of the models they will also be evaluated according to their use for the foreign language teacher and classroom.

2.3.1. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

One of the classic models of intercultural competence is Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)* developed in 1986/1993. Observing students, trainers, and educators, Bennett found out that "individuals confront[...] cultural difference in some predictable ways as they learn[...] to become more competent intercultural communicators"²⁷. Based on practical experience²⁸ Bennett outlines six stages demonstrating how one can experience cultural difference. Bennett differentiates among denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration.

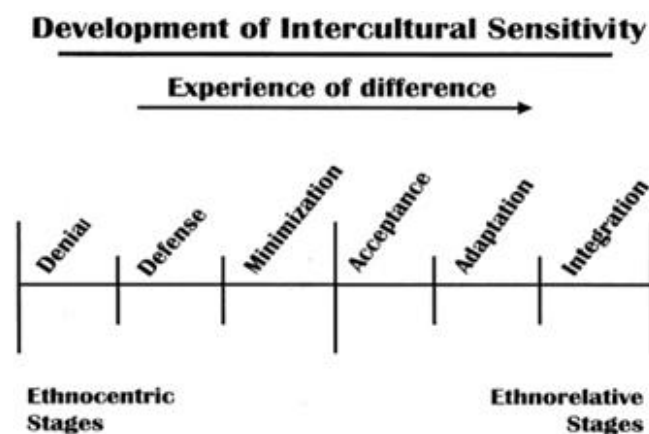


Figure 2: Bennett's DMIS²⁹

²⁶ For a detailed overview of several models, including developmental, structural, and procedural models of intercultural competence, refer to Over/ Mienert/ Grosch & Hany 2008, 68 f.

²⁷ Bennett & Hammer 1998, 1.

²⁸ Bennett developed his model based on 15 years of experience in training and teaching intercultural communication. The model was additionally used and modified in classes of intercultural communication (cf. Göbel 2007, 39).

²⁹ Bennett 1986, 182.

Bennett divides the six stages into two groups: Ethnocentric stages, in which one's own philosophy of life and culture are central to understand reality, and ethnorelative stages, in which one's own culture is understood in relation to other cultures. An increase of cultural experiences facilitates the development from one stage to another.

Bennett's model has had a major influence on study abroad courses and theories of culture shock. Yet, it was not designed for foreign language classes, and has been criticized in that it does not explain which role language plays in the development of cultural sensitivity³⁰. It is still applicable to language classes to some extent. Bennett's model highlights that intercultural competence needs time to progress. It reveals a long-term perspective on the understanding of intercultural competence and in that, is useful when it comes to the design of syllabi³¹. The model demonstrates that the development of intercultural competence is a continuous process with several stages. Concluding from that, it is necessary to determine which stage students and teachers³² have reached before lesson plans and lessons are designed. Only with this knowledge can lessons and tasks be effective when it comes to the development of intercultural competence³³.

2.3.2. Kramersch's Concept of the Third Space

Although not a model of intercultural competence, Kramersch's work concerning culture and language has influenced the intercultural approach. In her two main publications, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (1993) and *Language and Culture* (1998), Kramersch develops a metaphor for what happens when learners acquire intercultural competence. Focusing on the identity of learners, Kramersch states that it is not justified to measure success in a foreign language with native-speaker competence³⁴. Learners should not be asked to "copy and paste" language and culture, which would result in them being "linguistically and culturally schizophrenic"³⁵. Kramersch thinks that "the notion: one native speaker, one language, one national culture is [...] a fallacy"³⁶. To define THE native speaker is impossible considering the varieties of sub-cultures which influence language and culture of speakers from the target countries. Additionally to that, Kramersch comments on the multicultural identity of our society and the increasing role of language varieties when she criticizes the native speaker model.

³⁰ For a summary of the critique on Bennett's model refer to Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 160 and Hu & Byram 2009, XXI f.

³¹ Cf. Göbel 2007, 39.

³² Together with Hammer, Bennett has designed a tool to determine the stages of intercultural sensitivity (*Intercultural Development Inventory IDI*). Refer to Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009 for details.

³³ In the second part of his paper, Bennett (1986, 187f.) recommends several tasks for the intercultural classroom appropriate for each of the six stages. Refer also to Bennett (no date).

³⁴ Cf. Kramersch 1993, 181.

³⁵ Byram 1997, 11.

³⁶ Kramersch 1998, 26.

Out of those considerations, Kramersch develops a concept that she terms *looking for third places*. Rather than simply adopting the target culture, Kramersch explains that a *third place* emerges, a place that “grows in the interstices between the cultures the learners grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to”³⁷. Kramersch insists that knowledge and skills learners acquired from their native languages and cultures have an effect on how they learn about the target language and culture. Thus, the personal learner biography influences the learning of other languages and cultures. Students do not take on a new identity when they learn a new language. Rather than organizing boundaries between the native culture and the target culture, a third culture develops, an identity where students are able to access language, knowledge, and behavior from the cultures constituting their identity. Kramersch calls this person the *intercultural speaker*, a speaker who is able “to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use”³⁸.

With Kramersch’s concept of the third space teachers get a chance to understand intercultural competence from the student’s perspective and are made aware of the difficult position students are in when they learn about another culture. They have to make choices if and how they incorporate the new culture into their identity. This is not an easy task as Kramersch admits:

From the clash between the familiar meanings of the native culture and the unexpected meanings of the target culture, meanings that were taken for granted are suddenly questioned, challenged, problematized. Learners have to construct their personal meanings at the boundaries between the native speaker’s meanings and their own everyday lives.³⁹

Understanding and patience are required on the side of the language teacher. Very important implications from Kramersch’s concept come from the role of the learners’ native culture and language. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes the students already have are used for new experiences. For the language classroom, Kramersch offers a concept that is based on the multicultural world learners live in and tries to prepare them for this world⁴⁰ and therefore reacts to the zeitgeist⁴¹.

2.3.3. Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The best known model of intercultural competence is supplied by Byram (1997). It is the model that most definitions of intercultural competence are based upon today. Byram explicitly states that his model is designed to help teachers of languages understand the concept intercultural

³⁷ Kramersch 1993, 236.

³⁸ Kramersch cited in Bredella 1999, 91.

³⁹ Kramersch 1993, 238.

⁴⁰ Cf. Bredella 1999, 93.

⁴¹ Cf. Błażek 2008, 62.

competence⁴². The model also had a major influence on the definition of intercultural competence in the *CEF*, as well as in the national standards and the curricula for English in Berlin and Brandenburg. Byram's model is based on Hymes and van Ek's model of communicative competence. He starts off with a thorough analysis of the factors that influence intercultural communication, namely *attitudes*, *knowledge* and *skills*, illustrated in Figure 3:

	Skills interpret and relate (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (<i>savoirs</i>)	Education political education critical cultural awareness (<i>savoir s'engager</i>)	Attitudes relativising self valuing other (<i>savoir être</i>)
	Skills discover and/ or interact (<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i>)	

Figure 3: Factors in Intercultural Communication⁴³

According to Byram *attitudes* of

curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours [...], a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of the others with whom one is engaging⁴⁴

are necessary for successful intercultural communication. Note here that the attitudes do not necessarily need to be positive attitudes⁴⁵. Therefore, Byram sums up the attitudes with the ability to step back⁴⁶ from one's own worldview and cultural identity. Another important factor individuals bring into intercultural communication is their *knowledge*. Byram divides this knowledge into two categories. The first one is described as "knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one's own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country"⁴⁷. The second category considers procedural knowledge and is summarized as "knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual

⁴² Cf. Byram 1997, 31.

⁴³ Byram 1997, 34.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Byram (1997, 34) suggests that positive attitudes can impede understanding between cultures. Refer also to O'Dowd 2006, 27f.

⁴⁶ Cf. Byram 1997, 34.

⁴⁷ Byram 1997, 35.

and societal levels”⁴⁸. This knowledge takes into account linguistic and cultural behavior of the participants in intercultural communication. Finally, Byram comments on two *skills* that are dependent on the participants’ knowledge and attitudes, and thus have an influence on the effectiveness of intercultural communication. For one, there are *skills of interpreting and relating* understood as “the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one’s own”⁴⁹. The second set of skills, *discovering and interacting*, is described as the “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”⁵⁰. Both skills require an active engagement of the participants in intercultural communication.

Concluding from these factors, intercultural competence has an *affective domain* (attitudes), a *cognitive domain* (knowledge) and a *skills domain*. In the model, Byram additionally combines intercultural competence with communicative competence, and thus calls for a model of intercultural communicative competence in language teaching. Figure 4 shows Byram’s model:

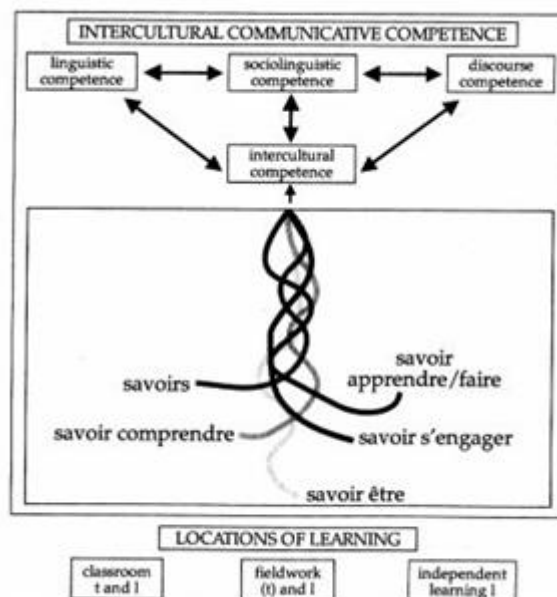


Figure 4: Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence⁵¹

The model shows that Byram defines intercultural communicative competence as the interplay of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Spencer-Oatey & Franklin 2009, 66.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Byram 1997, 73.

competence. This shows that he is not ready to completely abandon objectives and guidelines from the communicative approach of foreign language teaching but rather expands it and adds an intercultural perspective. With that, Byram also makes sure that the connection of language and culture is acknowledged. According to the model, five competences (*savoirs*) are necessary to develop intercultural competence. All five of them are strongly intertwined with communicative competence. *Savoir comprendre* and *savoir apprendre* relate best to the skills domain of intercultural competence⁵². The former correlates with what has already been described as the skills of interpreting and relating. The latter can be defined as “an ability to produce and operate an interpretative system with which to gain insight into unknown cultural meanings, beliefs and practices either in a familiar or in a new language and culture”⁵³. *Savoirs* correspond to “the knowledge of aspects of a culture, beliefs and reference points likely to be familiar to natives”⁵⁴, i.e. the cognitive domain. The affective domain is represented in *savoir être* or what Neuner describes as “an affective ability to give up ethnocentric attitudes and opinions when faced with otherness and a cognitive ability to bring about and to maintain a relation between one’s own and a foreign culture”⁵⁵. Additionally, what Byram describes as attitudes plays a role in *savoir s’engager*, i.e. “a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration of one’s own”⁵⁶.

The influence of Byram’s model has been immense. It gives a detailed outline of what intercultural competence is and what kind of skills need to be considered when teaching language according to the intercultural approach. It is useful for teachers as it breaks down a complex concept into its constituent parts. Additionally, the model is specifically designed for the language classroom, therefore considering the language learner and the desired outcomes of an intercultural approach to language teaching. It comments on the necessary skills of intercultural speakers and does not limit itself to native speaker competence. However, the model does not neglect the importance of language and makes sure to point out that linguistic competence is part of achieving intercultural competence. How exactly intercultural competence can be acquired in language classes, i.e. which resources and methods are recommended will be covered in the next part of this thesis.

2.4. Intercultural Competence in the Language Classroom – Implications for Teaching

Several of the most important international and national resources for language teachers have undergone a major modification in the last years. The *CEF* and the national standards, as well as the updated versions of Germany’s national curricula put emphasis on the development of

⁵² Cf. Błażek 2008, 54f.

⁵³ Byram cited in Błażek 2008, 57.

⁵⁴ Kelly 2001, 130.

⁵⁵ Neuner 2000, 43.

⁵⁶ Byram cited in Błażek 2008, 57.

intercultural competence in foreign language classes. Although they offer profound definitions of the concept, all documents lack information for resources and methods. The gap between the importance of intercultural competence and information on how it can be achieved is one of the main criticisms of the approach itself. The situation is described by Wesselhöft as a reign of “Narrenfreiheit bzw. didaktischer Leerraum”⁵⁷. Language teachers are overwhelmed when they are required to achieve something that curricular documents are not able to provide⁵⁸.

A look at recent publications on intercultural competence does not improve the situation much. Several scholars have published guidelines or general principles for the intercultural approach. Most of them, however, do not focus on the intercultural approach as such, but are rather lists for general principles of language teaching⁵⁹. Other works focused on specific fields of study. A predominant focus has been literature and its use for the intercultural approach⁶⁰. The main argument for the use of fictional texts is that it facilitates the understanding of others and thus helps the development of the affective domain. There is, however, no consensus on the features a fictional text should have or the types of tasks that go with the text. Other works focus on the role of stereotypes and prejudices⁶¹, games and role plays⁶², computer-based learning and e-mail projects⁶³, and direct/indirect exchanges with people from the target cultures⁶⁴. These publications show the effort and interest in the approach, as well as the importance of intercultural competence. They are very useful for a general orientation⁶⁵, but rarely offer ready-to-teach advice or material.

Additionally, several task catalogs have been published. These catalogs open up a wide range of quality from very general suggestions⁶⁶ to more learner-specific and organized. The methods provided by Haß⁶⁷ are detailed and he suggests explorative methods, research methods, analytical methods, creative methods, self-reflective methods, simulations, and interactive methods, and mentions several examples. He does not specify on the intended age group or the domain of intercultural competence that the methods promote, though. Freitag-Hild’s⁶⁸ list of tasks is impressive and summarizes the work of several scholars concerning the implementation of the

⁵⁷ Wesselhöft 2010, 73.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Cf. Brusch 2009 and Klippel & Doff 2007.

⁶⁰ Refer to Bredella 2002 and 2010, Burwitz-Melzer 2003, Hallet 2002, Schinschke 1995, or Stierstorfer 2002.

⁶¹ Refer to Hu 1993 or Weier 2002.

⁶² Refer to Walther 2006.

⁶³ Refer to Bockenheimer 2003, Donath 2003, or O’Dowd 2006.

⁶⁴ Refer to Bernhard 2002.

⁶⁵ Especially noteworthy for general ideas on the implementation of the intercultural approach in foreign language classes is Henderson 2005.

⁶⁶ Gehring 2010 suggests the categories *contextualizing*, *confronting*, *contrasting*, and *coordinating*. No sample tasks are given.

⁶⁷ Cf. Haß 2009, 39.

⁶⁸ Cf. Freitag-Hild 2010, 110f.

intercultural approach. Her focus, however, lies exclusively on tasks for literary texts. Another typology has been provided by Caspari and Schinschke⁶⁹. They put together a catalog of tasks for the three domains of intercultural competence and come up with an extensive list of tasks based on a thorough analysis of assessment tasks. However, these tasks focus on the assessment of intercultural competence and not on development and implementation.

Consequently, language teachers will find it hard to locate ready-to-teach and eligible material from the research that has been conducted so far. How well the resource used most of the time in language classes, the textbook, displays the intercultural approach will be discussed in the following chapter. But before that, a summary of the critique on the intercultural approach will be given.

2.5. Critique on the Intercultural Approach of Foreign Language Teaching

In a recent publication, Bredella claims „Interkulturelle Kompetenz ist zum unbestrittenen Erziehungs- und Bildungsziel geworden und hat im Rahmen des Fremdsprachenunterrichts die kommunikative Kompetenz als übergeordnetes Lern- und Bildungsziel abgelöst“⁷⁰. This opinion is not shared by all scholars and researchers in the field language teaching. The previous chapter has already shown that there is still work necessary to support language teachers with the implementation of the approach. Additionally, not all scholars agree upon the superiority of intercultural competence over communicative competence. Hu and Byram, for instance, pledge a dual reign of the two:

In addition to the important goal of communicative competence in foreign language learning, intercultural learning has been identified, especially since the 1980s, as one of the main objective of foreign and second language pedagogy⁷¹.

This controversy brings out of one of the main objections of the intercultural approach⁷². Some scholars fear that with an intercultural approach, the focus on teaching a language will be lost⁷³. A focus on language is necessary in every language class. The intercultural approach, however, is a direct reaction towards what language learners face in a multi-cultural world. Both are necessary to equip the learner with competences necessary to interact successfully in intercultural communication.

⁶⁹ Caspari & Schinschke 2009.

⁷⁰ Bredella 2010, 89.

⁷¹ Hu & Byram 2009, VII.

⁷² Cf. especially Edmondson & House 1998.

⁷³ Cf. Kiffe 1999, 63.

In addition, the inconsistency of terms used along with the amount of existing definitions, hinder a development of the approach itself⁷⁴. Of course, a definition of the concept as such and the formulation of teaching objectives are necessary. But the work that has been done so far has been too theoretical and too general to be useful for language teachers. Most of the empirical research focuses on one of the main objections to the approach: Assessment⁷⁵. Although I support the importance of assessment, especially in an output-, standard-, and competence-oriented teaching environment, the results provided by those studies hardly support teachers. They may show how much and what kind of intercultural competence students possess; however, they do not support teachers in training their students to actually improve and develop. Thus, more work needs to be done on the HOW (and not the WHAT) of intercultural competence.

All these points of criticism will be part of the next chapter, the textbook analysis, and the textbook *Camden Town 4* will be tested as to if and how it solves these issues.

3. Analytical Perspectives – Intercultural Competence in Textbooks

3.1. Textbooks in Language Classes

Textbooks have always been part of language teaching in German schools and in language classes in general. Mostly, this is for very practical reasons⁷⁶. Textbooks can make the work of a language teacher much easier. They help in the process of unit and lesson planning, offer a wide selection of resources and tasks, cover many topics and, in the best case, all competences prescribed by regional and national language curricula. They “embody the course design and in particular ensure a systematic presentation of the language and its structure”⁷⁷. Very often textbooks offer several forms of assessment, including preparation for national standardized tests. In an ideal case, they are designed with consideration of the language acquisition process, the learning process in general, and the current trends in language teaching.

Especially in *Sekundarstufe I*, textbooks play a dominant role in language teaching. Very often the textbook provided by one publishing company accompanies students during several years of language instruction. They get used to the layout and design of the textbook, and learn how to use it in class and when they work independently or at home. The Berlin curriculum emphasizes the role of the textbook as follows:

⁷⁴ Cf. Altmayer 2006, 45.

⁷⁵ Cf. Byram 1997, Over/ Mienert/ Grosch & Hany 2008, Hesse & Göbel 2007, and Hesse/ Göbel & Jude 2008.

⁷⁶ Maijala 2007 provides a very detailed, yet critical, summary of the advantages of textbooks in foreign language teaching.

⁷⁷ Byram 1999, 67.

Bei der Auswahl der Themen und Texte ist das Lehrwerk ein nützliches Medium, dem besonders im Anfangsunterricht eine wichtige Rolle zukommt. Es sollten möglichst Lehrwerke benutzt werden, die umfangreiches Material und unterschiedliche Medien zur gemeinsamen und individuellen Arbeit zur Verfügung stellen und alle Kompetenzbereiche berücksichtigen⁷⁸.

The influence the textbook has on language classes puts a lot of pressure on textbook authors. They have to consider several issues, such as standards, curricula, objectives, the school form, media, task forms, students, and topics when they design a new textbook. Very often, teachers do not have much input on the textbook chosen for a school. Out of economic reasons, they have to work with one series of textbooks for several years. Thus, at the very least, teachers have to put some trust in textbook authors and rely on the relevance and accuracy of the approach taken in the textbook.

Especially because textbooks provide most of the teaching material in language classes, they have been subject to debates, analyses, and studies. Textbook criticism (*Lehrwerkkritik*) and textbook analysis (*Lehrwerkforschung*) are popular fields within language studies and much work has been done in those areas. Scholars' opinions regarding teaching with textbooks are biased. One can find some supportive voices, such as Börner's, who is impressed with the variety and quality of activities in today's textbooks⁷⁹. However, a negative evaluation of textbooks is more likely encountered. Statements that claim the textbook as the main obstacle for communication in the classroom⁸⁰ are easy to find. Probably the strongest criticism today results in an apparent lack of an output-oriented, competence-based approach in textbooks. Thus, Schinschke's evaluation is devastating when she says that up to now, no satisfying competence-based textbook has been published⁸¹.

Suggestions to teach without textbooks have been made. Fery and Raddatz's⁸² publication brings together many concepts that suggest alternative resources for teaching material. Additionally, Freudenstein⁸³ outlines several approaches to language teaching without textbooks. These suggestions might offer several important aspects, in reality they are only additions to the textbook and not alternatives. According to a survey conducted by Leupold⁸⁴, out of 81 French language teachers in two federal states of Germany only one can imagine to teach without the textbook. The textbook is the main teaching device in schools, and the end of the textbook era is not in sight.

Consequently, the question is not *if* one should teach with textbooks. The question should be *how* one should teach with textbooks. Only from those results can teachers and textbook authors

⁷⁸ RLP Berlin 2006, 45.

⁷⁹ Cf. Börner 2002, 231f.

⁸⁰ Cf. Arendt 2007, 27.

⁸¹ Cf. Schinschke 2011, 12.

⁸² Cf. Fery & Raddatz 2000.

⁸³ Cf. Freudenstein 2006

⁸⁴ Cited in Freudenstein 2006.

profit. This general assumption justifies the importance of textbook analysis and textbook criticism. Work conducted in these areas has focused on several aspects, such as the development of textbooks over time, textbook design, communicative skills, grammar, vocabulary, training of pronunciation, design and variety of tasks, authentic material, illustrations, assessment, the focus on the learner, and of course the presentation of culture⁸⁵.

3.2. Culture and Intercultural Competence in Textbooks

With the rising interest of culture in foreign language teaching and the development of the intercultural approach, several scholars from a variety of countries have analyzed textbooks regarding cultural themes⁸⁶. O'Dowd sums up their results as follows:

[...] there does appear to be a great degree of consensus in the literature on the general failure of textbooks to deal adequately with the sociocultural aspects of language learning in general and the development of ICC [intercultural communicative competence] in particular.⁸⁷

Especially studies of the 1990s displayed frustration with the textbooks in use at that time. Many of these studies focused on the representation of either the target culture⁸⁸ or the native culture⁸⁹. Generally, most of the studies came to the conclusion that textbooks “were plagued with racial, gender and regional stereotyping”⁹⁰. Choices of topics and material were criticized because they favored a one-sided presentation of majority groups and cultures, and very often did not consider the multicultural reality in the target countries. Stereotyping, even if used to present a positive image of the country, was found in several textbook analyses. Additionally, controversial topics have often been avoided to facilitate the positive image of the target culture, and to avoid any offence of possible buyers⁹¹. The acronym PARSNIP summarizes the topics that were often not mentioned: Politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms and pork. Consequently, many textbooks have been criticized for a shallow and insignificant representation of the target culture⁹². Another focus within the analysis of cultural representations was the depiction of the native culture in comparison with the target culture. The positive image of the target culture was often in contrast to a neglect of cross-

⁸⁵ For an overview and articles on all of these aspects refer to Bausch/ Christ/ Königs & Krumm 1999 or Kast & Neuner 2000.

⁸⁶ For an overview of the work by German scholars up to 1996 refer to Abendroth-Timmer 1998, 18f.

⁸⁷ O'Dowd 2006, 46-47.

⁸⁸ Cf. Theis 1991, Friz 1992.

⁸⁹ Cf. Clarke & Clarke cited in O'Dowd or Risager cited in O'Dowd 2006.

⁹⁰ O'Dowd 2006, 47.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Cf. Gray cited in O'Dowd 2006, 47.

cultural content, or the degradation of the native culture⁹³. Thus, while the target culture was often represented in an idealized way, the native culture “came out looking badly from the comparison”⁹⁴.

More recent studies see an improvement towards the representation of culture, fostering intercultural understanding and the development of intercultural competences. Focusing the study on the analysis of English textbooks mostly used by students in Italy, Vettorel concludes that

some innovative elements for a more enlarged representation of culture in EFL [English as a foreign language] materials are being made. There seems to be an opening up towards a wider view, driving away from a totally NS[native speaker]-reference, target culture perspective. Such representations of culture set themselves within the perspective of EFL as a means of international and intercultural communication [...].⁹⁵

Ilett⁹⁶ comes to a similar conclusion in an analysis of German textbooks for North American students. The focus on this study was the depiction of racial and ethnic diversity. Thus Ilett wanted to find out if today’s textbooks present a more accurate picture of the target culture. He concludes his analysis with the evaluation that “all [textbooks] include representation of diversity”⁹⁷.

Other popular foci for textbook analyses and culture have taken the student more into consideration. In Gehring’s⁹⁸ analysis of 19 English textbooks for 7th grade students in Germany, the focus is on the inclusion of students’ interests and living conditions. Gehring’s results show that the analyzed textbooks often use very traditional, sometimes outdated concepts for themes such as family, parents, world of work, living, or school that do not display students’ reality. A very detailed analysis of the intercultural approach in French textbooks for elementary schools has been provided by Caspari⁹⁹. Risager focuses on the function of the learner that the textbook promotes and criticizes that older textbooks reduce learners to the role of “tourist, visitor and customer”¹⁰⁰.

Probably one of the most profound and detailed analyses for English textbooks in Germany regarding the intercultural approach has been provided by Kiffe¹⁰¹. With a set of 30 analysis questions Kiffe determines the role of culture and the intercultural approach in four textbooks for secondary schools. Based on this catalog of criteria, Kiffe sums up that the intercultural approach is realized in all four textbooks¹⁰². However, no textbook meets all criteria set up by Kiffe and they all have weaknesses. Most of the textbooks Kiffe analyzed are no longer used in German schools since

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ O’Dowd 2006, 47.

⁹⁵ Vettorel 2010, 178.

⁹⁶ Cf. Ilett 2009.

⁹⁷ Ilett 2009, 58.

⁹⁸ Cf. Gehring 1996.

⁹⁹ Cf. Caspari 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Risager cited in O’Dowd 2006, 47.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Kiffe 1999.

¹⁰² Cf. Kiffe 1999, 248.

new editions have been published. However, parts of Kiffe's question catalog will be used to analyze *Camden Town 4*.

3.3. Analysis of Camden Town 4

3.3.1. Description of the Textbook

The textbook series *Camden Town* was published in 2007¹⁰³ by *Diesterweg* and is designed for *Gymnasien*¹⁰⁴ in all federal states of Germany, except Bavaria. Textbooks and additional material are available for grades five to ten. In their description of the textbooks series, *Diesterweg* claims communicative competence as their topmost target¹⁰⁵. According to their didactic concept (authentic – student-oriented – communicative¹⁰⁶), authentic communicative situations which interest the students are the focus¹⁰⁷. Thus, the *Camden Town* series promotes a task-based approach, focuses on learner autonomy and lifelong learning. One section of the didactic manual gives information about intercultural competence:

Die Schüler erfahren, wie sich das Leben im Ausland und in multikulturellen Gesellschaften abspielt. Indem sie das Eigene dem Fremden gegenüberstellen, erkennen sie sich selbst als Teil einer interkulturellen Gemeinschaft. So entwickeln sie Respekt, Toleranz und die Fähigkeit, sich über kulturelle Distanzen hinweg erfolgreich zu verständigen¹⁰⁸.

The focus of this analysis will be *Camden Town 4*, the textbook for 8th grade¹⁰⁹. Regarding culture this textbook concentrates on themes about the United States of America. *Camden Town 4* consists of several parts, illustrated in the figure below:

¹⁰³ Its predecessor, a textbook series with the same name, was published in 1999.

¹⁰⁴ *Diesterweg* also provides the textbook series *Camden Market for Realschulen* and *Notting Hill Gate for Gesamtschulen*.

¹⁰⁵ *Diesterweg* (no date a).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Diesterweg* (no date b).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ The student's edition will be used for the analysis.

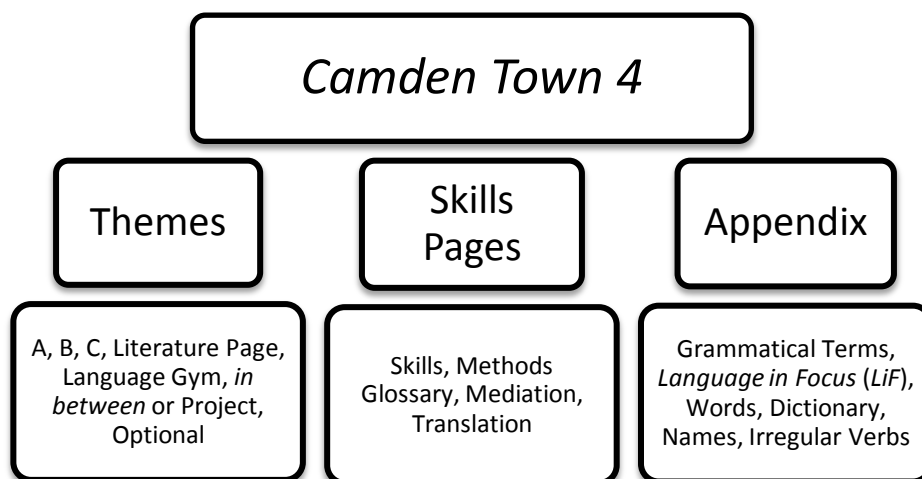


Figure 5: Structure of *Camden Town 4*

The main part, the theme section, offers six themes with a variety of topics. Each theme is made out of several parts. There are usually three sections (A, B, C) with texts, material, and various tasks for skills, grammar, and language. Every theme has a literature page with either an excerpt of a novel or a short literary text, including song lyrics. The *Language Gym* is a summary of the new knowledge learned in the themes. Several tasks focusing on grammar, words, and language skills can be found. It also gives a summary of what students should have learned in the theme. A theme includes either a project or a double page of *in between*, *Camden Town's* magazine, which offers several short texts related to the theme. Every theme ends with an optional section with further information on the theme. After the six themes students can find the *skill pages*. These pages summarize tips and procedures for skills such as listening, viewing, speaking, presenting, writing, reading, and working with dictionaries. The adjacent *method glossary* explains four methods that are used frequently in *Camden Town 4*. A lot of emphasis is put on mediation and translation; four pages are dedicated to these skills in the skills section. The *appendix* offers several other tools for the students' English lessons and home usage. A list of grammatical terms and the section *LiF Language in Focus* train and explain the relevant grammar topics of the textbook. The *word section* is organized according to the themes. They always start with new important phrases learned in the theme and a word field with the new vocabulary. Following is an English-German word list organized according to the order the words appear in the theme. Sample sentences as well as pictures are offered to explain new words and phrases. An English-German and German-English dictionary is included in *Camden Town 4*. The textbook's final pages include a list of names for people and places and a list of irregular verbs.

3.3.2. Procedure of Analysis

As to my knowledge, no analysis of the *Camden Town* series has been published so far. Several analyses focusing on other textbooks, as well as guides on textbook analyses have been provided, though. These were used to design my question catalog. I decided for a set of closed-ended and open-ended questions, rather than an analysis of the themes and topics covered in *Camden Town 4*. This approach should cover most aspects regarding the teaching of intercultural competence, such as media and activities. In the design of the question catalog, I have considered issues raised previously in chapter two, such as the two notions of culture, the importance of students' native culture, and aspects of the three models of intercultural competence. Work done by Risager (1991), as well as the question catalogs by Müller (1994), Kiffe (1999), Burwitz-Melzer (2003), and Freitag-Hild (2010) have been used to design this set of questions. The following fifteen questions will be considered in the evaluation of *Camden Town 4*:

1. Which cultural topics and themes are covered? Are many aspects of life in the target country acknowledged? Are they relevant and interesting for students?
2. Is there a great variety of social status, gender, age, culture, and race? Are people represented in a stereotypical manner or are they presented as individuals?
3. Does the textbook include positive and negative aspects of the target culture?
4. Is the students' native/local culture taken into account and in which manner?
5. Which types of activities are offered to learn about US-American culture?
6. Do tasks with a cultural component trigger the students' active engagement? Do they encourage dialog and interaction?¹¹⁰
7. Are there tasks that call for intercultural communication or tasks that involve intercultural communicative misunderstandings?¹¹¹
8. Are culture and language connected?
9. Are learners invited to challenge their attitudes or negotiate meaning?
10. Are learners asked to reflect about their own culture and relate it to the target culture?
11. What is the social function of the learner in the textbook?¹¹²
12. Are there suggestions for intercultural learning strategies?¹¹³
13. Which parts of the textbook encourage the development of intercultural competence?
14. Are all areas of intercultural competence, i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes, represented in the textbook?
15. Are there any forms of assessment for intercultural competence?

¹¹⁰ Müller 1994.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Risager in O'Dowd 2006, 47.

¹¹³ Burwitz-Melzer 2003, 114-115.

The first set of questions (questions 1 to 4) focuses on the representation of culture in the textbook. It asks with which topics and in which manner the textbook covers US-American culture. Question 4 considers the importance of the students' native culture and analyzes if and how it is included in *Camden Town 4*. Especially relevant for a comparison with the results from the empirical study are questions 1 and 4 since they are also a feature of the questionnaire. The next set of questions, question 5 to 10, focuses on the learner and the types of tasks covered in the textbook. I am especially interested in the tasks the textbook uses to train intercultural competence and want to find out if communicative competence and intercultural competence are connected in some manner (question 8). The last set of questions (questions 11 to 15) tries to consider the textbook as a whole.

The analysis of textbooks with a set of fixed questions is problematic and does not do the textbook justice, in general¹¹⁴. I am aware that no textbook will meet all the criteria set up in the catalog. Furthermore, a fixed set of questions cannot be completely objective. There are several questions I do not ask that might lead to a different evaluation of the textbook. Not all questions have the same merit and for some readers, results of a certain question might influence the general evaluation of the textbook. This also applies to me since some results of the analysis of *Camden Town 4* will be compared to the data collected in the empirical study. Most of the questions asked only consider one aspect of intercultural competence. Textbooks however, are complex units that ideally should be considered as a whole. I try to do that in the last set of questions. However, even these questions only analyze *Camden Town 4* considering intercultural competence. The treatment of grammar, vocabulary, or the training of language skills is not looked at in detail considering the topic and scope of this thesis. The textbook analysis can also not give information on how the textbook is actually used in the classroom. Consequently, this analysis can only give an overview of some aspects of intercultural competence in *Camden Town 4*. Its main function is to give an impression of the textbook as a resource for teaching intercultural competence and to assist the data analysis in chapter 4.

3.3.3. Analysis

The analysis questions will be answered in the order that they are listed. All parts of *Camden Town 4* outlined in Figure 5 will be considered in the analysis, some questions however will focus on the themes only. A summary of the analysis and final evaluation of *Camden Town 4* will be given below.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Kast & Neuner 1994, 100f.

1. Which cultural topics and themes are covered? Are many aspects of life in the target country acknowledged? Are they relevant and interesting for students?

Camden Town 4 offers a great variety of cultural topics and acknowledges both high culture and daily culture. Theme 1 functions as an introductory theme to the United States. Topics include summer camps, small town life, but also underage driving and arguments with parents. Theme 2 covers high school life in *Lake Park High School*, a school south of Chicago. This theme covers topics such as rules at high school, and homecoming week, and introduces the city of Chicago. A more historic approach is taken in theme 3, 5, and 6. All three focus on the history of the United States, starting off with the settlement, the War of Independence, and the Oregon Trail. Issues of Native Americans and their culture are also treated in this theme. Theme 5 then focuses on the New York City, its history and the history of immigration in general. The last theme regards immigration from another perspective; issues of Latin Americans are highlighted here with a special focus on their influence on US-American culture and perspectives on immigration in general. Theme 4 seems to stick out since it covers natural disasters, especially tornadoes in the Midwest, and connects it with movies and movie reviews.

The regional and historical scope of the themes is impressive and students get a chance to learn about many areas of the United States. Especially theme 1 and 2 cover topics that students should find easy to relate to, such as school life and life in a small town. Theme 6, with its focus on Latin American teenagers also has several texts and other material taking the perspective of people of the students' age. The students' interest in theme 3, 4, and 5 is mostly established through the way media is used to present the topics. Several forms of media are used to treat cultural topics such as movies, movie reviews, cartoons, stories, TV shows, talk shows, websites, blogs, newspaper articles, songs, and excerpts from poetry slams.

Thus, *Camden Town 4* finds a good balance in the visible and invisible part of culture. Even though high culture like history, geography, and sights are featured in the textbook, daily life and life of common people is also an issue. This is probably best illustrated with the choice of literary texts in *Camden Town 4*. There are no pieces of classic American literature in the textbook but rather stories and excerpts of novels or movie scripts that directly relate to the topic of the theme¹¹⁵. Book recommendations then, usually to be found in the *in between* magazine, often feature young adult literature or novels that focus on a specific aspect of US-American culture, for instance the novel *The Warriors*, by Joseph Bruchac or Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*. In sum, the themes in *Camden Town 4* offer a good basis for the intercultural approach.

¹¹⁵ Such as an excerpt of the script for *Independence Day* or the song *Small Town Big Time* by Chris Young.

2. Is there a great variety of social status, gender, age, culture, and race? Are people represented in a stereotypical manner or are they presented as individuals?

The representative people in *Camden Town 4* are not as diverse as the topics. Several cultures are featured, and the textbook makes sure to depict people with various cultural and racial backgrounds in photographs and pictures. However a variety across age and social status is not given. Especially considering the target group of the textbook, students aged 13 to 15, this seems understandable. The publishers probably wanted to connect to the target group, thus basing most of the textbook's characters on teenagers. However, generation conflicts are a daily issue in the life of teenagers, thus the older generation should have been considered, too. If conflicts between younger and older people arise in the textbook, it is usually among parents and children. The perspective on cultural topics from people older than the characters' parents is not taken into account. Most families depicted are middle or upper class families. In fact, the only family that seems to have financial struggles has a Latino background¹¹⁶. The families themselves usually give a very traditional picture, too. No single parents are to be found in *Camden Town 4* and the stereotypical family of father, mother, and one or two children is supported visually and during the texts featured. Gender issues are not part of *Camden Town 4* at all. Stereotyping itself, its effect and how students can cope with it, is not discussed in *Camden Town 4*.

3. Does the textbook include positive and negative aspects of the target culture?

The aspects of culture chosen in *Camden Town 4* are not all positive aspects. In general, the target culture is not depicted as superior to the students' culture. Several problematic issues are covered, such as life in a small town, problems in big cities, treatment of Native Americans during the settlement and their living conditions today, the attacks on the World Trade Center, the history of African Americans, as well as immigration in general and the issues and problems it raises. Only sometimes are several perspectives on one of these issues offered. Most of the time, critical aspects of US-American culture are looked at from a one-sided view, usually the one of a fictional character. Very often students are supposed to research themselves, and thus are confronted with a wider variety of material and media. The perspective of a close-minded person can be found in an article about immigrants to the United States¹¹⁷. Several other critical topics that students are familiar with from the media, such as religion, racism, alcohol, or patriotism, are not discussed in *Camden Town 4*.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Camden Town 4* 2008, 108.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Camden Town 4* 2008, 109.

4. Is the students' native/local culture taken into account and in which manner?

As a topic, the students' native/local culture is not taken into account in *Camden Town 4*. The influence of German culture on the United States' language and culture, the history of German settlers, relationship between the two countries, or the role of Germany for people in the United States today are not considered. In some tasks, which will be analyzed below, students are asked to present certain aspects of their culture and compare them with US-American culture. Therefore, the students' native and local culture is only taken into account from their own perspective, not from an US-American perspective.

5. Which types of activities are offered to learn about US-American culture?

The range of activities that cope with culture is quite impressive in *Camden Town 4*. Brainstorming and diagrams are used to activate ideas about cultural topics. Very often students discover or research topics on their own and are supposed to present them in class. Several projects, especially focusing on historic events, are offered in *Camden Town 4*. Other activities ask students to finish or rewrite poems, stories, or songs, thus facilitating a change in perspective. This is also one of the objectives in tasks such as the *hot seat*¹¹⁸, or when students are asked to write short text from the perspective of one or more characters, for example dialogs, diary entries, or articles titled "A day in the life of ...".

6. Do tasks with a cultural component trigger the students' active engagement? Do they encourage dialog and interaction?

Most tasks that focus on culture trigger the students' active involvement. They require the students to use productive skills such as writing or speaking and often involve partner or group work. Frequently, tasks that focus on cultural topics involve contrast with the students' own culture, collection and exchange of ideas and finally a comparison and discussion of these. One example for such a task can be found in theme 2¹¹⁹. After students read and learn about homecoming week at *Lake Park High School* they are asked to discuss in buzz groups if homecoming would be popular at their school. The students present their results in a whole class discussion. Thus, tasks in *Camden Town 4* encourage dialog and interaction among the students. There are no tasks, however, that call for intercultural dialog and interaction, i.e. dialog and interactions among Germans and US-Americans.

¹¹⁸ A student sits on the *hot seat* and answers questions from the point of view of another person or a fictional character. Cf. *Camden Town 4* 2008, 134.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *Camden Town 4* 2008, 35.

7. Are there tasks that call for intercultural communication or tasks that involve intercultural communicative misunderstandings?

There are no tasks that involve intercultural communicative misunderstandings between Germans and US-Americans in *Camden Town 4*. Some tasks involve intercultural communication but not between target and native culture. Especially the themes focusing on minority groups in the US feature some tasks where students need to take over the perspective of either a “white American” or an “American immigrant”. Tasks based on intercultural communication between US-Americans and Germans are not included in *Camden Town 4*.

8. Are culture and language connected?

Only in some tasks are cultural learning and language learning, i.e. how language can help to master intercultural situations, connected. Mostly, these tasks come close to the cultural info boxes that can sometimes be found in language textbooks. Especially the *in between* magazine features some articles on culture and language such as an analysis of the question “What’s up?”¹²⁰ in US-American small talk, a license plate quiz¹²¹, or a quiz about the origin of US place names¹²². Exercises focusing on spelling and pronunciation differences in British and American English can be found repeatedly.

9. Are learners invited to challenge their attitudes or negotiate meaning?

In many tasks learners are asked to come together in discussion groups and discuss their opinions and attitudes towards a certain topic. The impression specific topics have on students are reflected in several activities, especially in theme 1 and 2, where small town life and high school are the focus. There, students are asked to make decisions if they would like to pursue a certain way of living and are usually asked to give reasons for their decision. Very often, open questions are put to the test in which students must decide if certain aspects of US-American culture, for example school rules or homecoming week, could be applied to German culture. Students are also asked to give reasons and reflect why some US-American customs are integrated in German culture and why some are not.

10. Are learners asked to reflect about their own culture and relate it to the target culture?

When some tasks require learners to reflect on their attitudes and opinions concerning certain topics, one part of the task often considers the learners’ native culture. Students are sensitized on issues in their native culture when they are asked to compare how or if certain aspects or topics relate to their own culture. One task asks students to present their living area to a pen pal or an

¹²⁰ *Camden Town 4* 2008, 26.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 66.

exchange student in a short piece of writing. Students do not only need to reflect on their own culture but also need to decide which aspects they want to present and in which manner. Other tasks focus more on contrasting native and target culture. Very often, tasks require students to find out if there is something similar to an aspect of the target culture in their native culture (for example the 4-H club) or how certain aspects differ in the native culture of the students (for example life in a small town or an urban area). For some themes, *Camden Town 4* chooses a more personal approach, for instance asking the students to find out something about their family history.

11. What is the social function of the learner in the textbook?

Predominantly, students are treated as language learners in *Camden Town 4*, probably due to the fact that the textbook emphasizes communicative competence. Only in one task do students step into the role of a German exchange student. Other tasks require learners to take on the social function of a mediator or an ambassador of their native language. The skills pages on mediation require learners to help native German or native English speakers to communicate.

12. Are there suggestions for intercultural learning strategies?

Camden Town 4 offers no intercultural learning strategies. Students get no advice on how they can master intercultural communicative situations or misunderstandings. The textbook does however put a strong emphasis on projects and presentations and thus facilitates the development of research strategies. This may not be useful to students in an immediate intercultural situation; it can, however, influence the development of intercultural competence in hindsight.

13. Which parts of the textbook encourage the development of intercultural competence?

Intercultural competence is considered in the main parts of *Camden Town 4*, namely the six themes already introduced. It does not play a role in the skills pages, the grammar section, the word lists, or the vocabulary section.

14. Are all areas of intercultural competence, i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes, represented in the textbook?

Taking into account Byram's model of intercultural competence, particularly knowledge and attitudes are represented in *Camden Town 4*. Students learn a lot about the United States and its culture. This includes more traditional topics such as geography and history, but also daily routines and topics relating to the way of living such. *Camden Town 4* does not only present knowledge, but makes sure that students reflect on what they learn. In several tasks they are required to take on the perspective of others, for example with the method *hot seat*, thus developing empathy and understanding. Via comparison and contrast with their native culture, students also challenge and develop how feelings

towards German culture. Skills, however, are hardly represented in *Camden Town 4*. Although the textbook gives a variety of tasks for the training and development of the four communicative skills, intercultural skills are neglected.

15. Are there any forms of assessment for intercultural competence?

There are no tests, activities, or other suggestions for assessment of intercultural competence in *Camden Town 4*.

3.4. Final Evaluation

The analysis of *Camden Town 4* has shown that the textbook has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to the treatment of intercultural competence. A positive surprise was the great variety of themes. They cover many aspects of culture, including day-to-day culture that will probably be interesting for younger learners of a foreign language. This is reinforced by the scope of material and media used in the textbook, ranging from traditional forms such as maps and timelines to media that students use daily, such as the Internet, songs, or blogs.

Less satisfying are the offered tasks for the development of intercultural competence in *Camden Town 4*. Students hardly get the chance to encounter intercultural communication and never practice how they would/can react when intercultural misunderstandings or disagreements arise. The reason for this is probably *Camden Town's* emphasis on communicative competence. Thus, although knowledge is presented and reflected, and attitudes are shared and reconsidered in some tasks, hands-on skills necessary for a successful intercultural speaker are not conveyed. Consequently, students are not offered any form of assessment of their intercultural competence and cannot estimate which level of intercultural competence they have achieved and in which areas they can improve.

In sum, *Camden Town 4* offers a great resource for topics and material to teach intercultural competence. The tasks which facilitate how students acquire this competence are hardly included in the textbook though. Teachers would have to design new tasks or add to the tasks of the textbook.

I have already commented on the subjective nature of question catalogs for textbook analyses. In the next part of the thesis, therefore, I will compare my findings with the data collected from students and teachers who use *Camden Town 4* in class.

4. Empirical Perspectives – Teachers’ and Students’ Attitudes on Intercultural Competence and Camden Town 4

The following study tries to add an empirical perspective to the previous chapters and combines two popular research areas in foreign language research: Intercultural competence and textbook analyses¹²³. Thus, it focuses on one of the main interests and objectives of language teaching in the 21st century, but also considers the most used resource in German schools. Additionally, the study considers the two main consumers of the intercultural approach to teaching languages, and of language textbooks: Teachers and students. The main research question is if and how well *Camden Town 4* supports teachers and students in teaching and learning intercultural competence. Questionnaires were designed for teachers and students and data was collected concerning the understanding and importance of intercultural competence in language classes, the preferred topics, resources, and methods of teachers and students to learn about culture, and the evaluation of *Camden Town 4* regarding intercultural competence. The collected data will be presented and analyzed below.

The study took place with teachers and students of the *Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium in Königs Wusterhausen* in June 2011. The school was chosen because of a familiarity with the school’s English curriculum, the textbook in use, the teaching philosophy, and some of the English teachers and students¹²⁴.

4.1. Description of Sample Group

4.1.1. Students

25 students of 8th grade took part in the study. The participating grade was chosen for several reasons. An 8th grade or higher would guarantee that students know each other and are familiar with the school, the textbook, and the teaching methods of their English teacher. Additionally, an 8th grade was chosen because the cultural focus in this grade is the United States. This is a country students already know a lot about from the media, but also a country that is often connected with prejudices and stereotypes. The specific 8th grade was chosen because the students were familiar with the initiator of the study. I already had the chance to teach the students in fall 2009 during my internship at the school. I was thus not a complete stranger and it was less awkward for the students to participate. Secondly, the English teacher of the class was my mentor during the internship. I am

¹²³ Noteworthy similar studies have been conducted by Göbel 2007, the European Commission 2007 (*LACE* study), and Gherdan 2005. However, these studies focus only on teachers’ and students’ attitudes and intercultural competence, and not on language textbooks.

¹²⁴ I took part in an internship at *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium* in fall 2009.

familiar with this teacher's methods which was helpful in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

Two students were absent on the day the study took place, consequently 25 students filled out the questionnaires. Of the students present at that day, 15 are female (60%) and 10 male (40%). The students have known each other since they started at *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium* in 2009. The majority of students started to learn English in first, second, third, or fourth grade (64 %), although almost a third of the students had experiences in kindergarten. Only one student has started to learn English in grade five or later. One student is a Hungarian native speaker. About half of the students have travelled to Anglophone countries, mostly to the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the United States. Although many students have friends or relatives who live in countries other than Germany, contact with them is relatively rare.

4.1.2. Teachers

Four teachers took part in the study. Three of the participating teachers are female, one is male¹²⁵. They all have taught English for more than six years, and 75% of the participating teachers even have teaching experience for more than 16 years. Additional to English, all participants teach German at *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium*. The average age of the teachers is 47, the youngest being 41 years old and the oldest participant 53. All teachers have taught at the school for seven years or longer and thus are familiar with the school's curriculum and teaching philosophy, as well as the textbook in use. 75 % of the participating teachers have spent time in the United States. All participating teachers have stayed in an Anglophone country either for vacation or for reasons related to their study and degree program. In between 2010 and 2011, all participating teachers have travelled to either the United Kingdom or the United States.

4.2. Research Instrument and Procedure of Study

Two different questionnaires, one for the students (S-Questionnaire) and one for the teachers (T-Questionnaire) were designed and used as the major research instrument. Since research and previous studies focused on either intercultural competence or textbooks, but not both combined, no questionnaire could be used as a model for design. Guidelines and advice for questionnaire design covered in the Master's thesis colloquium as well as the previous research on intercultural competence and the analysis of *Camden Town 4* were the major resources for the construction of the questionnaires used.

¹²⁵ There are only two male English teachers at *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium*.

The two questionnaires differ because of the target group they were designed for. They overlap in several questions though, to make a comparison of teachers' and students' perspectives easier for the analysis of the data. Both questionnaires were revised and tested three times. A first version of both questionnaires was discussed and evaluated in the Master's thesis colloquium. The changes that were motivated by this session focused on the rephrasing and simplifying of questions, the usage of terms and phrases that would be appropriate for the sample group, especially the students, and changes in format and spelling. Additionally, coherence and cohesion and the order of questions were modified. In a second round of revision the T-Questionnaire was evaluated by 15 students of English in a Master's of Education program, and the S-Questionnaire was given to three 8th grade students (2 male, 1 female) from schools unrelated to the *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium*. This provided feedback from people who resemble the target groups. Consequently, the T-Questionnaire was changed to a gender-neutral version. The questions were reformulated as to avoid the feeling of a test situation for the teachers. For the S-Questionnaires, several response options were suggested and added. The last round of revision was carried out with people unrelated to the field of school or English language teaching, in order to obtain neutral, or at least unbiased, feedback. This concluded in some changes in the format and improvements in consistency. The final versions of S- and T-Questionnaires are described below¹²⁶.

The S-Questionnaire consists of 24 questions on 8 pages. The questions fulfill several analysis purposes. Questions 1 to 16 try to collect data about the students' background in language learning, as well as their interest in languages and cultures. The following questions focus on the main purpose of the study and can be split into two groups. Question 17 asks the students to rate the importance of intercultural competence in English lessons. Students have six response items and rate them according to their importance. The item "writing, speaking, reading, understanding" was chosen to represent a communicative approach to learning languages. The item "to get to know country and people" represents the intercultural approach. This is in contrast with "politics, history, and geography" which stands for a more traditional *Landeskunde* approach to teaching culture¹²⁷. Questions 18 to 24¹²⁸ focus on topics, resources, and methods most used in the students' English lessons and most preferred by the students. Two ways were chosen to gather data for a reply to the research questions: For one, students were directly asked to evaluate *Camden Town 4* regarding what they learn about culture in the textbook. Bearing in mind that the evaluation of textbooks is a

¹²⁶ S- and T-Questionnaires can be found in the appendix.

¹²⁷ Interestingly, the two items "To get to know country and people" and "politics, history, and geography" already caused debate among the 15 university students who evaluated the questionnaires. One student suggested that the two items ask the same thing. This caused critical responses from other students who reasoned that to know a country does not necessarily mean to know about its political system, history, and geography.

¹²⁸ Question 21 does not fit into that analysis category. Its function is to relax and motivate students.

challenging task and considering that most students will only give a spontaneous answer, another format was chosen to gather data for an empirical evaluation of *Camden Town 4*. In several questions students are asked to state which topics, resources, and methods they prefer and find most suitable to learn about culture. The format of these questions varies from closed-ended to open-ended questions, thus students choose from response options¹²⁹ but can also add their own suggestions. The results from these questions will be compared with what has been found out in the analysis of *Camden Town 4*. Finally, students are asked to rate if their preferred resources and methods are offered sufficiently in *Camden Town 4*.

The T-Questionnaire differs in design and questions asked. It is 3 pages long and consists of 13, mostly open-ended questions. The question format was chosen due to the smaller sample group of teachers and because of the conditions¹³⁰ in which the teachers answered the questionnaires. Just as in the S-Questionnaires, some questions are used to gather data about the personal and professional background of the teachers. The interest here was particularly teaching experience and experiences in Anglophone countries. Similarly to the students, teachers are asked to evaluate *Camden Town 4* in two ways. In question 10, which is identical to question 18 on the S-Questionnaires, teachers rate *Camden Town 4* directly. Additionally to that, questions 8 and 10 give the teachers the chance to name their favorite topics, resources, and methods for teaching US-American culture and for teaching culture in general. This will also serve as a data background to be compared to the results from the previous analysis of *Camden Town 4*. Another set of questions, not featured in the S-Questionnaires, focuses on the teachers' understanding of intercultural competence (question 9 and 12). Not only are they asked to rate the importance of intercultural competence in language classes¹³¹, they also give a personal definition of intercultural competence and compare it to *Landeskunde*. In the data analysis this will help to summarize how teachers understand intercultural competence and add their perspective to the concept.

Questionnaires were handed out to all teachers of the English faculty¹³². A cover sheet¹³³ was added to the questionnaire to give detailed advice on how to answer the questionnaire and to avoid any misunderstandings. Questionnaires could be filled out at home or at the school. The teachers had approximately ten days to submit the questionnaires. The deadline was extended three days when the return was not as high as expected. A reminder e-mail was sent to all teachers. The final return was 50%.

¹²⁹ The response options suggest topics, resources, and methods for both, a traditional approach to teaching culture and an intercultural approach.

¹³⁰ How the actual survey took place is described below.

¹³¹ Covered in question 7, identical to question 17 in the S-Questionnaire.

¹³² Eight teachers in total.

¹³³ The cover sheet for teachers can be found in the appendix.

Data from the student questionnaires was collected in a different manner. Students were given the questionnaires directly in one of their lessons in June 2011. They were previously informed of the study by their class teacher and their English teacher. Questionnaires were handed out to all students at the same time. A cover sheet¹³⁴ was included and students were asked to read it before answering the questionnaires. After reading the instructions students got the chance to ask questions in case anything was unclear. No questions were asked and the students started to fill out the questionnaires. Two items of the questionnaire caused irritation among two students and these students received individual instruction. One student had trouble with question 2 because he/she started with English lessons in kindergarten but then took a break and picked it up again in grade 5. The student was told to tick the option that would give information about when he/she started to have instruction in English. Another student was confused with question 8. For this student, the term “englischsprachiges Ausland”¹³⁵ needed to be clarified. Students needed between 15 to 25 minutes to fill out the questionnaire. Students who submitted the questionnaire received a worksheet from the class teacher to avoid distraction of other students. After 25 minutes, all students had submitted their questionnaires and the survey was over. 25 students were present on the day of the survey; the return was 100%.

4.3. Presentation of Results

The results presented below will be used to answer the research question. Not all of the data collected will be presented since the amount of data surpasses the scope of this thesis¹³⁶. The results will be presented according to the following three sub-questions:

- 1. What is intercultural competence and how important is it in language lessons?*
- 2. What are the preferred topics, resources, and methods to teach and learn about other cultures for teachers and students?*
- 3. How is Camden Town 4 evaluated regarding intercultural competence?*

In this section, each question will be answered independently. A final discussion of the major research question, regarding all sub-questions and teachers’ and students’ perspectives, will be provided below.

¹³⁴ The cover sheet for students can be found in the appendix.

¹³⁵ This was no problem for other students since they only named Anglophone countries.

¹³⁶ A summary of the data collected with T- and S-Questionnaires can be found in the appendix.

1. What is intercultural competence and how important is it in language lessons?

All teachers gave a personal definition of intercultural competence. The definitions overlap in several ways. All teachers use the term “understanding differences” as a key phrase. 75% of the teachers included the importance and comparison of one’s own culture in their definition. Two teachers included an active skill in their definition, namely to engage in cultural particularities and to engage in different customs. The definitions also include components of the affective domain described on page 15; teachers also use terms such as diversity, tolerance, curiosity, and mentality.

When it comes to a comparison of intercultural competence with *Landeskunde*, one teacher claims that there is no difference between the two. Another one does not specifically state a difference but claims that the development of intercultural competence should be part of *Landeskunde* lessons. 50% of the teachers list differences between *Landeskunde* and intercultural competence. The teachers both categorize *Landeskunde* as mostly focused on knowledge, whereas intercultural competence “goes further”. Both teachers ascribe an active and productive component to intercultural competence when they state that it is more than just knowledge and when they use verbs such as “apply” and “develop”.

The question concerning what is most important in English lessons presents no clear data on the teachers’ side. This is mainly due to the small group of teachers and the lack of one participating teacher to answer this question completely. The only valid result of this question is that 100% of the teachers think that “writing, speaking, reading, understanding” is most important in English lessons¹³⁷.

The data supplied by the S-questionnaires gives a more detailed image on what is important in English lessons:

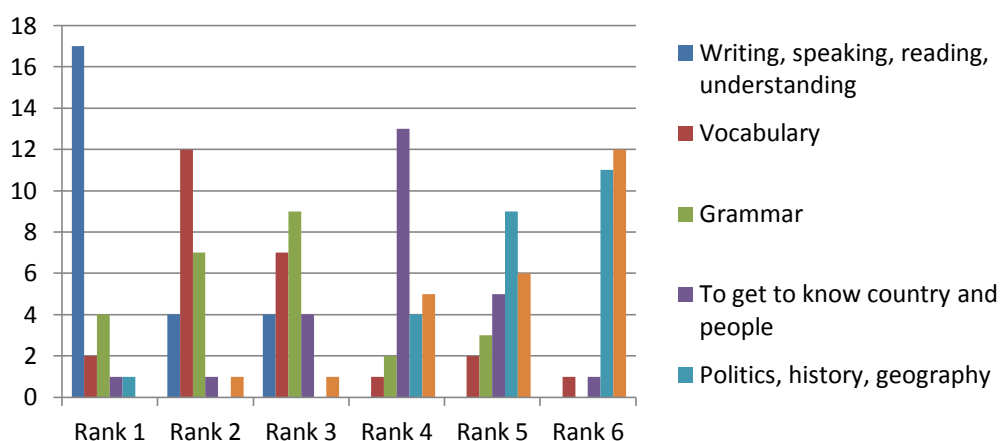


Diagram 1: Most Important in English Lessons According to Students

¹³⁷ All four teachers agreed that this is their most important objective.

Top-ranked according to 68% of the students is “writing, speaking, reading, understanding”. Students who did not vote this item on rank 1 decided for rank 2 or 3. Also very important according to students are the items “vocabulary” and “grammar”. 84 % (21 votes) of the students voted “vocabulary” in the top 3, and 80 % (20 votes) did the same for “grammar”. “To get to know country and people” was voted fourth important by most of the students (13 votes). Almost one quarter of the students (24%) voted it among the three most important things. The same amount decided to vote it on rank 5 and 6. The least important objectives in English lessons are “politics, history, geography” (80% voted it on rank 5 or lower) and “literature” (72% decided for rank 5 or lower).

2. What are the preferred topics, resources, and methods to teach and learn about other cultures for teachers and students?

All teachers listed topics and themes that they found most important in grade 8, in which the focus is US-culture. The topic named by 75% of the teachers was history. Named by two teachers were the topics cultural and ethnic diversity, as well as topics related to school, school systems, and youth. Additionally, teachers mention geography and cities among the most important topics in grade 8.

When questioned about their preferred resources and methods to teach about culture, three out of four teachers state that they use films and film analysis. Another popular method is role play, as mentioned by two teachers. Other methods mentioned by only one participant are music analysis, creative tasks, language and culture trips with students, journal articles, books, the Internet, learning at multiple stations, and stories about the teacher’s own experiences and adventures in the United States.

A different question format was chosen for the S-Questionnaires and students rated several culture-related topics and themes with “agree”, “somewhat agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, and “disagree” according to importance. The most votes in the “agree” category were distributed to the items “to learn what is different in the country compared to Germany” (13 votes), “famous sights” (13 votes), “how to get around in the country” (12 votes), “how to avoid misunderstandings” (11 votes), and “to learn what to look out for when I am in the country” (11 votes). Students avoided placing items in the category “somewhat disagree” and “disagree”. To get a more profound look on the topics and themes students think are important, the data has been filtered and the category “neither agree nor disagree” has been eliminated. According to this filter, the most important and rather important topics when learning about culture are “how to avoid misunderstandings”, “what to look out for when I am in the country” followed by “to learn what is different in the country than in Germany” and “famous sights”. 80% of the students think that to learn “how to get around in the country” is important. The least important topics and themes are “the political system, the voting system” (11 votes) and “flora and fauna” (9 votes).

Just like the teachers, the students were asked to name their preferred resources and/or methods to learn about a country and its culture. The diagram below sums up the students' answers¹³⁸:

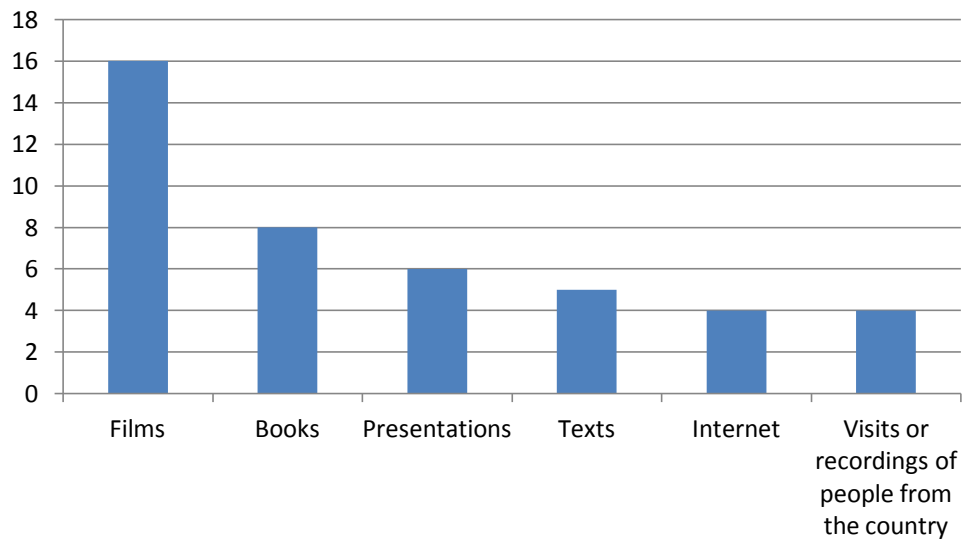


Diagram 2: Best Ways to Learn about another Country in English Lessons

Thus, 64 % of the students think that films are the best resource to learn something about another culture. Books are the second favorite resource, mentioned by eight students (32%)¹³⁹. Another popular method is presentations about cultural topics (24%), including both presentations by the teacher and presentations by the students themselves. Only two students name the textbook as the best resource to learn something about another culture.

Students were additionally questioned as to the resources and material used most frequently in their English lessons. The following resources received the most hits within the categories “used very often” and “used frequently”: “textbook” (24 votes), “audio files” (22 votes), “workbook” (18 votes), and “worksheets” (12 votes). Opposed to that are the following resources and methods that are “used rather seldom” or “used almost never” in class: the “Internet” (24 votes), “chat rooms, forums, blogs or a printed version” (22 votes), “visits or recordings from a person of the country” (20 votes), “magazines and journals” (17 votes), “passages of a printed or electronic lexicon or encyclopedia” (17 votes), “brochures and tourist information” (16 votes), “writing fictional texts” (14 votes), “newspaper articles” (14 votes), “films” (14 votes), “to categorize information about a country according to keywords or certain criteria and write it in our notebook” (14 votes), “to take over the

¹³⁸ The diagram shows only suggestions that were made by 20 % or more of the students.

¹³⁹ The data does not suggest if the students mean fictional or non-fictional books in this category. It is also not clear if students mean fictional or non-fictional texts.

perspective of the person living in the country” (12 votes), “songs” (12 votes), and “to think of a situation that could happen in the country” (12).

In the penultimate question of the S-Questionnaire, the students were asked to choose the three most suitable resources and methods to learn something about another country from the response options of question 22. The diagram below displays the students’ answers¹⁴⁰:

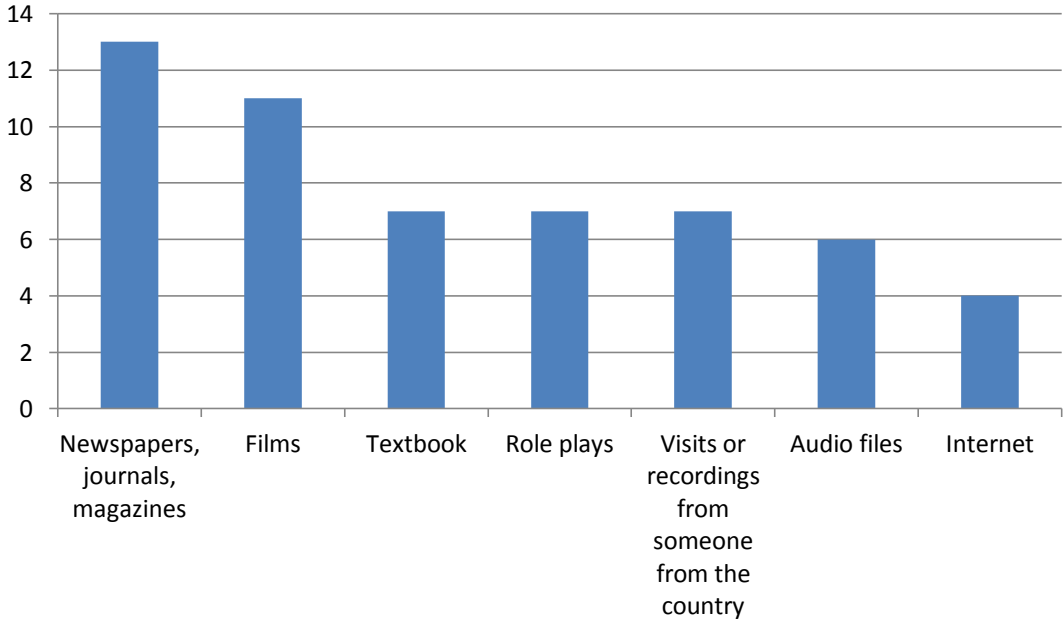


Diagram 3: Most Suitable Resources and Methods to Learn about Culture

Thus, according to more than half of the students “newspapers, journals, and magazines” are the best resources to learn something about another country in class, followed by “films, “the textbook”, “role plays”, and “visits or recordings from someone living in that country”.

3. How is Camden Town 4 evaluated regarding intercultural competence?

One teacher rated *Camden Town 4* concerning the teaching of intercultural competence as “very good”, one rated it as “good”, and two decided for the option “fair”. Students were asked a similar questions and the diagram below sums up how they rated *Camden Town 4* regarding how well it teaches them about the United States and the people who live there:

¹⁴⁰ The diagram shows only suggestions that were made by 20% or more of the students.

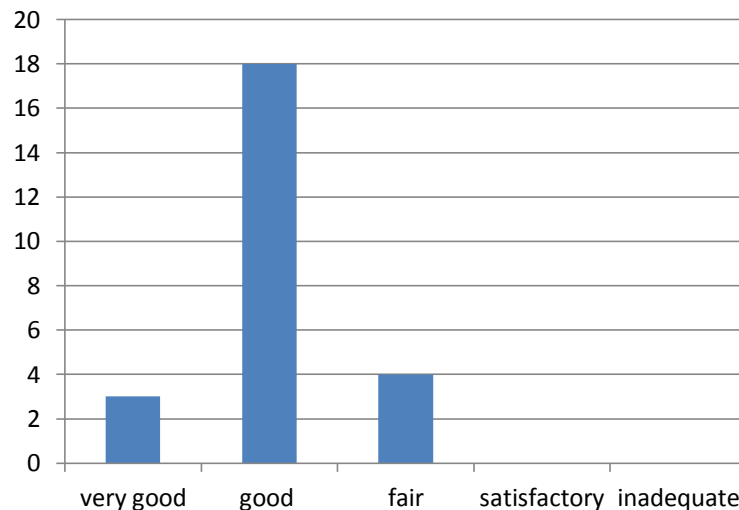


Diagram 4: Students' Evaluation of *Camden Town 4*

84% of the students rate *Camden Town 4* within the category “very good” (12%) or “good” (72%). 16%, thus only 4 students, decide for the category “fair”. No student chose the category “satisfactory” or “inadequate”.

Students were additionally asked to rate *Camden Town 4* and decide if their preferred resources and methods named in question 23 of the S-Questionnaire are presented adequately in *Camden Town 4*. 52% of the students are satisfied with what *Camden Town 4* offers whereas 48% of the students do not think their preferred material and methods are covered in their textbook.

How these results compare to *Camden Town 4* will be analyzed below.

4.4. Analysis and Interpretation of Results

1. Teachers' and Students' Attitudes on Intercultural Competence

The results show that all teachers have an understanding of intercultural competence. Although not cited directly, the teachers' personal descriptions of intercultural competence match with the two most agreed upon items in Deardorff's study, that is, “understanding of others' worldview” and “cultural self-awareness and capacity of self-assessment”¹⁴¹. Teachers also put emphasis on the understanding of other cultures, their customs, and behaviors, as well as the importance of one's own culture as a reference guide in their personal definitions of intercultural competence.

The data collected to determine the importance of intercultural competence as a main objective in English lessons shows that most teachers think communicative skills are more important than intercultural skills. The item “writing, speaking, listening, understanding” was voted most important

¹⁴¹ Cf. Deardorff 2008, 34.

by all teachers. Although no assumptions can be made about the ranking of the other items it is noteworthy that “to get to know country and people” received no votes in the top three ranks. This is additional proof that the communicative approach to language teaching is preferred by the participating teachers.

The students of grade 8 share their teachers’ preference. They too voted the item “writing, reading, listening, understanding” mostly on rank 1. This is also supported by the high rates “vocabulary” received. Only once was the item “to get to know people and country” voted on rank 1. It received the most votes in rank 4. Thus, students prefer an emphasis on communicative skills in their language classes, followed by instruction in vocabulary and grammar. This is not surprising on the students’ side. For them, the items voted most popular are the most important in classroom situations and also those in that they are assessed. An intercultural approach to teaching can only be preferred by students if they know its outcome and are made aware of the advantages of such an approach. Since most of the teachers prefer a communicative approach to teaching, it is not surprising that students do too since it is the approach of instruction with which they are familiar.

A comparison of the items mostly voted on rank 4, 5, and 6 shows, however, that students do have a preference as to what and how they want to learn about culture. The item “to get to know country and people” receives an overall higher rating than “politics, history, geography”. Thus, from this interpretation of the data it can be assumed that students prefer to learn about the notion of culture with a small-c. 80% of the participating students think “politics, history, geography” belongs in the two least important categories whereas 68% of the students think “to get to know country and people” is third or fourth most important objective in language classes. This shows that the students prefer an intercultural approach to learning about other cultures rather than the traditional *Landeskunde* approach. Surprisingly, another item that received an equally poor rating besides “politics, history, geography” was the item “literature”, mostly voted on rank 5 and 6. This is particularly interesting since literature and literary texts are very often recommended as a resource to teach intercultural competence¹⁴². Students however, unaware of the connection between literature and intercultural competence, based their votes solely on preference and importance. Thus, at least from a student’s perspective, literature seems not to be the ideal resource for material and methods to engage students to learn about culture.

¹⁴² Cf. page 18.

2. Topics, Resources, and Methods and Camden Town 4

A closer look at the teachers preferred topics to teach US-culture and culture in general shows that teachers cover both, traditional *Landeskunde* topics and topics relevant to teach intercultural competence. History of the United States is very dominant, as is geography. Nevertheless, topics mentioned such as ethnic and cultural diversity and topics relating to school and youth assume a more intercultural approach to teaching. The resources and methods stated by the teachers support this result. Role plays, film, music, the Internet, creative tasks, and language and culture trips are resources and methods that are commonly used to encourage the development of intercultural competence.

All of the topics suggested by the teachers are offered in *Camden Town 4*. Thus, what Byram coins “knowledge” in his model of intercultural communicative competence seems to be well represented in the textbook. This is not the case concerning the teachers preferred methods. Although film, music, and text analyses are part of *Camden Town 4*, tasks in which these resources are used rarely focus on culture or the development of intercultural competence. The same applies to role plays, another favorite method mentioned by the teachers. Role plays in *Camden Town 4* mostly focus on the students’ improvement of communicative skills, not on intercultural competence. In no role play in *Camden Town 4* do students need to combine what they know about language and culture of the United States. Neither do they need to reflect or compare their knowledge with their own culture. There was no data collected that gives information about how important the teachers think the students’ culture is. However, the teachers’ definitions of intercultural competence show clearly that they consider the students’ culture and how they reflect and compare it with another culture an important part in acquiring intercultural competence. This, however, is almost never necessary in *Camden Town 4* and the students’ culture is hardly relevant in the textbook.

The students were also asked to rate the importance of cultural themes and topics in English lessons and their results differ from what the teachers suggested¹⁴³. More than 80% of the students think it is important that they learn “how to avoid misunderstandings”, “how to get around in the country”, “what is different in the country compared to Germany”, and “what to look out for when I am in the country”. All of these items suggest that students prefer an intercultural approach, rather than a traditional approach to learn about culture. This does not mean that students do not want to learn about traditional topics such as history, geography, or politics. Students recognize the importance of cultural knowledge, as can be seen by the high votes these items received in the “neither agree nor disagree” category. However, only the item “famous sights” received an over 80%

¹⁴³ This is also due to the different format of the questionnaires.

approval of the students. Thus, the students' preferences focus on abilities. They ask for hands-on skills that will help them when they are in another country and have to interact with different cultures. Interesting also is that the students call for an acknowledgement of their own culture. More than 80% of the students want to learn about the differences among target and native culture. Close to half of them want to learn something about Germany while they learn about other cultures. Thus, topics and themes which focus on skills and acknowledge the students' own culture are preferred. The analysis of *Camden Town 4* has already shown that the textbook lacks in especially those two areas.

The students mention several resources and methods which they prefer to learn about cultures and the variety of resources and methods suggested is impressive. Students think they mostly learn something about culture via "films". When students are asked to choose their preferred resources and methods from a list of supplied response options, "films" are still rated very high. The top-rated resources to learn something about culture though are "magazines, journals, and newspapers", followed by "films", "role plays", "visits or recordings from someone living in that country", and "the Internet".

It cannot be said that the students' preferred resources and methods are not part of *Camden Town 4*. The analysis has shown that the textbook offers a whole theme on films, as well as projects where the Internet is necessary and writing tasks which have task rubrics similar to chat rooms or blogs. However, these resources and methods hardly have an intercultural focus. If newspaper articles, films, or the Internet are relevant in *Camden Town 4*, it is almost never to improve and facilitate intercultural competence, but serves other functions, such as the training of communicative skills. Thus, teachers and students preferred resources and methods are covered in *Camden Town 4* but not used to teach or learn about intercultural competence in the textbook.

3. General and Final Evaluation of Camden Town 4

The comparison of topics, resources, and methods suggested by students and teachers with what is offered in *Camden Town 4* casts a negative evaluation on the textbook. This is not supported by the students and teachers direct evaluation of *Camden Town 4*. Most of the teachers and students rate *Camden Town 4* with "good" regarding intercultural competence. Other data will be taken into consideration to give a final evaluation of the textbook. No teacher mentions *Camden Town 4* when they are asked about their favorite resources and methods for teaching about culture. Only two students name the textbook as their preferred source to learn something about another culture in question 19 of the S-Questionnaire. The number increases when students choose resources and methods from a supplied list and seven students name the textbook as one of their preferred resource, less than a third of all students. These results show that *Camden Town 4* is not the first

resource on the mind of teachers or students when they are asked to choose their preferred way to teach or learn about culture.

The final question of the S-Questionnaires asked students to rate *Camden Town 4* again, but this time concerning if it provided their previously stated preferred resources and methods. Almost half of the students point out that resources and methods they consider best to learn about culture are, according to their impression, not represented in *Camden Town 4*. The diagram below shows which resources and methods were selected as most preferred by this half of the students:

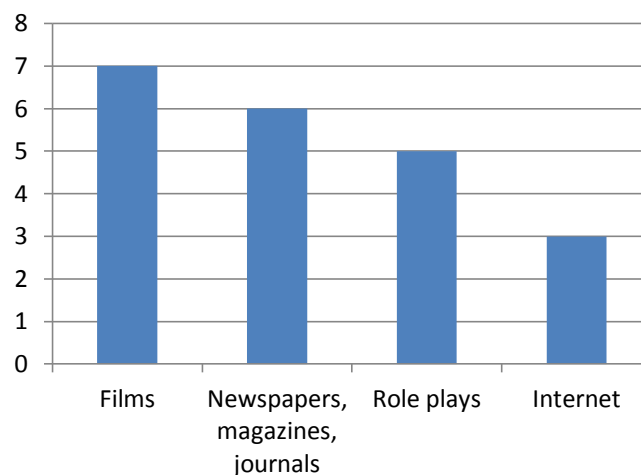


Diagram 5: Resources and Methods of Students
Who Do Not Think these Are Covered Sufficiently in *Camden Town 4*

Those students were asked to explain their negative evaluation of *Camden Town 4*. Most of the students simply stated that in a textbook their preferred methods cannot be featured due to the nature of the primary medium. Other students gave more detailed reasons and mentioned that there are no tasks combining culture and their preferred methods. Practical reasons, such as limited time, were also mentioned. Another student stated that there is no direct contact possible with people from the country if the textbook is used.

This shows that, even though teachers and students are well satisfied with *Camden Town 4* in a direct evaluation of the textbook, an in-depth analysis of the data and a comparison with results of the analysis of the textbook give a more diverse evaluation of *Camden Town 4*. The textbook offers an excellent resource book for what teachers consider the most important topics about US-American culture. Students' preferences on more skills-oriented topics and themes are hardly considered, though. Although most of the resources and methods preferred by teachers and students are offered in the textbook, they mostly focus on the training of communicative skills. Additionally, the students' native culture is hardly taken into consideration in *Camden Town 4*. Thus, although the textbook

offers great variety when it comes to what Byram terms the cognitive domain, the affective domain and the skills domain are neglected in *Camden Town 4*.

5. Perspectives on a Current Trend in Language Teaching – Conclusion and Outlook

This thesis has analyzed a current trend in language teaching from several perspectives. From a theoretical point of view, opinions and works of scholars in the field of language teaching have been used to define and describe what is understood by intercultural competence and the intercultural approach. It was made clear that culture has an important part in language teaching and that it is necessary to prepare students for intercultural communication as it will happen inside and out of their native country. To define culture, the intercultural approach, and intercultural competence is difficult due to the several academic fields and objectives of these that take part in the academic discourse about these concepts. Consequently, three models of intercultural competence have been presented to explain the concept and Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence has been rated as most useful for language teachers. The summary of the research has also shown that language teachers will have difficulties to find ready-to-teach advice and material to implement the intercultural approach into the language classroom. It seems that the focus of research and empirical work so far has been on defining intercultural competence¹⁴⁴, or assessing intercultural competence, but not on effective resources or methods in a classroom setting.

The analysis of *Camden Town 4* has shown that the textbook does support teachers and students, especially in the improvement of the cognitive domain of intercultural competence. Results from previous studies, such as stereotypical or racial depiction of target or native culture, or the lack of competence-oriented, or student-oriented tasks, did not or only hardly prove verifiable in *Camden Town 4*. The preference of the textbook authors for a communicative approach to teaching, and the main goal of the textbook to improve students' abilities to read, speak, write, and understand the English language, were proven throughout the analysis. This was also supported by the lack of tasks that improve students' intercultural skills and the little amount of tasks that illustrate the relevance of the students' native culture in the textbook.

Teachers and students share the opinion that communicative competences are more important than intercultural and they prefer a focus on these competences in English lessons. The students' attitudes, however, show that if they learn about culture, they prefer the intercultural approach rather than the *Landeskunde* approach. Thus students call for hands-on skills that will help them to master intercultural communication. Teachers also acknowledge the importance of

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Deardorff 2008.

intercultural competence; they all have a general understanding of the concept. With those attitudes in mind, teachers and students rate *Camden Town 4* with “very good” and “good” in a direct evaluation, but are more critical when asked to focus on the resources and methods *Camden Town 4* offers. The results from both questionnaires show that *Camden Town 4* offers a good foundation when it comes to teachers’ preferred topics, but lacks tasks that focus on intercultural skills and attitudes. This conclusion is identical with what has been found out in the analysis of the textbook. Students in particular criticize that modern media, such as films, the Internet, magazines, and journals are not offered enough in *Camden Town 4* or do not focus on culture. This finding supports Majala in her call for a new era with textbooks that offer cross-references to other media and resources for teaching material¹⁴⁵. For the teachers at *Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium* who wish to implement the intercultural approach and support students in developing intercultural competence, *Camden Town 4* offers only a good resource for topics and themes. Additional resources or supplementary tasks are necessary in combination with *Camden Town 4*.

Theory, textbook analysis, and empirical study have shown that the intercultural approach and the development of intercultural competence are relevant to foreign language teaching, although not always the preferred approach. The analysis of *Camden Town 4* and teachers’ and students’ attitudes also displayed the need for qualified resources and methods to implement this approach. Although both, textbook and teachers, showed a general understanding of the concept, how it is used in the classroom seems to be not so clear. Consequently, rather than focusing research on a definition of intercultural competence, the results of the empirical study here call for research that assists the development of qualified and effective methods that can be used in the classroom, especially since textbooks seem to be only limitedly equipped. This can only be achieved if theory is taken into the classroom and if scholars and teachers work together and communicate. Trends need to be evaluated. Thus, how intercultural competence develops and which methods are most useful to build up the necessary skills can only be discovered in the language classroom.

¹⁴⁵ Majala 2007, 557.

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