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Acknowledgments

Introduction

The situation of meeting the Other (also called *intercultural encounter*) has always fascinated and intrigued people for a variety of reasons. Because of its character and complexity, intercultural encounter is a problem-solving, emotion-generating, and face-threatening situation, which is inseparably connected with uncertainty, unpredictability, and the unknown. However, nowadays, in an era of social changes (e.g., globalisation, international integration, advance of information technology, increased mobility and migration, international tensions), intercultural encounter is a necessity. Dupuis (in Heyworth et al. 2003: 28) talks about "multilingual daily life" to indicate the frequency of intercultural encounters. Dervin (2007a: 69–70) elaborates on the notion of "liquid times" (a term introduced by the Polish-born British sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in 2000). According to Dervin (2007a: 69),

> in liquid times, we all navigate between different and countless cultures […], and witness an excess of identity. […] As we live in a world where we constantly meet people physically or virtually (acquaintances, friends, strangers, etc.), we need to "identify" (i.e., show resemblance or differentiate) and create culture every time encounters occur.

Dervin (2007a; 2007b) stresses the necessity to redefine some crucial concepts, such as communication process, communicative competence, cross-border interaction, and fixed identity.

Some other researchers focus on processes that shape our intercultural communication and help us derive meaning from intercultural encounters. Intercultural communication, first introduced by Hall and Trager (1953) in *The Analysis of Culture*, is often defined as communication between people representing different cultures (cited by Bystrov

and Yermolenko 2011: 16). According to Byram (2000), intercultural communication aims to reveal the external and internal relationships between different cultures, interpreting each in terms of the other, as well as being able to analyse it and critically understand both native and non-native cultures. Terms similar to the notion of intercultural communication include the following: cross-cultural communication, transcultural communication, interethnic communication, and intercultural interaction (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 16).

Intercultural communication research has its long tradition. As noted by Gudykunst (2004) theorising about intercultural encounter has also made tremendous progress in the last 20 years. The need for effective and competent intecultural communication has been recognised by many researchers (e.g., Chen 2014; Hua 2016; Neuliep 2015). However, the notion of intercultural communication competence itself is very complex and it consists of at least four dimensions, namely Personal Attributes, Communication Skills, Psychological Adaptation, and Cultural Awareness. Each of these dimensions contains some other components (Chen 2014: 19). Literature review reflects this complexity. Gudykunst et al. (in Gudykunst 2004) divide the intergroup and intercultural theories into five categories which are not mutually exclusive:

1. Theories focusing on effective outcomes, which include the following:
   – cultural convergence theory (Barnett and Kincaid 1983; Gudykunst 2004: 11);
   – anxiety and uncertainty management theory (Gudykunst 1994);
   – effective group decision making (Oetzel 1995; Gudykunst 2004: 11);
   – integrated theory of interethnic communication (Kim 1997, 2004 in Gudykunst 2004: 11).
2. Theories focusing on accommodation and adaptation.
3. Theories focusing on identity management.
4. Theories focusing on communication networks.
5. Theories focusing on adjustment and adaptation to new cultural environments (Gudykunst 2004).

According to Chen (2014: 19), the Triangular Model of Intercultural Communication Competence indicates the interrelation of particular aspects in a very precise way and it synthesises the previous literature. Chen (2014: 19) states that the three sides of the triangular model represent the three aspects of cognition (as manifested by intercultural awareness), affective (manifested by intercultural sensitivity), and behaviour (manifested by intercultural effectiveness or adroitness). Thus intercultural communication cannot be limited to the behavioural aspect only,

but it should also take into account the remaining two aspects, that is, the affective aspect and the cognitive one. Some of the current challenges and future directions of ICC research should focus on "the re-investigation of the nature of intercultural communication competence in global context" and the exploration of the impact of new media on the ICC" (Chen 2014: 23; Neuliep 2015).

Ladegaard and Jenks (2015: 5) state that one of the issues that has been repeatedly discussed in ICC research over the past three decades is "how we conceptualise culture, and how much, or how little, importance we should attach to interlocutors' cultural background when we analyse intercultural encounters." Current research tendencies view "*culture* as a fluid, flexible and multifaceted phenomenon, which is created, negotiated and recreated *in situ* as people engage in talk and other forms of social interaction" (Ladegaard and Jenks 2015: 5). This has a lot in common with the social constructionist approach (Ladegaard and Jenks 2015: 5). However, there are also voices that in order to understand the role of culture in intercultural communication, we need to take into account the importance of background culture and situational demands (i.e., "the possibility of ethnic or cultural marking in communicative behavior and the situational context where participants co-construct (inter)cultures *in situ*," Kecskes 2014: 5, in Ladegaard and Jenks 2015: 6). This view is congruent with a number of studies. According to the Acculturation Model (Schuman 1970, in Niżegorodcew 2011) and Complex System Theory (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008), when two people are engaged in a talk, their 'conversation' emerges from the dynamics of how they talk to each other, while what they say reflects and constructs who they are as social beings (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 163, in Niżegorodcew 2011: 32). Consequently, interaction is dependent on the linguistic constraints (e.g., the constant adaptation of their linguistic resources in the service of meaning-making, cf. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 135, in Niżegorodcew 2011: 32), contextual constraints and affective constraints (e.g., learner's expectation and learner adaptability, to mention just two).

It is agreed that "intercultural communicative processes are essentially dialogic, and involve recognising and negotiating points of sameness as well as difference" (Holmes 2014: 2; Jokikokko 2010: 13). However, intercultural dialogue is not always a smooth and easy process. Problems often faced in intercultural communication include: cultural identity conflict, anxiety, interpersonal difficulties, value confusion, to name just a few. Yet, difficulties are perceived as normal and indispensable to any process of communication and relation building (Holmes 2014: 2). According to Holmes (2014: 2), the positive thing

about intercultural dialogue lies in "the possibility to (re)negotiate and (re)construct their positions and identities within and across groups, to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of relationships, and to work towards solutions to seemingly intractable divergences and unrelenting postures in situations of conflict." Taking all these aspects into account, it is evident that an intercultural encounter a challenge – the challenge of the 21st century.

The book revolves around two broad concepts, namely, intercultural encounters and narrative inquiry. Both of the concepts underpin the characteristics as well as the challenges of the 21st century. The term intercultural encounter refers to the opportunity and the actual situation of meeting foreigners or experiencing cross-cultural conversations due to mobility, alternative, computer-based means of communication, as well as the plurilingual and multicultural diversity of the society. In this sense, intercultural encounter is not limited to direct contact in the foreign context but encompasses a variety of situations both in the home country context and abroad (these notions would be elaborated upon elsewhere in this book).

The theoretical part of the book aims at discussing the idea of intercultural encounters, characterising their aspects and examining the factors which affect the success of such encounters. Special attention will be focused on the role intercultural encounters play in foreign language learning as well as their impact on shaping learner identity. A closer look will be also given to the nature and mechanisms involved in intercultural encounters as well as the description of contextual factors that may have some impact on the character and nature of intercultural encounters.

The value of intercultural encounters, however, lies not only in what we experience, but most of all, in what we do afterwards, that is, how we narrate and reflect upon the intercultural encounters and what knowledge we derive from them. Consequently, intercultural encounters can be perceived as catalysts for reflection and an incentive to express oneself orally or in writing. This brings us to the second important issue that the book tackles, namely: narrative inquiry or narrative analysis, which is related to the role of narratives in organising and shaping individuals' experiences.

Human beings are often defined as *Homo narrans* ("story-telling man," "the story-telling organism" – Straś-Romanowska, Bartosz, and Żurko 2010). This means that any individual leads a storied life and tells stories to others. In fact, *stories* or *narratives* are perceived as indispensable elements of interpersonal interaction and communication of one's own personal experiences (Straś-Romanowska, Bartosz, and Żurko

2010: 9). A story is compared to a vehicle as it provides a stimulus for learning or noticing particular things (Garvie 1990: 67). Story is also described as a theme, because it allows one to organise unrelated events into a sequence or a chain (Garvie 1990: 67). Consequently, narrative competence and narrative intelligence seem as important as communicative competence and cognitive intelligence, respectively.

The empirical part of this book analyses narratives collected from Polish and Turkish students of English. The main objective of the research is to examine cross-cultural differences and similarities that affect the perception and narration of intercultural encounters. The research project involves several stages, including brainstorming and group discussion, the training proper as well as the production of narratives. For better understanding of the research area, it is essential to make a distinction between the following concepts: story, narrative, and *narration*. According to Garvie (1990: 67), the story is the raw material, the theme of the event. Putting a structure to it and arranging it sequentially means producing a narrative, whereas the process of telling is the narration. As Garvie (1990: 67) further explains, the story carries the potential, the narrative is the "cognitive resource" – a meaning making strategy, and the narration is the *sharing* of it orally or in literature. In this book, the author intends to focus mostly on the meanings implied by the narratives produced by the research subjects. Consequently, a closer look would be given to the topical analysis of those narratives. Another aspect of the research concerns the examination of mechanisms regulating the very process of narrative processing and production. However, the terms: story and narrative may occasionally be used interchangeably so as to avoid the over-repetition of the word narrative.

Data was collected by means of questionnaires, including scales; trainer's observation and records, and the students' narratives. Qualitative analysis (focusing on topical categories in the narratives) and quantitative analysis (based on LIWC programme and the calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient) helped to evaluate research objectives and formulate final conclusions.

Chapter 1

Intercultural encounters

Contemporary society with its characteristics, such as globalisation and increased mobility, has greatly influenced the nature of our contacts. Intercultural encounters are unavoidable, because as Grabowska (2012: 304) writes, deciding on pursuing mobility means initiating intercultural dialogue, for which knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of a given language is simply not enough. According to the Council of Europe,

> An intercultural encounter can be an experience between people from different countries or it can be an experience between individuals from other cultural backgrounds in the same country, for example, from other regional, linguistic, ethnic or religious backgrounds. (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/default_en.asp#lien_inactif, accessed 07.07.2012)

The above definition does not limit intercultural encounters to particular representatives or contexts. Rather, it stresses the varied nature of contacts that a person may experience when meeting a foreigner. This chapter provides characteristics and concentrates on various dimensions of intercultural dialogues. According to Araújo e Sá and Melo (2007: 9), intercultural encounters are about: awareness, interaction, mediation, and negotiation.

1.1 Intercultural encounters – Facts

To better understand the role of intercultural encounters, it is essential to present some background information concerning the quantity and quality of the phenomenon. The first refers to the frequency (scale) of

the phenomenon, the second to the characteristics of the phenomenon. According to statistical data, in the European Union around 20 million people are migrants (Euractive 2006, in Glaser et al. 2007: 20). Currently, the migration flow is high and these numbers are changing rapidly. Main statistical findings indicate that "a total of 3.8 million people immigrated to one of the EU-28 Member States during 2014, while at least 2.8 million emigrants were reported to have left an EU Member State" (www.ec.europa/ eurostat, 2016). To add more, "On 1 January 2015, the number of people living in the EU-28 (Member States of the European Union) who were citizens of non-member countries was 19.8 million, while the number of people living in the EU-28 who had been born outside of the EU was 34.3 million […]. The largest numbers of non-nationals living in the EU Member States on 1 January 2015 were found in Germany (7.5 million), the United Kingdom (5.4 million), Italy (5.0 million), Spain (4.5 million), and France (4.4 million). Non-nationals in these five Member States collectively represented 76% of the total number of non-nationals living in all of the EU Member States" (www.ec.europa/eurostat, 2016).

Globalisation entails greater degrees of human mobility on all levels than was the case up until the 1980s (Glaser et al. 2007: 21). This generates cultural and linguistic interactions which may be a source of richness but also of inefficiency. The likelihood of meeting or exchanging information with a foreigner is relatively high.

However, contemporary migration (i.e., post-1991) is different. It has become more diverse, more irregular, and temporary (Van Avermaet and Pulinx 2012: 267). A lot of migrants are in transit. They may stay in one country for a while on their way to another country. Van Avermaet (2012, in Van Avermaet and Pulinx 2012: 267) discusses some other features of contemporary migration, namely:
– increased economic migration or mobility which is facilitated by cheap travelling opportunities,
– diversity, which is becoming the norm. It is also more complex. Cities are multicultural and multilingual by definition. Van Avermaet (2012, in Van Avermaet and Pulinx 2012: 267) talks about "super diversity,"
– immigrants integrate into society and become an integral part of it.

The intensity of migration and varying migration patterns and motivations call for further characteristics. Van Avermaet (2012) in his quotation highlights the challenges that contemporary migration brings.

> Traditional processes of acculturation no longer occur. Major cities are multicultural and multilingual by necessity. An immigrant is no longer an immigrant, s/he is a member of a complex metropolis, where nego-

tiations over differences in norms and values are self-evident and hold in one context but not necessary in another. This new type of migration, along with the previous migration from the 1950s to the 1970s, puts more pressure on many European nation states when it comes to concepts such as social cohesion, integration, citizenship, identity, culture and language. (Van Avermaet 2012, in Van Avermaet and Pulinx 2012: 267)

According to Van Avermaet and Pulinx (2012: 268), the phenomenon of more complex forms of migration and the development of new forms of mobility correspond to the development and distribution of the internet and other mobile communication technologies. These new information technologies promote regular and (intense) communication between migrants and countries of origin as well as other social networks, and consequently change the structure and the significance of the diaspora (the dispersion of an originally homogeneous entity, such as a group of people, a language or culture (Blommaert 2012, in Van Avermaet and Pulinx 2012: 268)

Katnić-Bakarsić (2002: 42) claims that the notion of border is one of the key theoretical and practical notions which got revisited and redefined at the end of the 20th century. The boundaries of one country are no longer boundaries separating particular cultures and communities from others. Terms such as *freezing the distance* or *multicultural and multiethnic society* (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002: 134) reflect the nature of this change much better. Borders no longer refer to territoriality and spacing only. They also indicate some social and individual processes, including identity formation ("Us" vs. "the Others"). Currently, various communities and cultures have to coexist and cohabit together within a given city or province (Kapuściński 2004: 25), and the likelihood of meeting the Other is relatively high. Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002: 134) introduce the following phrases: "bordering, ordering, othering" or "(b)ordering, othering" to capture the most important tendencies. At the same time, Katnić-Bakarsić (2002: 134) emphasises that the notion of border does not necessarily have negative connotations. The negative connotation is created only when there is no awareness of border and its meaning.

Dervin (n.d.) goes a step further and discusses how migration and a multicultural society affect our perception and behaviour. He presents certain processes that are typical for "liquid times" (a term introduced for the first time by Zygmunt Bauman in 2000).

In liquid times, we all navigate between different and countless cultures […], and witness an excess of identity. As such, one could say that eve-

ryone's culture turns into culturality – an incessant creation of culture – and everyone's identity into identification (Hall and du Gay, 1996). As we live in a world where we constantly meet people physically or virtually (acquaintances, friends, strangers, etc.), we need to "identify" (i.e. show resemblance or differentiate) and create culture every time encounters occur. (Dervin, n.d.)

Undoubtedly, the phenomena indicated by Dervin require the redefinition of some crucial concepts, such as communication process, communicative competence, intercultural encounter (or cross-border interaction – Dervin, n.d.), and the elimination of a fixed identity. Similarly, Katnić-Bakarsić (2002: 42–43) suggests the change of perspective when defining intercultural interaction. For her, the metaphor of "building bridges" seems appropriate to describe the challenges that intercultural communication brings.

Researchers (cf. Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 20; Dervin, n.d.; Katnić-Bakarsić 2002) agree that the value of studies on intercultural communication lies in examining and interpreting real cultural contacts. Holmes (2014: 1) says that "intercultural dialogue is now in wide currency and offers much hope to peace and harmony among nations." This corresponds to the policy of the Council of Europe, which revolves around the issues of language awareness, cross-cultural interaction, plurilingualism, and hands-on experience with intercultural communication. Martikonis (2012: 143) states that multilingualism is a fundamental value of the EU. The Council of Europe strives for strengthening the identities of individuals and maintaining diversity at the same time (www.coe.int/plurilingualeducation). The principle of respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is stated explicitly in Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union.

A branch of research initiated by the Council of Europe deals with popularising as well as enjoying diversity: intercultural awareness and multilingualism (Lamb, in Boeckmann et al. 2011: 73; Holmes 2014: 1). The aims of the Council of Europe concentrate on promoting plurilingual and intercultural education as a way to prepare people for mobility and a plurilingual society. *The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, introduced in 2009, is an example of a concrete initiative supported by the Council of Europe which resulted in a practical and widely accessible tool that can help people to cope with intercultural encounters.

The present research will examine communication and effective outcomes of the phenomenon.

1.2 Intercultural encounters as awareness-raising situations

The role of intercultural encounters in raising students' awareness and sharpening their sensitivity is undeniable. Awareness covers various dimensions, namely: (1) me as a person (individual's identity and self-awareness, realising one's strengths and weaknesses); (2) me as a member of a particular social group; (3) me as a language user, and (4) me as a conversational partner.

Several authors (Kapuściński 2004: 25; Kramsch 1998; Sievers 2008) compare the intercultural encounter to a mirror, because it reflects the character of one's own culture group (Sievers 2008) or certain (personal, individual) features. It also uncovers the things that we would like to hide (Kapuściński 2004: 25). According to Kramsch (1998), the intercultural encounter is the moment when individuals view the Other through the lenses of themselves, which helps them to reconstruct their identity or reinscribe it (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002: 132). The authors believe that one's social identity results from a social process of continuous "re-writing" of the self and of social collectives. Migration enhances a constant process of re-invention and self-re-definition. Intercultural encounters reveal certain features of our character, and they might promote self-focus, change, and self-development. Lévinas (in Kapuściński 2004: 24) claims that the encounter with the Other is a privileged phenomenon as it makes us aware of the features that we have and those that we need to develop. As Kristeva (1991, in Van Houtum and Van Naerssen 2002: 132) succinctly puts it, we are strangers to ourselves. In the course of intercultural encounters we are always becoming, which is a gradual and conscious process based on some factors. Lévinas believes that meeting the Other face-to-face implies dialogue and responsibility (cited by Kapuściński 2004: 26). Malinowski (in Kapuściński 2004: 25) points out that successful encounters depend on some essential features of character, such as: one's own identity, awareness of one's own potential, value and maturity. If a person is devoid of these features, s/he will withdraw from the encounters, perceiving them as face-threatening situations.

Another dimension of intercultural encounters relates to language awareness. Dialogue with the Other, conducted in a particular social context, promotes the personal exploration of the L2. It helps an individual to find out how language works, thus extending person's knowledge of the language and of himself/herself as a language user (Bourke 2008). In particular, it raises the individual's language awareness, which can be understood as:

– conscious perception of language mechanisms, including some irregularities, levels of formality, registers;

– insights into how language is and adapted to sociocultural contexts (sensitivity to contextual and situational cues that influence language use);
– awareness of one's own individual language skills.

1.3 Intercultural encounters as interaction, mediation, and negotiation

Successful intercultural communication is often described as appropriate and effective (Glaser et al. 2007: 27). However, success may mean different things to different people. Glaser et al. (2007: 28) state that effective intercultural communication and interaction entail the following:

1. An investigatory attitude, "understanding each others' styles and motives behind them, is a first move in overcoming intercultural misunderstanding" (Kim 1998: 105, in Glaser et al. 2007: 28).
2. A dialogical and relational attitude, where sheer communication and interaction, although with a purpose, is at stake (Byram 1997).
3. A more or less respectful strategic attitude, which can imply a commitment to fulfill a task or to persuade, or even influence, the other (Byram 1997).
4. A critical attitude, which implies a critical awareness of the motives and pressures experienced by all participants, of the power structures in both cultural contexts and of the interdependence and relations between them (Guilherme 2002, in Glaser et al. 2007: 28). According to Bystrov and Yermolenko (2011: 16), the addresser and addressee who belong to different cultures should be aware of the intercultural differences in order to interact effectively.

There are some other features and conditions that determine successful interaction with the Other. First of all, the timing of the "action – interaction pattern" (or "communication and interaction pattern"). When meeting the Other, "there is no room for trial and error, no learning from mistakes and no hope of another chance" (Bauman 2000: 95). Action implies immediate reaction on the part of the interlocutor. This makes intercultural encounters challenging situations that involve their participants cognitively and affectively. The consequences of an intercultural encounter are usually long-lasting. Ting-Toomey (1999: 17–18) characterises intercultural communication as an irreversible process to indicate the interdependent and transactional nature of such encounter. According to Ting-Toomey (1999: 17), when strangers make contact and

attempt to communicate, they enter into a mutually interdependent relationship. Intercultural communication is an interactive situation with symbolic exchange, that is, the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols between a minimum of two individuals to accomplish shared meaning (Ting-Toomey 1999: 17).

Secondly, interaction is dependent on both cultural constraints, but even more on individual features. Ting-Toomey (1999: 18–19) says that intercultural communication does not take place in a vacuum, but it is a process engaging different cultural communities. However, cultures do not talk to each other, individuals do (Burton and Dimbleby 1995: 133). In other words, it is not one culture communicating with another, but rather individuals communicating across cultural differences. Bystrov and Yermolenko (2011: 16) add that it is often interpersonal communication occurring in a special context, when one participant discovers the cultural differences of other communicants. According to Glaser et al. (2007), concepts such as tolerance of ambiguity, active listening, and mindfulness, which are indispensable in interpersonal communication, may only partly explain the mentality and behaviour of the persons participating in the intercultural encounters. Consequently, the authors stress the need for mutual accommodation between the interlocutors, persistence and effort, and understanding each other in the lingua franca as well as a more standardised form of the language (Glaser et al. 2007: 33).

Thirdly, the use of a common language does not guarantee the success in communication, making the outcome of the interaction unpredictable. Bystrov and Yermolenko (2011: 16) point out that intercultural communication is based on the process of symbolic interaction between individuals and groups. People from other cultures decipher received messages in different ways. According to Glaser et al. (2007: 30), the use of a common language by culturally diverse non-native speakers implies, at least, linguistic and cultural translation and negotiation of meaning, which can at the same time complicate and enrich communication and interaction. Similarly, even the selection of a lingua franca does not ensure that words and concepts are equally understood by all participants (Glaser et al. 2007: 32). Ting-Toomey (1999: 19–20) says that one of the features of intercultural communication is negotiation of shared meanings. It operates on three levels: (1) content meaning (i.e., factual information that is conveyed in the process of communication); (2) identity meaning (as exemplified by such questions as: "Who am I and who are you in this interaction episode); and (3) relational meaning (information concerning the state of relationship between the two communicators) (Ting-Toomey 1999: 19–20).

And finally, intercultural communication is susceptible to judgement and evaluation. Participants do not enter intercultural dialogue empty-handed, they bring various, often diverged expectations and prejudices (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 16). According to Thorp (1991: 108–109), culturally specific norms and patterns of interaction affect communication and learning, whereas interactional difficulties lead to negative assessments. Judgement seems inevitable in interaction, especially when its participants operate on culturally different standards. It manifests itself on two levels: the action-selection level and the action-reaction level. Thorp (1991: 108) also discusses "confused encounters," that is, situations which are characterised by a mismatch of expectations and unpredictability. Individual's judgement and appraisal of intercultural encounters may influence his/her actions and motivation to engage in future encounters.

Some researchers (Thorp 1991: 109; House 2003; House et al. 2003; Kriebernegg et al. 2014) examined interactional problems in the classroom context. They found that the main reason for interactional difficulties is lack of knowledge and different, culturally learned expectations for appropriate social behaviour. They add that these tacit social rules and routines are culture specific, and they can impede the interaction. Philips (1983, in Banks and McGee Banks 2010) refers to these routines and rules as "invisible culture" (1983, in Banks and McGee Banks). Although the research conducted by Philips deals with the educational context, some results may be also applicable to a more general context. Glaser et al. (2007: 34) discuss culturally dependent differences in communication styles, an awareness of which seems essential in intercultural exchanges. Certain national communication patterns regulate conversational moves, for example, turn-taking, directness vs. indirectness, or language behaviour, for instance, spoken vs. written preferences. Likewise, communication styles, which are situation-based, determine the following aspects of communication: interrupting (when and how to do it), communicating among team members, decision making in a formal or informal way, direct vs. more indirect ways of speaking, etc. (Glaser et al. 2007: 34).

Because linguistic diversity and cultural dissonance become noticeable during intercultural interaction, flexibility and creativity on the part of its participants are called for. According to Glaser et al. (2007: 29), intercultural encounters serve as opportunities to learn, unlearn, and relearn new but also old knowledge and, therefore, to challenge one's paradigms and re-read the world. Consequently, the success of intercultural interaction is also dependent on the individual's willingness to exert this flexibility and creativity as well as his/her readiness to cope

with the fears and insecurities that intercultural encounters provoke (Glaser et al. 2007: 21). The success of intercultural communication is also correlated with the individual's level of engagement, which will determine the degree of involvement in interaction. Glaser et al (2007: 27) state that the process of engagement with other cultures should not be seen as an immediate event but as a progression made up of different stages. Bennett (1993) refers to this as "the model of becoming interculturally competent." He identifies two main stages at each end of the process, namely "the ethnocentric stage" and "the ethnorelative one" (Bennett 1993). The first stage starts with the "denial" of differences, by emphasising what is common (or apparently common) in all human beings, and progresses to a "minimisation" stage where the individual admits some differences but tries to play them down. The "ethnorelative" stage starts with an "acceptance" stage and moves on to an "integration" stage. Bennett (1993, in Glaser et al. 2007: 28) explains that intercultural individuals can reach different levels of "the integration stage." They can try to combine aspects of both cultures and, to some extent, construct a new identity which remains rooted in the cultural context. Or they can somehow live in a "constructive marginality," which enables them to become more independent from the cultural constraints of their immediate context (Bennett 1993, in Glaser et al. 2007: 28).

1.3.1 Intercultural encounters as mediation. Mediation is defined as a settlement of a disagreement, dispute, or controversy. Taking intercultural encounters into consideration, mediation is understood as an internal process taking place between the individual's real self and ideal self. Intercultural encounters are situations during which an individual attempts to cope with perceived uncertainty, insecurity, and tension. At the same time, s/he tries to overcome any negative aspects and resolve any possible tension by applying all the possible strategies s/he is familiar with.

Intercultural encounters are often perceived as situations that result in learning and developing a clearer self-understanding (Holmes and O'Neill 2012). Through communication with the Other, a person builds his/her self-knowledge and explores both the individual and relational aspects of their interactions. This enables him/her to critically reflect on their intercultural competence (Holmes and O'Neill 2012: 715–716).

Mediation, however, may not always be successful. Sensitivity to the feelings of other people and the ability to empathise with their experiences are two conditions essential to the ability to mediate (Alred 2003: 19).

There is also one more interpretation of mediation and intercultural encounters, namely, "mediating between oneself and others" (Byram 2003: 60). This refers to "seeing how different cultures relate to each other and acting as mediator between them, or more precisely, between people socialised into them." Byram (2003: 60) talks about "taking external perspective on oneself as one interacts." For him, the skill of mediation is part of critical cultural awareness.

1.3.2 Intercultural encounters as negotiation. When referring to intercultural encounters as negotiation, two dimensions, that is, literal and metaphorical can be identified. The former deals with direct negotiation of meaning in the course of conversation. In other words, it implies conveying ideas, building understanding, and reaching consensus by the interlocutors. The latter, that is, metaphorical dimension, is connected with the internal dialogue that an individual carries out within himself/herself. This dialogue may lead him/her to change perspectives, internalising new pieces of information and redefining certain issues. Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2002: 132) state that the process of people giving meaning to their new world implies constant negotiations with the new social environment as well as with their former or other social environments. Kramsch (1998) believes that identity and representation are negotiated during intercultural encounters. She claims that the dialogue she had with the Cultural Other enabled her to "value and revalue" certain concepts, identity being one of them (Kramsch 1998).

A similar view is shared by Grabowska (2012: 304) and Mihułka (2009: 64). For them, intercultural dialogue is a conversation by representatives of (at least) two cultures held between their communities, nations, language, and ethnic groups despite differences. It is an exchange free of mutual prejudice, dislike, and hatred, which reaches beyond mental barriers and is held in the spirit of mutual respect, openness (to the interlocutor), and friendship. Knowledge of foreign and native culture provides the basis for comparing specific cultural phenomena and their assessment, as well as relativisation of certain attitudes and behaviours, which result in a better understanding of oneself and others (Mihułka 2009: 64; Grabowska 2012: 304).

And finally, negotiation is essential for turning "intercultural communication" into "effective interaction." Guilherme (2004: 297–300, in Glaser et al. 2007: 32) defines intercultural competence as "establishing and maintaining relationships instead of communicating messages and exchanging information." This is inseparably connected with "accomplishing a negotiation between people based on both culture-specific and culture-general features" (Guilherme 2004: 297–300, in Glaser et

al. 2007: 32). For Cohen (2001), "negotiation is an exercise in language and communication, an attempt to create shared understanding where previously there have been contested understandings. When negotiation takes place across languages and cultures the scope for misunderstanding increases." In other words, negotiation helps to clarify the concepts of identity and language objectivity. It involves arguments about words and concepts, and allows people to overcome language barriers.

1.4 Intercultural encounters – The linguistic dimension

As stated by some researchers (Bandura 2011: 45, Glaser et al. 2007), the language shared by the participants in intercultural encounters is a necessary but insufficient condition for achieving success. Yet, linguistic dimension needs to be briefly discussed. Glaser et al. (2007: 32) identify main sub-competences that play a crucial role in communicating across cultures, namely, non-verbal communication, verbal communication, and language awareness. Verbal communication as exemplified by the notion of communicative competence is of the utmost importance. The two sub-competences denoting the knowledge of language are widely discussed by Canale and Swain (1980: 7–11, in Glaser et al. 2007: 32–33):

– grammatical competence (or structural competence: the "knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics, and phonology");
– discourse competence ("how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken and written text in different genres").

However, no language operates in a vacuum. As a result, the two other sub-competences referring to using the language need to be commented upon:

– sociolinguistic competence ("made up of two sets of rules, i.e., socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse"; Canale and Swain 1980: 7–11, in Glaser et al. 2007: 32–33).
– strategic competence ("verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance or to insufficient competence") (Canale and Swain 1980: 7–11, in Glaser et al. 2007: 32–33).

Furthermore, according to Glaser et al. (2007: 33), paralinguistic features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation play a fundamental role in verbal communication (e.g., the tone used in a particular community such as the Spanish of Spain may seem aggressive in another Spanish-speaking community and may cause misunderstanding even though the linguistic code is shared). Glaser et al. (2007: 33) also mention language

awareness as the third element that affects communication across cultures. Language awareness is defined by them as the awareness of how speaking one or more languages or a particular language such as English is related to social/professional status.

Byram and Zarate (1995: 17) emphasise that the linguistic dimension of intercultural encounters requires individuals "firstly to recognize that they are experiencing a different language (which should not be equalled with a different code for their own language), and secondly, to re-structure the meanings they attach to 'the same' words, and the connotations that are part of their own native language and culture." The process is long and it takes place on two levels: cognitive (accepting analytically the linguistic and non-verbal – taboos of another community) and affective (adjusting emotions appropriately).

Glaser et al. (2007: 33) draw attention to another fact, namely, the need to heighten consciousness of tolerance of ambiguity, to defer judgement when there is uncertainty and to seek clarification. They also suggest implementing *intercomprehension* as an auxiliary code where the mother tongues of the interlocutors are related. These are either languages related to the learner's mother tongue (or the language of education) or related to a language already learnt (Hidalgo Downing and Vela Delfa 2011: 219). Intercomprehension relies on the assumption that several languages of the same linguistic family are studied in parallel. Similarity between languages promotes learning and activation of inferential strategies. It also allows interlocutors to use their own languages (Candelier et al. 2007; Glaser et al. 2007; Hidalgo Downing and Vela Delfa 2011).

As Niżegorodcew (2011: 33) points out, intercultural communication is a two-way process, aimed at understanding both cultures, one's own and the other/s, and English as a lingua franca can be used by representatives of other cultures as a medium of intercultural communication to make native cultures known to the others and vice versa. Intercultural communication is sometimes compared to translating (cf. Schäffner 2003, in Niżegorodcew 2011: 37). Both intercultural communicators and translators are intercultural mediators. Low level of language skills and intercultural competence can easily lead to misunderstandings and the breaking off relationships.

1.4.1 Intercultural encounters as language-in-action situations. The act of meeting a foreigner gives one a chance to use the language in a particular communicative context. The phrase *language-in-action* denotes the specificity of this situation. Participants of intercultural dialogue do not share a common context. They represent different cultures, speak differ-

ent mother tongues, and may often use the third language to communicate. Successful communication is possible. However, the scenarios for intercultural encounters vary, quite as do the outcomes of the conversation. As intercultural encounters are "language-in-action" situations, they can be analysed from three perspectives, namely:
– the analysis of utterances produced in the course of intercultural interaction, including linguistic analysis and the motivational dimension (intercultural encounters serve here as a test of the individual's language skills);
– the sources of misunderstanding and miscommunication, in particular linguistic and pragmatic failure;
– the strategies to maintain conversational involvement of the interlocutors.

The likelihood of miscommunication or communication failure in intercultural encounters is relatively high and it may result from numerous causes. House, Kasper, and Ross (2003: 1) talk about misunderstanding, miscommunication, and communicative (conversational, pragmatic) failure to describe the possible consequences of inappropriate language use in social interactions. Misunderstanding is often defined as an unsuccessful communication attempt, resulting from the difference between the speaker's intentions and the hearer's expectations (House et al. 2003: 4, 2009). Interestingly, Young (1999: 4) differentiates between misunderstanding and non-understanding. He claims that "when we do not understand the actions of the other we are aware of that fact, whereas when we misunderstand we do not realize it" (1999: 4). Both of these processes are present in narratives describing intercultural encounters, however, misunderstanding is more frequent.

House (2003: 22–23) maintains that misunderstanding stems from inadequate perception or inappropriate comprehension at different (possibly interacting) levels of language, that is, morphosyntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and discoursal levels of language use. The linguistic levels of misunderstanding include the following:
1. Phonetic.
2. Syntactic.
3. Lexical.
4. Semantic.
   – propositional content;
   – reference expressions (external, addressee),
5. Pragmatics.
   – illocutionary force and indirect speech acts;
   – non-literal uses: implicatures, irony, metaphor, etc.;
   – relevance;

– topic;

– plans (Bazanella and Damiano 1999, in House et al. 2003: 6–7).

Misunderstanding can be partial or total. Bremer (2014: 37) states that miscommunication or misunderstandings derive from a single identifiable element – this is a case of lexical comprehension problems or misunderstanding caused by "mishearing" a lexical element. Another category includes those problems in which misunderstanding results from relative degrees of difficulty and misuse of lexico-grammatical rules. Bremer (2014: 37) gives the examples of structural complexity and ellipsis as complementary sources of difficulty. He also mentions content of the utterance. The third category concerns comprehension problems caused by indirectness and implicit discourse norms. For House (2003), the third category, that is, a failure to interpret "real meaning" or communicative intentions is the most interesting to examine.

House (2003: 22–23) argues that misunderstanding on the language levels may stem from gaps in one or both interlocutors' knowledge of the world, or from uncooperativeness on the part of one or both interlocutors who may have understood perfectly well but simply behaved uncooperatively. She also adds that interlocutors may have perceived and comprehended correctly and also intended to cooperate, but failed at the level of utterance production (House 2003: 23).

Roberts (2014: 14) discusses the strategies of conversational involvement that participants of intercultural encounters may perform. In case of limited experience with the new language, the participants will resort to the global and general contextual features characteristic for such encounters (Roberts 2014: 14). This global knowledge enables them to build some expectations about the topics that may be raised and their possible interpretations; different orientation and the discourse roles of the participants (Roberts 2014: 14).

Some other communication strategies to cope with intercultural encounters involve the following (Roberts 2014: 15):

– making some general, impersonal comments;

– developing only those themes which the interlocutor is familiar with and can express himself/herself;

– producing a context which not only reflects the social structure but itself becomes a factor that contributes to the shaping of social reality. Roberts (2014: 15) stresses the mutual dependence between interaction and stereotypes by saying that contact feeds stereotypes just as stereotypes structure contact.

1.4.2 Intercultural encounters as culture bumps – Cross-cultural pragmatics. Each culture is characterised by certain "cultural scripts" of behav-

iour as well as a set of values and beliefs. This determines behaviour, including language behaviour. Cushner and Brislin (1996: 6) say that "most cross-cultural misunderstandings occur at the subjective level of culture (the invisible, less tangible aspects of culture, such as values, attitudes, norms of behaviour, and adopted roles). The term *culture bump* was introduced for the first time by Carol Archer (1986) in reference to some interactional clashes. Dilys Thorp (1991: 116–117) defines "culture bump" as a situation when a person from one culture finds himself/herself in a strange or uncomfortable position when interacting with people of a different culture. Thorp (1991) prefers to use the term *confused encounters* to describe the mismatch of expectations between one interlocutor and another (in her research: faculty and overseas students). The discomfort is the result of deep cultural presuppositions that shape responses to particular situations.

Ting-Toomey (1999: 22–23) assumes that many intercultural encounters involve well-meaning clashes. Introduced by Brislin (1993: 10, in Ting-Toomey 1999: 22–23), the term *well-meaning clashes* refers to misunderstanding encounters in which people are "behaving properly and in a socially skilled manner *according to the norms in their own culture.*" According to Ting-Toomey (1999: 22–23), the term *well-meaning* implies unintentionally inappropriate or unpleasant behaviour. As she explains, "members of different cultural communities have learned different scripts in, for example, conversational opening, maintenance, and termination. They tend to use their own cultural scripts, often on an unconscious level, to evaluate the appropriateness of others' conversational opening or exit. Many intercultural miscommunication episodes start off from well-meaning clashes" (1999: 23).

Seiffge-Krenke and Shulman (1990, in Price and Crapo 2003: 146–147) examined the impact of cultural background on dealing with difficulties by adolescent German and Jewish people. The examples analysed concerned poor marks, conflicts with parents and teachers, fear of being rejected, negative self-concept. The authors noticed that behaviour of German and Jewish adolescents varied significantly. German adolescents actively searched for solutions for the problems; they sought help from external sources, that is, various institutions, and read books, journals to find answers to their problems. Some of them, mostly older adolescents, preferred withdrawal strategies. In contrast, Jewish adolescents tended to rely on internal sources and preferred to find the solution on their own. They displayed the tendency to reflect, be creative in finding the solution, and their coping strategies strongly corresponded to their individual cognitive preferences. Some stayed passive or displayed the tendency to withdraw when approaching a particularly

demanding situation (Seiffge-Krenke and Shulman 1990, in Price and Crapo 2003: 146–147).

As far as language behaviour is concerned, research (McKay 1992; McKay and Hornberger 1996; Gillet 1997) shows that it is often difficult for speakers of other languages to understand "what is meant" by "what is said." It is also difficult for monolingual speakers to recognise that this may be a problem unless they face the situation of misunderstanding. A student who says "Give me a coffee" is seen as rude by an English speaker in the UK.

Jenny Thomas classifies politeness as a linguistic phenomenon. She explains that the utterance should be treated as a case of a linguistic error rather than the violation of social conventions (Gillet 1997). Several authors (e.g., Jiang 2001: 382; Bogdanowska-Jakubowska 2010) provide examples concerning cross-cultural differences in realising and judging politeness, modesty, and the impact the differences have on the conversation. It is widely accepted that to show modesty is to be polite. Leech's modesty maxim says "Minimise praise of self (Maximise dispraise of self)." But the extent to which this maxim is adhered to in different cultures varies greatly. When being complimented, the average English-speaking person would be likely to accept the compliment by saying something like "Thank you" to show his appreciation of the praise, whereas a Chinese speaker would probably try to deny the truth of the compliment. Both are trying to be modest, and probably think that they are behaving politely, but they might perceive the behaviour of the other person as being immodest or untruthful (Jiang 2001: 382). Another issue illustrating cross-cultural differences concerns greetings. Wang Zongyan (1991: 28, in Jiang 2001: 383) notes that in interactions with foreigners, a Chinese person may appear to be excessively inquisitive. Some further examples which have been studied due to potential interpretive ambiguity include the following: complimenting, apologising, requesting, inviting, offering, and responding (Gillet 1997).

Aleksandrowicz-Pędich (2005: 15–16) stresses that there are a large number of possible linguistic and cultural traps. She provides a list of selected, most common issues/situations that may lead to miscommunication or communication problems:

– chronemics, namely, different understandings of the concept of time, different attitudes to punctuality and setting the deadlines;
– lack of knowledge about conversational idioms (e.g., "How are you?");
– politeness (overpoliteness/underpoliteness; inappropriate use of forms of address);
– conversational style, communication style;
– proxemics (distancing);

– kinesics, touch;
– gift-giving;
– eating habits;
– drinking habits, attitudes to alcohol;
– workplace communication and habits, including working patterns and conversational routines;
– forms of address;
– taboos, including topics which may be inappropriate in particular situations (e.g., money, politics or religion);
– physical objects such as clothing or artifacts;
– a sense of humour, including the content of the jokes and ways of reaction (humour expression);
– complaining or complimenting another person (Aleksandrowicz-Pędich 2005: 15–16).

   To sum up, culture bumps can result either in a relationship or in a stereotype. These are affected by the amount of self-reflection, analysis, and communication between the parties involved after the bump occurs. The value of culture bumps lies in their potential to develop understanding of the situations (intercultural encounters as "enlightening situations"). Other benefits of culture bumps are that they can increase our awareness of and sensitivity to culturally different modes of behaviour and developing tolerance for various behaviour patterns (Gillet 1997). In particular, this includes recognition of different cultural patterns at work in the behaviour of people from other countries and cultures as well as the analysis of how our own cultural background influences our behaviour.

1.5 Intercultural encounters as problem-solving tasks

   Another way to look at intercultural encounters is to define them as a sort of problem-solving tasks to complete. Erickson (1982) argues that any learning task requires two sets of knowledge, namely, the Academic Task Structure (ATS) and the Social Participation Structure (SPS). According to him, the ATS deals with the subject matter, whereas the SPS involves knowledge of what social conventions are necessary to cope with the subject. The theory offered by Erickson (1982) explains certain possible problems that an individual might face during intercultural encounters. For Neuner (2001: 88), the aim of the intercultural approach is to concentrate on students' difficulties in dealing with otherness and explaining them. Neuner (2001: 90) is of the opinion that the best way is to focus on cognitive learning and appeal to the following processes:

– activating the learner: bringing to light all that the learners have in their minds;
– establishing connections between the linguistic elements, usage, and sociocultural contexts of mother tongues; first foreign language and subsequent foreign languages;
– stimulating cognitive methods of learning like comparing, inferring, discussing of analogies and differences (transfer/interference).

Asking individuals to reflect upon intercultural encounters makes them consciously examine the above processes, and handle intercultural communication better. Instead of guessing or approaching intercultural encounters in a "trial-and-error" manner, a person will develop control over processes that need to be implemented when interacting with the Other.

1.6 Intercultural encounters as emotion-generation situations

Dialogue entails openness, empathy, and trust (Salo-Lee, 2007: 79–80; 2003: 121). It provides an opportunity to reach understanding and let new ideas emerge (Jokikokko 2010: 81). Dialogue/interaction with the Other is not different in this respect from any other dialogue as it generates a lot of emotions and is accompanied by emotions. Emotions play an important role in intercultural encounters because together with language and interpersonal skills, they affect the outcomes of these encounters. As presented in Gudykunst's anxiety/uncertainty management theory, successful intercultural communication is dependent on the control of anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst 2005, in Samochoviec and Florack 2010: 509). "High levels of anxiety and uncertainty lead to avoidance of intercultural communication, or if contact cannot be avoided, to nervous and tense communication, which is perceived as aversive and ineffective" (Samochoviec and Florack 2010: 509).

Ellis (2008) provides a link between emotions and cognition, saying that emotions drive all cognitive processes, largely determining their qualitative feel, their structure and in part even content. MacIntyre (2002, in Oxford and Cuéllar 2014: 175) goes further in claiming that emotions may be more basic than cognition. He enumerates several functions of emotions, saying that they can act as "an amplifier, providing the intensity, urgency, and energy to propel our behaviour" (MacIntyre 2002, in Oxford and Cuéllar 2014: 175). Emotions are likely to influence behaviour or motivate social reactions (Ortony et al. 1988). They are not theoretical states; they involve a practical concern with a readiness to act (Ze'ev 2000: 6; in Kumar 2004: 96). They are valenced (good or

bad) reactions to events (Aylett at al. 2009: 332). Emotions can be developed in the course of intercultural encounters. The research by Holmes and O'Neill (2012) indicates that focusing the students' attention on their subjective inner thoughts and feelings developed their empathy. It also helped them derive personal sense from the encounter.

Intercultural experiences are often charged with strong feelings, such as excitement, dissatisfaction, fear, anger, joy, insecurity and so on, which are significant triggers of critical reflection. It can also be the case that it is relatively easy to reflect and reason or be aware of something on a cognitive level, but if our emotions do not change, it is very likely that our actions will not change either. Cognitive reflections are thus insufficient without recognising one's emotional states.

However, Zajonc (1980: 157) notes that affective reactions are difficult to verbalise because they require a certain degree of self-knowledge and self-awareness. Besides, the affective reactions (feelings) are not always precise. Sometimes we are not aware that the feeling is there. She also says that affective reactions and judgements are inescapable and not always voluntarily controlled (Zajonc 1980: 156). They are often immediate, instantaneous, and automatic. Literature review (e.g., Bower and Forgas 2001; Evans 2002; Ortony et al. 1988; Oxford 1996) shows that emotions are dependent on our perception and interpretation of a particular situation. In addition, they are constantly evolving and changing. As Ortony et al. (1988: 21) admit, emotions may co-occur and some will occur in sequences. Momentary nature of emotions and other characteristic features make emotions difficult to research. Similarly, selecting appropriate research technique is a challenge. For example, narrativisation promotes self-disclosure and subjectivity. However, it does not measure the similarity of the wording used to describe emotions. It also does not allow respondents to apply other means to report their feelings (e.g., non-verbal channels).

Researchers agree that emotions vary in frequency, intensity, and duration (Kumar 2004; Aylett et al. 2009). The variation is dependent on some individual factors (personality). However, some global factors also play a role as they determine emotional intensity. These are as follows:
– sense of reality (how much do you believe the emotion-inducing situation is real?);
– proximity (how close in psychological space do you feel to the situation?);
– unexpectedness (how surprised are you by the situation?);
– arousal (how much are you aroused prior to the situation?).

Aylett et al. (2009: 330) observe that the participants are likely to feel positive about each other and to display empathic behaviour if an

embodied conversational character matches the cultural expectations of the user (Similarity Principle). The emotional evaluation of the situation is also dependent on the intercultural sensitivity of the person who makes the judgement.

The OCC model (Ortony et al. 1988) demonstrates the nature and complexity of emotions and the impact they may exert on behaviour. All emotions are valenced reactions (in other words, positive or negative) to a situation. The OCC model specifies that valenced reactions can be directed at either the consequences of events, actions of agents, or aspects of objects (Ortony et al. 1988; Steunebrink et al. 2012: 87–88). When discussing intercultural encounters, it would be essential to examine event-based emotions (e.g., satisfaction, dissatisfaction) and relate them to the consequences they bring for others and for self. Ortony et al. (1988) claim that emotions emerge as a response to our evaluation of the following aspect of the situation, namely: its attractiveness (how desirable it is), likelihood, effort, realisation.

For Cushner and Brislin (1996: 3–4), intercultural communication is dependent on successful adjustment in the following areas:
– good personal adjustment, marked by feelings of contentment and well-being;
– development-and-maintenance of good interpersonal relations with hosts marked by respect for people in the other culture, good collegial relations in the community or on the job, free time spent with those of other culture, and sharing of personal information with others;
– task effectiveness (attainment of task-related goals);
– no greater stress or experience of culture shock than would occur in the home culture when moving into a similar role.

Failure to adjust, accompanied by negative emotions and miscommunication may occur at any of the area (Cushner and Brislin 1996: 4).

According to Matsumoto et al. (2005), emotion regulation is indispensable to dealing successfully with intercultural communication. Some researchers (Matsumoto et al. 2005; Alagic et al. 2009) note that "negative feelings" such as anger, frustration, and resentment can easily take over our thinking and feeling over the conflict. Yet by managing our emotions skillfully it is possible to free up our cognitive resources and find suitable solutions.

Cognition, affect, and actions are interlinked. However, it is important to characterise some affective and cognitive factors in detail as they may to a large extent influence intercultural encounters as well as the emotions experienced. A closer look will be given to such factors as empathy, perspective taking, sense making, identity, communication apprehension, willingness to communicate, self-disclosure, and stereotypes.

1.6.1 Empathy. The term empathy is widely perceived as an ability to imagine, understand, and share the thoughts and feelings of other people (Richards et al. 1992: 122). Glaser et al. (2007: 35) define empathy as feeling or concern for others, which leads to some kind of personal and emotional identification. DiStefano and Maznewski (2000: 51–52, in Glaser et al. 2007: 35) talk about empathy as almost getting into somebody's body and mind: "Empathy is getting inside another person's skin, thinking as the other person thinks and feeling what the other person feels." Some researchers (cf. Lewicka 2008a: 81) identify various levels of empathy, namely, emotional, cognitive, moral, and behavioural empathy. All of those types will be briefly presented below:

– Emotional empathy, the most widely known, is the skill of sharing feelings and emotional states with other people (Lewicka 2008a: 81). It originates with innate human states which can be developed and which are weaker at the end of life.
– Cognitive empathy consists in identifying and understanding another person's emotions thanks to efforts made to objectivise obtained information. This type of empathy is altered in the course of learning.
– Moral empathy is related to deeply rooted altruism, which results in prosocial activity.
– Behavioural empathy is expressed in communication situations where we signal to our interlocutors that we have understood their point of view.

   The importance of empathy is undeniable as it contributes to the attitudes we have towards others. It may also determine the degree of success in language learning (Richards et al. 1992: 122). Empathy plays a crucial role in intercultural communication because it facilitates mediation, which is largely based on individual empathic skills (Alred 2003: 19; Zając 2012: 342–343). Empathy leads to knowledge and understanding of the cultures of students and allows students to overcome differences and to join a constructive dialogue (Kosowicz 2012: 335). For Byram (1989: 89) empathy can be linked with tolerance. Glaser et al. (2007: 35) add that both (empathy and tolerance) require flexible attitudes and the capacity to decentre. These two skills are essential for intercultural communication. However, according to Byram (1989) empathy is a more demanding process because it does not only result in passive acceptance of otherness but it also leads to real understanding and change of perspective.

   As noted by Alred (2003: 21), empathy varies in degree and in its expression. The author also points out that there are cultural differences in how empathy is communicated, for example, "Americans prefer verbal articulateness and expression, whereas Asians often convey

their empathtic awareness non-verbally" (Alred 2003: 21). For these reasons, "empathy training in one culture" may not prepare a person to communicate effectively with representatives of other cultures (Alred 2003: 21).

1.6.2 Perspective-taking and sense-making. Glaser et al. (2007: 35) consider perspective taking as a fifth competence, which presupposes the capacity to see things from somebody else's position. Perspective taking, according to Glaser et al. (2007: 35), is a highly demanding factor because looking at reality from different viewpoints is a difficult task for human beings who are usually socialised in a particular community and therefore have deep-rooted beliefs, values, and assumptions, most of them taken for granted and unconscious. Perspective-taking rests on qualities such as empathy, flexibility, decentring, open-mindedness, and coping with ambiguity.

The intercultural team member also has to develop the competence of sense-making, defined as the preparedness to deal with new information, uncertainty, and ambiguity, and to process those elements in a coherent way with pre-existing conceptual frameworks. As Dervin (1999: 740; in Glaser et al. 2007: 34) points out: "Making sense assumes the actor as theorist of her world with hunches, hypotheses and generalizations about how things connect to things and how power flows." Olsson (2005: 2, in Glaser et al. 2007: 34) relates this competence with discourse analysis and social constructivist theory as sense-making ultimately depends on language: "Language is seen as the primary shaper of observations and interpretations of the world (see Dervin 1991: 46–47; Dervin et al. 1992: 7, in Glaser et al. 2007: 34). Information is about what people do with language and what language does to people (Talja 1997: 71, in Glaser et al. 2007: 34).

Glaser et al. (2007: 35) claim that sense-making involves the ability to interpret documents, facts, incidents/events or any other emerging cultural artifact. This is very much related to what Byram et al. (2002: 13, in Glaser et al. 2007: 35) call the "skills of interpreting and relating" or "savoir comprendre," defined as "the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own." But interpretation is not enough; sense-making also implies making meaning. The intercultural citizen has to make meaning of new or unexpected documents or events. In Byram et al.'s terms (2002: 13, in Glaser et al. 2007: 35) these are the "skills of discovery and interaction/savoir apprendre-faire," 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." Finally, sense-making entails identifying/perceiving and understanding prevalent values, beliefs, and norms in a situation. These are not always apparent and failure to identify and understand them may well result in misunderstandings (Glaser et al. 2007: 35).

1.6.3 Identity and self-construals. Cultural identity is one of the widely discussed issues in intercultural communication (Young and Sercombe 2010). The exposure to a different culture definitely makes "the individual redefine an understanding of self and/or the surrounding world" (Arthur 2001: 42). Alred et al. (2003: 4) say that "experience of otherness creates a potential for questioning the taken-for-granted in one's own self and environment." Researchers also talk about cross-cultural transition (Arthur 201: 42), switching between the cultural identity of the old and the new culture, and cultural frame-switching (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martinez 2013: 48).

As noted by Arthur (2001: 42), "the experience of cross-cultural transition inevitably involves a challenge to personal meanings and beliefs. It also raises questions about adjustment and cross-cultural effectiveness." Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martinez (2013: 48) mention stress resulting from cultural switching, unpredictability of social cues and unfamiliarity of social symbols. They claim that "cultural frame-switching is easier when the cultural identities of two people are compatible" (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martinez 2013: 47).

Other researchers comment upon a self-construal, which is conceptualised as how individuals see the relationship of their self to others or their self as at a distance from others (Singelis and Sharkey 1995). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), there are two types of self-construals: independent and interdependent. An independent self-construal is a unique entity that emphasises a person's own internal thoughts and feelings. An interdependent self-construal is defined as an entity that is closely intertwined with others and that is responsive to, and dependent on, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. Some researchers (e.g., Gudykunst and Matsumoto 1996; Matsumoto et al. 1989; Kim 1994; Singelis and Sharkey 1995) report that individuals' self-construals are shaped by cultural influences.

Independent self-construals are representative of individualistic cultures, while interdependent self-construals are representative of collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst et al. 1996; Singelis and Sharkey 1995). Hence, US Americans have independent self-construals and Koreans have interdependent self-construals. The findings of Kim et al. (2007) and Merkin (2009) show that the higher one's independent self-construal, the less

likely one is to be apprehensive and the higher one's interdependent self-construal, the more likely one is to be apprehensive.

1.6.4 Communication apprehension. Communication apprehension is defined by McCroskey (1982) as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons. McCroskey and Beatty (1986: 281) say that communication apprehension is a subjective, affective experience, which can be treated as pure trait or pure state. Consequently, McCroskey and Beatty (1986: 281) identify four types, namely:

1. Trait-like communication apprehension – viewed as a relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward oral communication across a wide variety of contexts.
2. Generalised-context communication apprehension – a relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward oral communication in a given type of communication context.
3. Person-group communication apprehension – relatively enduring, personality-type orientation toward oral communication in a given person or group of people.
4. Situational communication apprehension – a transitory orientation toward oral communication in a given person or group of people. It is not viewed as dependent on personality but rather as a response to the situational constraints generated by the other person or group.

General communication apprehension appears in all possible situations in which an individual is exposed to speaking or participating in all forms of discussion. In contrast, specific communication apprehension manifests itself only in some particular conditions, for example:

– given topic may be the cause of the learner's fright;
– interlocutors or some members of the audience evoke feelings of tension or anxiety;
– the situation or the environment may cause some fear in the individual.

McCroskey and Beatty (1986: 286) enumerate some effects that communication apprehension exerts on the interaction:

– high communication apprehension is negatively correlated with desirable outcomes in interpersonal relationships;
– the higher the communication apprehension, the greater the internal conflict;
– high communication apprehension manifests itself in three patterns of behavioural responses, such as: communication avoidance, communication withdrawal, and communication disruption. The atypical pattern is excessive communication (overcommunication).

The three components of desired communication learning are: communication competence, communication skill (being able to produce appropriate communication behaviours physically), and positive communication affect (liking and wanting to produce appropriate communication behaviours) (McCroskey and Beatty 1986: 288; McCroskey 1982: 37). Research (McCroskey 2009; Gałajda 2012) indicates that high communication apprehension leads to withdrawal or avoidance of oral interaction. High communication apprehension determines the context and frequency of social contacts as it is related to a low level of willingness to communicate (Gałajda 2012).

As far as intercultural encounters are concerned, communication apprehension may affect the quantity (i.e., the frequency of contacts and the likelihood of initiating the encounter) and the quality of interaction (the type of communication patterns and the general feelings experienced during conversation).

1.6.5 Willingness to communicate. This concept, introduced as a complementation to the research on communication apprehension and communicative anxiety, is crucial for analysing intercultural communication. Willingness to communicate (WTC) is defined as "an individual's general personality orientation towards talking" (McCroskey and Richmond 1987: 131) and "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using L2" (MacIntyre et al. 1998). Both definitions capture the fact that willingness to communicate is an individual feature that may determine the probability of engaging in communication (in other words, the frequency of oral interactions).

When it comes to intercultural encounters, willingness to communicate together with openness can determine the frequency of contacts with the Other. Communication anxiety (i.e., the level of fear with actual and anticipated communication) and perceived communicative competence (i.e., belief that one can communicate effectively in a given context) are the strongest predictors of WTC. To be successful in intercultural communication, individuals need to manage uncertainty and anxiety experienced in communication contexts with strangers (Florack et al. 2014: 279). Uncertainty (classified as a cognitive component) may result from lack of knowledge about cultural norms, values, and appropriate behaviours. It is also related to feeling cognitively unsure of how to react or how others would react to individual's communicative attempts (Florack et al. 2014: 279). Uncertainty is often accompanied by a feeling of unease or tension (i.e., an affective component; Florack et al. 2014: 279). Difficulty in handling uncertainty and anxiety leads to interaction avoidance.

1.6.6 Self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is often defined as the process of revealing personal information that another person would be unlikely to discover from others or through third sources (Lin et al. 2011; Adler and Proctor 2014; Cayanus et al. 2009; Chen and Nakazawa 2012; Smith et al. 2013). Self-disclosure is the expression of personal information that is of a descriptive, affective, or evaluative nature (Littlejohn and Foss 2009: 872). Lustig (2013) stresses the fact that self-disclosure can be both conscious and unconscious.

Self-disclosure is one of the components of effective communication (Chen 1991; Chen 2002; Littlejohn and Foss 2009). It determines solidarity and relation-building. In the classroom contexts, teacher's self-disclosure may influence the amount of teacher-students out-of-class communication, students' interest and engagement (Cayanus et al. 2009: 109).

As far as the process of communication is concerned, self-disclosure plays an important role, and it affects communication in different ways:
– as an individual predisposition (a personal feature), self-disclosure is essential for communication, because it serves as a predictor of how well a person would cope with interaction (Jandt 2010: 35–37);
– self-disclosure is a factor that contributes to relationship building and maintenance. Parameters of self-disclosure include the following: the breadth (the variety or number of the topics covered) and depth (the intimacy, privacy, sincerity, and personal character) and duration (the time spent on revealing the information). They would determine the nature and quality of the relationships (Jandt 2010; Misoch 2015). However, it should be noted that when studying interpersonal relationships, there are different dimensions such as intent, amount, valence, honesty, and intimacy that also need to be taken into consideration (Cayanus et al. 2009: 106).
– as a part of open communication, self-disclosure includes a lack of topic avoidance (Neulie 2015: 353). In other words, certain topics are welcome or even required in the communication process, whereas others are undesirable. More detailed comments concerning the topic coverage and topic avoidance would be presented in subchapter 1.6.7.

When examining self-disclosure in detail, the following characteristics can be provided:
– self-disclosure is irreversible – once certain information is conveyed, it cannot be forgotten;
– self-disclosure is unequal – people disclose to the varying degrees depending on some individual factors and cultural norms (certain topics are allowed in some cultures, and not in others);

– disclosure is also dependent on two contextual variables, namely: audience and topic, which affect its degree. As Frye and Dornish (2010) suggest, people are more likely to disclose to audiences for whom they have greater liking and to whom they feel closer. Research shows that people disclose significantly more and faster to strangers when future interaction does not seem to be probable (the "stranger-on-the-train" effect, for details see: John, Acquisti, and Loewenstein 2011, in Misoch 2015). If we take the content of conversation into account, people are more likely to disclose when they are discussing less intimate topics (Frye and Dornish 2010). This implies the fact that disclosure is not constant (Frye and Dornish 2010);
– disclosure is highly reciprocal; self-disclosure results in other-disclosure (Sanders and Wiseman 1993: 3);
– by increasing comfort levels of the communicators, non-verbal immediacy creates more open interaction (Sanders and Wiseman 1993: 3);
– self-disclosure may result in professional and material losses;
– self-disclosure is determined by culture and its rules. Following the rules about self-disclosure brings approval, and violating them brings disapproval or even social rejection. Cultural studies have identified cultural variations in topics, timing, amount of self-disclosure, and degree of relational intimacy in interpersonal relationships (Jackson 2014).

1.6.7 Cultural differences in self-disclosure. As stated earlier, self-disclosure is part of the communication process, and as such is largely dependent on cultural norms. Culture norms and values govern the degree to which it is acceptable to self-disclose as well as they determine the range of topics that can be tackled. Culture is a significant predictor of self-disclosure (Celenk et al. 2011). Research indicates that for Americans, self-disclosure is a strategy to make various types of relationships work, whereas for Chinese, it is a gift shared only with the most intimate relatives and friends (Chen 1995, in Celenk et al. 2011; Xi 1994: 155, in Liu et al. 2011: 182–183). This, in turn, has some impact on the flow of the conversation. For example, US Americans generally feel more comfortable sharing family problems or tensions with their colleagues. In Chinese culture, self-disclosure about family problems takes place between close friends or relatives (Xi 1994: 155, in Liu et al. 2011: 182–183). Gudykunkst (1986, in Sanders and Wiseman 1993) pointed out that African Americans disclosed more often than Euro-Africans across a variety of interethnic relationships.

Some other examples relate to the content of the conversations and the amount of personal information an individual is expected to disclose. For example, in China (or Korea) it is common to ask and dis-

close information about one's income and age, even when meeting for the first time. In England, however, people are hesitant to reveal such private information (Liu et al. 2011: 182–183).

Researchers (e.g., Adler and Proctor 2014: 30; Chen and Nakazawa 2012: 123) agree that self-disclosure is one of the major interactive techniques utilised to reduce uncertainty and develop intercultural relationships. One of the strategy of self-disclosure concerns confessing your cultural ignorance. It is represented by the comment: "This is very new to me. What's the right thing to do in this situation?" (Adler and Proctor 2014: 30). According to the authors, admitting your cultural ignorance is ineffective because the cultures vary in the degree of sincerity and self-disclosure that is allowed. Consequently, it may lead to communication failure (Adler and Proctor 2014: 30).

Summing up, self-disclosure, understood as willingness of individuals to openly and appropriately reveal information about themselves, is undoubtedly crucial for successful intercultural interaction (Jandt 2010: 35–37). However, it should be examined in relation to some other personal traits that also play a role, namely, self-concept (the way in which a person views the self), self-monitoring (controlling and modifying one's self-presentation and expressive behaviour), and social relaxation (the ability to reveal little anxiety in communication).

1.6.8 Stereotypes. Stereotypes are simplified "pictures in our heads" (Lippmann 1922, in Hinton 2000: 3; Lebedko 2013; Nelson 2003) or "person perception schemas of a particular group of people (Fiske 1998, in Ruble and Zhang 2013: 203). McGarty et al. (2002: 1–2, in Lebedko 2013: 6) list three guiding principles that illustrate the functions of stereotypes: "stereotypes are aids to explanation," "stereotypes are energy saving devices," "stereotypes are shared group beliefs." Stereotypes reflect our beliefs, prejudices, opinions and are congruent with wider social trends. Stereotypes derive not from personal authentic experience but from tradition, folk wisdom, and borrowing. Personal experience can reinforce or disprove particular stereotypes.

Stereotypes play an important role in intercultural communication. As noted by Rbule and Zhang (2013: 203), "typically, stereotypes about cultural groups are varied and contain a combination of both positive and negative attributes." The authors identify some research tendencies on stereotyping in intercultural communication, namely, "the reasons why individuals rely on stereotypes in interactions (*stereotype functions*), the ways stereotypes work in interactions or the ways they can be changed (*stereotype processes*), and *stereotype content*" (Ruble and Zhang 2013: 203).

The social function of the stereotype is a protection or defence of widely recognised and socially accepted traditions. The stereotype is a specific cognitive construction (Nelson 2003; Pieklarz 2004; Ruble and Zhang 2013). That is why it has the following dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and pragmatic (Pieklarz 2004: 82). Selective perception, that is, noticing facts that confirm our stereotypes, leads to a specific attitude, which later on determines our behaviour. According to Sievers (2008), cultural stereotypes can be realised and recognised during intercultural encounters. Facing the Other promotes the discovery of differences, while similarities can break down barriers and false perceptions. Pieklarz (2004: 83) recommends confronting students with their stereotypes and triggering their reflection on the opinions and beliefs they have about a particular society. The more advanced levels of language proficiency, the more essential it is for the learners to question their stereotypes.

1.6.9 Culture shock. Culture shock is the process of individual's adjustment to an unfamiliar environment (Pedersen 1995: 1). This process of adjustment takes place on various levels, that is: emotional, psychological, behavioural, cognitive, and physiological (Pedersen 1995: 1). Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg 1960: 1777, in Gaw 2000: 85). For Adler (1981: 343, in Gaw 2000: 85), "culture shock is related to the frustration and confusion that result from being bombarded by unpredictable cues."

Pedersen (1995: 1) claims that experiencing a new culture is a sudden and sometimes unpleasant feeling causing persons to re-evaluate both the new host and their own home culture. Oberg (1960, in Pedersen 1995: 1) mentioned six negative aspects of culture shock including: (1) strain resulting from the effort of psychological adaptation; (2) a sense of loss or deprivation referring to the removal of former friends, status, role, and/or possessions; (3) rejection by or rejection of the new culture; (4) confusion in the role definition, role expectations, feelings, and self-identity; (5) unexpected anxiety, disgust, or indignation regarding cultural differences between the old and new ways; and (6) feelings of helplessness as a result of not coping well in the new environment.

Adler (1975, in Pedersen 1995: 3) describes five stages of culture shock:
1. The honeymoon stage – where the newly arrived individual experiences curiosity and excitement of a tourist, but his/her identity is rooted in the back-home setting. The emotions experienced at that stage concern the following: excitement, stimulation, euphoria, playfulness,

discovery, and adventuresomeness (Pedersen 1995: 27). The behaviours are guided by curiosity, interest, self-assurance, and the collecting of interesting experiences or impressions (Pedersen 1995: 27).

2. The disintegration stage – it involves disintegration of the old familiar cues. The individual is overwhelmed by the new culture's requirements. The individual typically experiences self-blame and a sense of personal inadequacy for any difficulties encountered.

3. The reintegration stage – it concerns reintegration of new cues and an increased ability to function in a new culture. The individual experiences anger and resentment toward new culture as having caused difficulties and being less adequate than the old familiar ways.

4. The autonomy stage – gradual autonomy and increased ability to see the bad and good elements in both the old and the new cultures. A balanced perspective emerges, which enables appropriate interpretation of both cultures.

5. The interdependence stage (reciprocal interdependence, where the person has ideally achieved biculturality, or has become fluently comfortable in both the old and the new cultures.

1.7 The intercultural continuum

Intercultural mobility is sometimes perceived as a frame of mind, because it allows any cross-cultural encounter to turn into an intercultural one and "it transforms both parties" (Phipps and Gonzales 2004: 22, in Glaser et al. 2007: 45). It is also "a journey into intercultural being" as it enables one, through *languaging*, to explore self and social context (Phipps and Gonzales 2004: 22, in Glaser et al. 2007: 45). It implies, therefore, a lengthy process of discovery, travelling back and forth, learning and unlearning, trying, struggling, appreciating, and transforming. Intercultural mobility is also described as liquid interculturality to denote its dynamic character. Jokikokko (2010: 31–32) refers to it as a transformative process.

Languaging, together with reflection, is essential for the *intercultural continuum*. It is "a life skill" because verbalisation promotes reflection and internal dialogue. Languaging is also "inextricably interwoven with social experience" (Phipps and Gonzalez 2004: 2, in Glaser et al. 2007: 45). The authors suggest "a critical cycle" to support the process of intercultural learning (Glaser et al. 2007: 45). "The critical cycle" is "a reflective, exploratory, dialogical and active stance towards cultural knowledge and life that allows for dissonance, contradiction, and conflict as well as for consensus, concurrence, and

transformation" (Guilherme 2002: 21, in Glaser et al. 2007: 45). It entails moving through a series of operations "gathered in three main moments:

– when one approaches and responds to culture(s) – experiencing exploring, wondering, and speculating;
– when one engages with and embarks on (inter)cultural observation, research, and interpretation – appreciating, commenting, comparing, reflecting, analysing, and questioning. According to Jokikokko (2010: 31–32), the process of critical reflection is particularly essential as it enables people to challenge their personal constructs built on prior experiences and knowledge;
– when one performs (inter)cultural acts and transforms cultural life-hypothesising, evaluating, negotiating, deciding, *different*, and acting" (Guilherme 2002: 221, in Glaser et al. 2007: 46). Such operations should nevertheless require "a cognitive and emotional endeavour that aim at individual and collective emancipation, social justice and political commitment" (Guilherme 2002: 219, in Glaser et al. 2007: 46).

1.7.1 Interculture, interlanguage. The term *interculture* was developed by Kordes (1991: 300–301, in Glaser et al. 2007: 37) by analogy with Selinker's notion of interlanguage. Similarly to the interlanguage, interculture designates the transition stages between the home culture and the target culture in the process of one's own intercultural development. Interculture is defined in relation to the individuals' degree of cultural competence, and this fluctuates between the native and the target culture and departs from the first culture as their familiarity with the target culture increases. Liddicoat (2005, in Glaser et al. 2007: 37) argues that, like individuals' interlanguage, interculture comprises characteristics of the first culture, features extracted from the target culture and further elements that belong to neither of them but are peculiar to the learners in their way of hypothesising about and dealing with cultural phenomena. For her, native-like mastery of the target culture creates various problems (Liddicoat 2005, in Glaser et al. 2007: 37).

The final stage in the development of interculture would not be a native-like command of the target cultural patterns, but rather the development of an optimal distance from each of these two cultures that allows both relativisation of the first culture and personal growth (Kordes and Meyer 1991, in Glaser et al. 2007: 37).

Glaser et al. (2007: 37) stress the fact that in the transformational model of intercultural competence, interlanguage and interculture are important elements because each individual's interlanguage and interculture are unique and dynamic. According to them, the intercultural

learner is always between languages and cultures, and their interlanguage and interculture will be dynamic. Hence it is possible that individuals who show high proficiency in the target language(s) may not be successful in intercultural interactions. On the other hand, individuals with a limited command of the target language(s) may possess a much bigger degree of intercultural competence and be more successful (Glaser et al. 2007: 38).

1.7.2 Cultural intelligence. The concept of *cultural intelligence* (CQ) is defined as a person's capacity to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts (Earley and Ang 2003: 9, Glaser et al. 2007: 28). Earley and Ang (2003: 9–11) distinguish three aspects of cultural intelligence, namely:

1. Cognitive – referring to general cognitive skills used to create conceptualisations of how to function and operate within a new culture as well as culture-specific knowledge (both procedural and declarative). In 2006, Ang et al. (2006: 101) expanded this aspect to "mental intelligence," including both cognitive and metacognitive subcomponents. Metacognitive CQ reflects the processes the individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge. The cognitive aspect is connected with general knowledge and knowledge structures about culture (Ang et al. 2006: 101). The cognitive aspect addresses the question: "Do I know what is happening?" (Earley and Ang 2003: xii).

2. Motivational – adaptation to another culture requires both understanding this culture and feeling motivated to get engaged into new settings and new interactions. For Earley and Ang (2003), motivational aspect of CQ includes self-efficacy expectations, goal-setting and self-concept evaluation through identity. The motivational aspect can be summarised by the question, "Am I motivated to act?" (Earley and Ang 2003: xii).

3. Behavioural – referring to the capability of an individual to actually engage in behaviours that are adaptive (Earley and Ang 2003: 11). It encompasses behavioural responses and overt reactions (both verbal and non-verbal) to particular linguistic nuances. The following question best captures the idea of the behavioural aspect: "Can I respond appropriately and effectively?"

Research conducted by Earley and Ang (2003) shows that mental CQ (both cognitive and metacognitive) significantly predicted cultural judgement, decision making, and task performance. Motivational CQ significantly predicted general adjustment in intercultural environments, whereas behavioural CQ was related to task performance and general adjustments in intercultural environments. Other studies indicate a positive relationship between cultural intelligence and cultural adapta-

tion, expatriate job performance, intercultural negotiation effectiveness and team processes in multicultural teams (Van Dyne et al. 2012: 296). According to Ng et al. (2012: 43), CQ predicted the development of social networks in a culturally diverse group of students. Another example relates to frequency of intercultural contacts; non-native-English-speaking employees with higher CQ had more frequent interactions with native-English-speaking employees (Ng et al. 2012: 42). Cultural intelligence is a malleable capacity that can be developed over time (Ng et al. 2012; Van Dyne et al. 2012).

1.7.3 Intercultural competence. Understanding and acting successfully during intercultural encounters would not be possible without some personal predispositions or features of a potential participant of intercultural interaction. A culturally competent learner must possess: sociolinguistic competence, pragmatic competence, sociocultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness (Byram 2000; the Council of Europe 2001: 101–130; Chłopek 2008: 11). Consequently, the concept of *intercultural competence* seems indispensable. As defined by Byram (1997), intercultural competence is the ability to see yourself as others see you, to respond to them in the light of that, and to interact with them accordingly. Similarly, Beneke (2000: 108–109) describes this concept as an ability to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others. Intercultural competence is also connected with the awareness of culture related issues. Bandura (2011: 43) stresses the fact that intercultural competence is independent of any particular language or culture. As a result, it can be developed irrespective of one's fluency in a given language. Intercultural competence is seen both as a condition and an aim of intercultural contact (Jokikokko 2010: 13).

Intercultural competence is described as a multidimensional concept (Chłopek 2008; Niżegorodcew 2011: 37). The most influential model of intercultural competence by Byram (1997: 5–7) provides the following components:
– intercultural attitudes;
– knowledge of social groups;
– skills of interpreting;
– skills of discovery and interaction;
– critical cultural awareness/political education.

Sometimes intercultural competence is briefly presented in terms of various *savoirs*, that is, declarative knowledge (*savoir*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*) and existential competence (*savoir-être*) (Byram 2000). The savoirs can manifest themselves in any forms of intercultural situations. The model offered a bit later by Deardorff (2006) bears

some similarity as it focuses on attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are essential for appropriate and effective intercultural communication. An interesting model is suggested by Chen and Starosta (1996, in Jandt 2010: 53) who define intercultural competence as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communicative behaviours that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment." According to the authors, competent communicators interact effectively and appropriately to achieve their own goals and respect and affirm the cultural identities of those with whom they interact (Jandt 2010: 53). Their model, which provides background for INCA project, includes three perspectives:

1. Affective or intercultural sensitivity – to acknowledge and respect cultural differences.
2. Cognitive or intercultural awareness – self-awareness of one's own personal cultural identity and understanding how cultures vary.
3. Behavioural or intercultural adroitness – message skills, knowledge of appropriate self-disclosure, behavioural flexibility, interaction management, and social skills (Jandt 2010: 53).

As Jokikokko (2010: 24) points out, intercultural competence is sometimes viewed as something that, in addition to performance of action, encompasses intellectual, cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, and social dimensions. Hanley (1999) enumerates self-knowledge (i.e., introspection and self-understanding), experience (i.e., unmediated experience, contacts with other cultures), and an inclination for positive change as crucial components of intercultural competence. For Bandura (2011: 43), it is cultural self-awareness and knowledge that are essential to one's intracultural competence, which together with the understanding of one's interlocutors' cultures and of the nature of the process of communication itself, is required to establish intercultural relationships and communicate successfully.

And finally, there is the INCA project which links Byram's (1997) Framework for Intercultural Competence Learning to the needs of industry. The idea of the INCA project team was to produce a clear and transparent framework that can be used in promoting intercultural awareness, mostly as part of a vocational languages programme. The initiators of the INCA project distinguish six intercultural competences, which are presented below:

1. Tolerance of ambiguity (TA) = Tolerance for ambiguity is understood as the ability to accept ambiguity and lack of clarity. It also denotes individual's ability to deal with ambiguity in a constructive way. In other words, the unexpected and unfamiliar situation is perceived as an enjoyable challenge; any potential problems are

resolved by applying adequate solutions (www.incaproject.org, accessed 01.10.2012).

2. Behavioural flexibility (BF) = Behavioural flexibility is the ability to adapt one's own behaviour to different requirements and situations. In other words, it means modifying individual's ways of working so as to avoid unnecessary conflicts of procedure and expectation. It also relates to accepting other people's customs or less familiar working procedures if this facilitates cooperation and mutual agreement (www.incaproject.org, accessed 01.10.2012).

3. Communicative awareness (CA) = The ability to establish relationships between linguistic expressions and cultural contents, to identify and consciously work with various communicative conventions of foreign partners, and to modify correspondingly one's own linguistic forms of expression. In practice, it means paying attention to any examples of misunderstanding which may result from differences in speech, gestures, and body language. Communicative awareness also manifests itself in seeking clarification and being willing to adopt less familiar conventions if necessary (www.incaproject.org, accessed 01.10.2012).

4. Knowledge discovery (KD) = The ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to apply that knowledge, those attitudes and those skills in real time communication and interaction. It refers to individual's willingness to research in advance and to learn from intercultural encounters (www.incaproject. org, accessed 01.10.2012).

5. Respect for Otherness (RO) = Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. In other words, it means regarding other people's values, customs, and practices as worthwhile in their own right and not merely as different from the norm. It also relates to respecting other people's values, customs, and practices, however, being able to adopt a firm but diplomatic stance over disputable points (www.incaproject.org, accessed 01.10.2012).

6. Empathy (E) = The ability to intuitively understand what other people think and how they feel in concrete situations. Empathic people can deal appropriately with the feelings, wishes, and ways of thinking of other persons. Empathy relates to the ability to see and feel a situation through the eye's of other people. Although it depends on individual's personal knowledge and expectations, empathy goes beyond awareness of facts. The initiators of the INCA project stress the fact that empathy often shows itself in a concern not to hurt others' feelings or infringe their system of values (www.incaproject. org, accessed 01.10.2012).

The competences can also be classified into three broader categories, denoting three levels of performance, namely:

1. Openness – this category encompasses Respect for Other Cultures and Tolerance of Ambiguity. It means openness to the other and to situations in which something is done differently. This implies acceptance and tolerance of the Other who is different and does things differently.
2. Knowledge – this includes Knowledge Discovery and Empathy. Knowledge implies both factual knowledge (the hard facts about a situation or about a certain culture) and interpersonal knowledge (recognising the feelings of the other person). This category also refers to sensitivity to others (understanding how your interlocutor feels).
3. Adaptability – the term covers both Behavioural Flexibility and Communicative Awareness. It refers to the ability to modify and adjust your behaviour and your style of communication (www.incaproject. org, accessed 01.10.2012).

The intention of the INCA project team was to provide a little simplified and more user-friendly framework of skills and competences, which could be easily applied to particular situations and behaviour (further details on INCA project – www.incaproject.org, accessed 01.10.2012).

1.7.4 Intercultural sensitivity and other conditions for intercultural learning. Developing understanding of and seeing the relationship between cultures requires two processes: an intellectual process and a consideration of personal experience (Byram and Zarate 1995: 15; Jokikokko 2010: 20). The intellectual process activates a range of cognitive skills (e.g., critical thinking skills, interpretive skills, etc.) that allow an individual to handle the relationship with otherness and make sense of it. However, some other predispositions are required to let a person benefit from immediate actual intercultural experiences. Jokikokko (2010: 34) talks about a certain amount of tolerance of uncertainty and stress, interest, flexibility as well as openness towards otherness and diversity. Jokikokko (2010: 93) also mentions self-knowledge, self-transcendence, and self-criticism.

Interdependence of these two processes is best explained by Taylor (2000: 291, in Jokikokko 2010: 72–73), who says that people rarely change their views through purely rational processes ("analyze-think-change") but are more likely to change in a "see-feel-change" sequence. Without the expression and recognition of feelings, people will not embark upon critical reflection (Taylor 2000: 291, in Jokikokko 2010: 72–73). This would justify the experiential approaches to intercultural competence development. This also corresponds to the concept of intercultural sen-

sitivity and the Glaser's idea of "Learning – Unlearning – Relearning," which will briefly be discussed in the following subsections.

Introduced by Bennett (1993), the term *intercultural sensitivity* is defined as "the complexity of perception of cultural difference, so that higher sensitivity refers to more complex perceptual discriminations of such differences" (Bennett 2009: 4). Jokikokko (2010: 71–72) notes that sensitivity alone is insufficient; it needs to be complemented with knowledge and skills. According to Bennett (2009), intercultural competence is the more visible side of intercultural sensitivity referring to our actions. Bennett (1993: 26) argues that the development of intercultural sensitivity is ultimately the development of consciousness and, through consciousness, developing a new "natural approach" to cultural differences.

1.7.5 Learning – unlearning – relearning. The idea of "learning – unlearning – relearning," put forward by Glaser et al. (2007: 39), refers to the process of revisiting, reinterpreting and even discrediting previous knowledge before constructing a new (sometimes temporary and incomplete) body of facts. The first two steps are natural, yet essential in the process of becoming interculturally competent. If an individual's perception is determined by his/her L1 cultural background, s/he needs to re-evaluate the norms of behaviour and knowledge gained during L1 culture acquisition, abandon and reinterpret them in the light of encounters with L2 culture. "Unlearning is unpacking some old baggage" (Wink 1997: 14, in Glaser et al. 2007: 39). Glaser et al. (2007: 39) claim that unlearning involves recognising the validity of other perspectives, noticing differences and exceptions. It also means redefinition of the meaning of previously known concepts. Only then is one ready to accept new information. Initially, the cycle consisted of two steps ("learning – unlearning"). Later on, the third step was added ("learning – unlearning – relearning") to stress the opportunity to challenge one's paradigms and re-read the world (Glaser et al. 2007: 29). Learning stands for facing something new or different; unlearning means re-examining and reconsidering new and old concepts. Relearning means modifying new and old concepts so as to construct a coherent body of knowledge.

There is one more interpretation to this "learning – unlearning – relearning cycle." Getting involved in the process of re-defining or re-reading the world may include some uncomfortable moments of instability and insecurity. Glaser et al. (2007: 39) admit that linguistic diversity and cultural dissonance pose a challenge for an individual who has to be flexible, creative, and ready to do it. They also highlight

the interconnectedness between experience and reflective thinking and its contribution to democratic life (Glaser et al. 2007: 39). Reflective thinking about experience generates experiential learning. A person who successfully engages in "learning – unlearning – relearning cycle" develops skills necessary for active democracy and citizenship (Glaser et al. 2007: 39).

According to Glaser et al. (2007: 40), the process of "learning-un-learning-relearning" affects individual's behaviour and is observable at various levels. It manifests itself in cognitive growth but also psychological, emotional, civic and ethical unfolding. It is a dynamic process which may aid intercultural competence development. The authors suggest implementing the "learning – unlearning – relearning" cycle to promote "a critical view of intercultural interaction" (Phipps and Guilherme 2004: 3, in Glaser et al. 2007: 40). It helps to critically examine one's own and other cultural backgrounds.

1.8 Obstacles to intercultural communication

As stated earlier, communication during an intercultural encounter is a challenge. A person who encounters an unfamiliar culture may lack knowledge of typical and culturally specific behaviour. S/he may also lack awareness of expectations and interpretations of other people's linguistic and non-linguistic performance. This, in turn, may lead to amusing situations, and even conflict, caused by unintended miscommunication (Chłopek 2008: 11).

Communication is largely dependent on unspoken cultural rules, created by a community, which are full of meaning and which "allow people to anticipate events" (Kramsch 1995: 2; Chłopek 2008: 11). Thus, according to Zając (2012: 344), intercultural communication may result in conflict, dependent on both ethnicity and identity, which is to a certain extent unavoidable. Barriers to cross-cultural communication can be defined as any impediments resulting in misunderstanding, lack of knowledge and misinformation, generalisations, judgements, and stereotypes (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 23–24). Kosowicz (in Zając 2012: 335) mentions the following difficulties: stereotypes, oversimplification, selective construals, non-verbal and paralinguistic inconsistency, and divergent discourse patterns. Zając (2012: 340–341) is of the opinion that culture-based problems are likely to appear in the communication of interlocutors representing different cultures sooner or later. According to her (Zając 2012: 335), a list of potential difficulties (obstacles) includes the following:

- meaning attributed by society or connotations specific to a given lexeme and its cultural representation;
- speech acts and their culture-specific method of performing individual functions, such as apologising, reproaching, promising, etc.;
- internal organisation of communication, including specific discourse conventions, for example, yielding floor, interrupting, negotiation stages, etc.;
- topic discussed, depending on a situation (public or private);
- type of communication in the case of direct or indirect communication and the level of its explicitness;
- language registers forming alternative methods of expressing thoughts related to a specific situation, speaker's age, interlocutor's social status, and the language register;
- para-verbal factors, such as loudness, speed, pausing, and rhythm;
- non-verbal factors such as gesticulation and proxemics;
- values and attitudes specific to individual cultures (this criterion refers to the above-mentioned cultural norms);
- actions, their sequences and cultural rituals (including verbal and non-verbal actions specific to a given culture, such as welcome kisses in France).

The enumerated culture-based problems may be the source of miscommunication or communication failure as they can distort the real intention of the interlocutor. However, the list does not exhaust the topic. Other obstacles to intercultural communication concern "cultural interference" or "sociocultural transfer" (Kramsh 1995), which results in perceiving the world through the prism of one's native culture (Balcerkiewicz and Kułaczkowska 2010: 179; Zając 2012: 344). Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern (2002: 610) claim that intercultural communication barriers arise from group differences in cognition (e.g., fundamental epistemologies, values, norms, etc.), affect (e.g., types and levels of emotional expressivity), and patterns of behaviour (e.g., language, customs, communication styles, etc.). According to the authors, effective intercultural communication requires cognitive, affective, and behavioural adaptions (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern 2002: 610). The description of barriers to intercultural communication indicates some directions for intercultural training and sheds some light on what such training should focus on.

1.9 Intercultural encounter as a trigger for reflection

Reflection is inseparably connected with both action and learning. Without reflection upon the previous action, it is not possible to restructure our knowledge and modify our future actions. Intercultural encounters provide food for thinking about people and the language used. For this reason, *metalinguistic reflection* needs to be briefly commented upon. Metalinguistic reflection refers to the act of thinking about the language. It requires conscious control, including learner's intentional planning of his/her linguistic processing (Gombert 1993; Simard and Wong 2004: 98). This type of reflection is built on the ability of the learners to reflect on their L1, which simultaneously will project on their ability to reflect on different aspects of foreign language learning:

– observation about the phenomenon of communication: verbal and non-verbal communication, meaning conveyance;
– reflections about language acquisition;
– observations about how language works: identification of parts of sentences, new word formation, etc.;
– awareness of the diversity of languages: identification of various accents, foreign or regional, listening to translations of messages of different languages;
– awareness of the difference between oral and written codes: observations of different types of messages and alphabets (Dabene 1990; in Simard and Wong 2004: 103).

Literature review (cf. Simard and Wong 2004: 102) provides two ways of promoting metalinguistic reflection, namely:

1. Guided reflection – techniques that guide learners to reflect metalinguistically on the nature and function of a particular grammatical point. From the practical point of view, it means probing learners with questions about the target form, having them compare samples of language to arrive at a deeper understanding of the function of the form; having them verbalise strategies that they used to arrive at their understanding of the target structure.
2. Cross-linguistic exploration of language – leading learners to reflect on both the nature of language acquisition as well as multiple aspects of language on a more global level – the so-called critical incidents technique.

Intercultural encounters are likely to enhance cross-linguistic exploration of language. However, critical reflection alone will not lead to a perspective transformation (Taylor, 1994: 403), because transformation needs to take place in conjunction with action and discourse. As stated by Jokikokko (2010: 31–32), a person needs to explore and experiment

with new roles in new intercultural situations and be in dialogue with others. In practice it means a certain degree of readiness and willingness to question personal beliefs (Taylor 1994: 402) and change his/her behaviour (actions).

1.9.1 Intercultural encounter as an example of experiential learning. The experiential learning cycle, first suggested by Dewey, was later developed by David Kolb (Petty 2004: 319). Kolb's idea of experiential learning includes many stages that should be followed in sequence, namely: concrete experience, critical reflection on experience, abstract conceptualisation, and planning active experimentation (Petty 2004: 319).

The model stresses the significance of reflection, because experience itself does not guarantee learning. We must recall our experiences, try to relate them to theory and then plan how to perform better on another occasion (Petty 2004: 319). The experiential model also puts emphasis on the fact that learning is cyclical and that it begins with some sort of trigger.

However, in Kolb's model, this trigger can be 'a daily' experience, not just major life crises. Similarly, Aittola (1998: 64, in Jokikokko 2010: 33–34) argues that the most of the significant and transformative learning experiences are generated by informal life situations. And here is the link between experiential learning and intercultural encounters, which can initiate the experiential learning cycle and the include all of the elements needed for the experiential learning cycle to start.

1.9.2 Intercultural encounter as a part of a sociocultural process. Sociocultural learning process is based on the idea that knowing involves the agency of other people and is mediated by community and culture (Vygotski 1962 and Cole et al. 1978, in Lantolf and Thorne 2007). While both transformative and experiential learning theories emphasise the importance of cognitive self-reflection for learning and change, sociocultural learning theories highlight the fact that our learning experiences always occur in a certain context – personal, social, professional or cultural – and that these contexts play a key role in influencing the way in which people interpret the situation and derive their knowledge from it to learn (Jokikokko 2010: 34–35). As stated by Kohonen (2007), the quality of the interaction between the participants affects the individual construction of the meanings. It is not only that environment and other people affect our learning. In other words, two or more people can learn from each other and create something together. Thus, learning becomes a mutual construction of new knowledge and a shared experience (Jokikokko 2010: 34–35).

The sociocultural approach considers L2 learning as becoming a member of a second language community, which is demonstrated in following its language use norms, including cultural norms (Niżegorodcew 2011: 31–32; Kohonen 2007). When we consider two people engaged in a talk, their conversation emerges from the dynamics of how they talk to each other, while what they say reflects and constructs who they are as social beings (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 163, in Niżegorodcew 2011: 32). From Complex System Theory, which is part of the sociocultural approach, we take the proposal that discourse is a self-organizing and co-adaptive process. Accordingly, language learning is not the taking in of linguistic forms by learners but the constant adaptation of their linguistic resources in the service of meaning-making in response to the affordances that emerge in the communicative situation, which is, in turn, affected by learner's adaptability (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 135, in Niżegorodcew 2011: 32). Effective communication in intercultural encounters is largely determined by high degree of adaptability and skill at implementing negotiation-making strategies.

1.10 Research on intercultural competence

The inspiration for this research came originally from the personal and academic interests. However, in recent years the concepts of intercultural education, multilingualism, and plurilingualism have grown in importance.

1.10.1 Projects on intercultural competence and training – An overview. The policy of the Council of Europe promotes intercultural training and diversity. The Council of Europe has launched several programmes, among which are the following:
– ICOPROMO – Intercultural Competence for Professional Mobility;
– PluriMobil – it aims to develop the trainee teachers' ability to learn "knowing how," or being disposed, to discover "otherness" – whether the other is another language, another culture, other people or new areas of knowledge' in order to be abler to assist their (future) pupils in developing this ability (Egil Cuenat et al. 2011: 5). At a practical level it encourages the application of various tools of the Council of Europe (activities based on European Language Portfolio, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters, and tasks developed as the outcomes of other projects, that is, ICCinTE, ICOPROMO, ELP-TT, to name just a few);

– ICCinTE – Developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence – A guide for language teachers and teacher educators;
– INCA – Intercultural competence assessment. This project aims to link Byram's (1997) Framework for Intercultural Competence Learning to the needs of industry, and produce thereby a framework for delivery and assessment suitable for use in promoting intercultural awareness and understanding as part of a vocational languages programme. The INCA project is based on the theoretical work of Mike Byram, Torsten Kühlmann, Bernd Müller-Jacquier, and Gerhard Budin (INCA project, www.inca.project);
– Intercultural encounters between the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe (www.biss.va.lv/content/partners.interculutral);
– Project: "Developing intercultural awareness through cross- cultural research of worldviews" (www.intercultura-soar.de/projects.htm);
– HERA – Joint Research Programme "Cultural Encounters" 2012 (www.heranet.info);
– The LARA Project (www.lancs.ac.uk/user/interculture/docs).

Project reports accompanied by the materials offer a number of ideas and practical tasks that can be implemented during intercultural training.

1.10.2 Ways of studying intercultural competence. Developing intercultural competence is a process that aims at changing the individual's cognition, emotion, and behaviour. As an action-oriented concept, intercultural competence is connected with personal growth as a human being and a language user (Kohonen 2007). Consequently, as noted by Jokikokko (2010: 24), intercultural competence has been studied from various perspectives, and it has been described with different terms such as cross-cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, cultural expertise or effectiveness, and multicultural awareness. The most common ways of enhancing intercultural competence development include the following:
– autobiographical reflection;
– field observation;
– interactive modelling;
– role-play games;
– examining self-concept;
– simulations (Grushevitskaya et al. 2002, in Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 20).

This particular research involves auto-narrative writing, based on the process of reconstructing personal past experiences and biographical reflection. However, autobiographical reflection is important and requires further comments. Since it is based on interpretation of one's individual

biography, the biographical reflection aims at clarifying one's identity and its manifestations in everyday life (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 20). As Taylor (1994) claims, critical reflection alone will not lead to a perspective transformation. Transformation needs to take place in conjunction with action and discourse (Jokikokko 2010: 82). Due to the biographical method and the reproduction of past life experiences, it is possible to actualise and realise the events that defined the formation of a personality (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 20). The specific character of autonarrative writing lies in the fact that narratives are seen as an everyday means of communicating experience, and storytelling is recognised in almost all cultures (Hall and Powell 2011: 1). Narratives provide contextual detail and person-revealing characteristics (Hall and Powell 2011: 1). Thus, the significance of autonarrative writing can be attributed to the fact that autobiographical reflection helps interpret one's cultural belonging, identify personal cultural standard and discover the mechanism of cultural self-perception (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 20). Cultural awareness is often perceived as an attitude developed through experience or based on one's acquisition of information about other cultural groups (Bystrov and Yermolenko 2011: 23).

Understanding the research and the impact of reflection on the process of intercultural competence development would not be possible without examining narrative inquiry and its role in restructuring the individual's experience. This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Narrative inquiry – Background

The research project involves narratives, which constitute one of the major tools for collecting data. The aim of this chapter is to characterise narrative inquiry (or narrative analysis), present its role and provide reasons for selecting narrative as a research tool. *Narrative research* or *narrative study*, terms used sometimes interchangeably, focus on stories which can be treated as research data or tools for data analysis (Barkhuizen et al. 2014: 3). Sikes and Gale (2006) put it succinctly by saying that narrative research concerns stories that can be told (narratives as data) and stories that we inquire into (or, in other words, data as narratives).

Introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, the field of narrative inquiry has gradually evolved, currently receiving a great deal of interest and attention from researchers. Pavlenko (2007: 164) talks about a narrative or discursive turn in the humanities. Sikes and Gale (2006) describe recent times as a narrative and auto/biographical turn, particularly within the social sciences. Similarly, Barkhuizen et al. (2014: xi) write about a "critical mass" of narrative research in the field of language teaching and learning.

The development and popularity of narrative studies have coincided with interest in qualitative type of research as well as the demands and characteristics of the contemporary world. According to Heikkinen (2002), this narrative shift reflects to a certain extent the cultural shift from modernism to postmodernism. "Modern thinking" was perceived as a period of interpreting the world and so-called metanarratives that attempted to explain what should be taken as real, whereas postmodern thinking is characterised by constant change, multiplicity, fluidity, and uncertainty. Consequently, great stories tend to be replaced by local and individual narratives (Andreotti 2010: 6–7).

Researchers (such as Pavlenko 2002, 2007; S. Bell 2002; Straś-Romanowska, Bartosz, and Żurko 2010; Wajnryb 2003; Webster and Mertova 2007; Woods 2012) stress the fact that individuals lead a storied life. "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy 1968: 5, in Pavlenko 2007: 164). Similarly, Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 19, in Webster and Mertova 2007: 2) say "experience happens narratively […] Therefore, educational experience should be studied narratively." Webster and Mertova (2007: 71) add that "narrative is an event-driven tool of research." Identifying and recalling past events often lead us "to adapt strategies and processes to apply to new situations" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 71). In other words, stories are used as a means of delivering information (i.e., describing meaningful communication or interaction) and restructuring one's own experience (i.e., understanding and learning from the events). Consequently, the analysis of narratives gives some insights into human cognition. Narratives are also to bring a change of perspective (students gain better awareness and knowledge). These issues, together with some others, will be elaborated upon in the following subchapters.

2.1 Homo narrans and narrative intelligence

Narratives stem from the fact that human beings are *storytelling organisms* (S. Bell 2002) or *storying creatures* (Sikes and Gales 2006). This is understood to mean making sense of the world and the things that happen to us by constructing narratives to explain and interpret events both to ourselves and to other people (Bruner 1996; Jokikoko 2010; Sikes and Gale 2006; S. Bell 2002: 207; Trahar 2009). The ability to narrate is perceived as one of the most essential in the life of every person. Researchers (Currie 1998: 2; Sikes and Gale 2006) introduced the terms *homo fabulans* (the tellers and interpreters of narrative) and *homo narrans* (an individual who is the story-telling man; a person narrating one's life – Straś-Romanowska, Bartosz, and Żurko 2010) to indicate the fact that telling the story is significant as it organises past experience and prepares one for future action. Clandinin and Connelly (1989: 2) say that "the storied quality of experience is both unconsciously restoried in life, and consciously restoried, retold and relived through processes of reflection. Narratives are as essential as the action itself." A number of researchers focus on the relationship between narratives and identity formation (Bamberg 2004; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Barkhuizen 2011; Early and Norton 2012; Estefan et al. 2016;

Hemmi 2014; Norton 2014; Norton and Early 2011; Norton and Toohey 2011; Ryan and Irie 2014; Smith and Sparkes 2008). Atkins (2004: 341, in Smith and Sparkes 2008: 5) says that "human understanding takes a narrative form and as "self-understanding beings, persons have narrative identities," structured through "the textual resources of narratives" (Atkins 2004: 350, in Smith and Sparkes 2008: 6).

Bamberg (2004: 368) talks about a "narrative construction of self," and claims that worth examining is how storytellers manage a sense of themselves in contexts that require interactive accounting. Similarly, Georgakopoulou (2006: 128) calls for considering "how do we do *self* (*and other*) in narrative *genres* in a variety of *sites of engagement*." Both of them recognise the potential of "small stories" (Bamberg 2004; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) or "snippets of talk" (Georgakopoulou 2006), which "cover a gamut of under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell." According to Norton and Early (2011: 421), such small stories-in-interaction may largely contribute to identity work because they "highlight diverse identity positions in everyday interactive practices." Ryan and Irie (2014: 111) add that retelling a story results in a repeated mental simulation that makes a learner focus on particular aspects of encounters and try out different conversational strategies or lexical items. Thus, through retelling a story, an apparently "akward or limited social encounter may evolve into a smooth, successful exchange of ideas," which functions as a key formative episode in the development of this learner's L2 self-concept" (Ryan and Irie 2014: 11).

Consequently, researchers agree that narrative is unavoidable and fundamental to human understanding, communication, and social interaction. Besides, it is always present in the life of an individual (cf. Sikes and Gale 2006; Straś-Romanowska, Bartosz, and Żurko 2010). In addition, narrative is interlinked with history: "the history of narrative begins with the history of (*hu*)mankind; there does not exist, and has never existed, a people without narratives" (R. Barthes 1966: 14, in Sikes and Gale 2006). Related to narrative thought is "narrative knowing" (Polkinghorne 1988, 1995). According to Baur (1994: xx, in Kreiswirth 2000: 304), narrating "is intricately related to knowing and is our way of taking the flow of experience and making it intelligible."

Narrative intelligence, the term introduced by Bruner (1996), refers to the capacity to formulate and follow a story by means of such intertwining sub-capacities as the ability to emplot, characterise, narrate, generate, and thematise (Randall 1999). These processes are automatic to our "construal of reality" (Bruner 1996; Randall 1999). Stempleska-

Żakowicz and Zalewski (2010: 21) prefer to use the term *narrative competence*, which they define as the ability to produce good narratives.

"Narrative meaning is created by noting that something is a 'part' of a whole, and that something is a 'cause' of something else" (Polkinghorne 1988: 6). Narratives provide links, connections, coherence, meaning, and sense. Narrative is the type of discourse that draws together the diverse events, happenings, and actions of human lives (Polkinghorne 1995: 5). However, narrating might not be equally valued in different cultures, because it involves two different modes of thinking, that is, *logical-scientific* (or *paradigmatic*, related to science, philosophy, and formal education) and *narrative* (or narrative cognition, which is the principal mode in both literature and life). These modes do not always gain similar recognition in different cultures (Bruner 1996), which means that the analysis of narratives provides information about cultural differences. In other words, narratives shed some light on the ways that culture speaks itself through an individual's story, or in other words, on the ways that private constructions mingle with "a community of life stories" (Bell 2003: Riessman 1993: 4).

2.2 Narrative's moment – A record of one's own experience (individual perspective)

Narrative inquiry stresses the role of narratives in reconstructing, restructuring, and reinterpreting an individual's experience, and eventually leading to understanding and knowledge. Barkhuizen (2011: 395, in De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 97) discusses *narrative knowledging* and refers to the meaning-making, learning, and knowledge-construction that takes place at all stages of the narrative research activities. De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015: 97) describe narrative knowledging as both a cognitive and a social activity. Cognitive – because we generate knowledge in the process of understanding experience (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 97). Yet, narrative knowledging is also a social activity because narratives are discursively constructed with others in spatiotemporal contexts, and after analysis presented to an audience for (re)interpretation (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015: 97).

In addition, narratives may have the potential to promote learning through reflection. According to Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski (2010: 17), what makes a narrative a good story is the extent to which the story triggers narrative thinking and facilitates one's individual understanding of the event, helps an individual to gain insights into his/her own way of thinking, discloses certain mechanisms to him/her or

allows to find a deeper, more general sense in the experiences s/he has gone through (Pennebaker, in Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 24–26). Bold (2012: 2) says that "narrative is a means of developing and nurturing the skills of critical reflection and reflexivity." In addition, narrating helps one to retrieve, restructure, and derive meaning from some external events, people's behaviour, one's own actions, emotions or other internal states in such a way that they are perceived as integral elements of the story (Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 27). In this sense, narrating personal experiences starts autobiographical self-reflection and it provides some points of entry into identity work. Ryan and Irie (2014: 116) put forth a *storied-self approach*, which gives some insights on how people reinterpret past events and construct their self-concept. And for that reason, narrative inquiry is often used in educational research (teacher development and intercultural training).

A narrative, as opposed to a paradigmatic mode of thinking, is strongly situationally and personally contextualised. Both modes are complementary, yet it is believed that the narrative mode of thinking is more susceptible to adaptation. The objective of the narrative mode of thinking lies in understanding the individual's experience and finding personal meaning in it rather than explaining the behaviour of the individual in a particular situation, which is characteristic for the paradigmatic mode of thinking (Jokikokko 2010: 38; Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 18). Narrative cannot be consciously experienced. Trzebiński (2005, in Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 26) differentiates the act of telling stories from the so-called narrative-in-action, during which our narrative schemata organise our understanding automatically and unconsciously.

The process is similar to other cognitive schemata. The more organised the narrative is, the more complex and the more socially contextualised it seems (Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 40).

Shaping individual experience is perceived as the most important function of narrative interpretation. However, narrative thinking brings some other benefits to the way individuals function. In particular:
– narrative thinking increases the locus of control, making an individual feel that s/he is in control of situations;
– it facilitates the planning and regulation of our own behaviour;
– it makes an individual stay focused and persist in efforts or actions;
– it generates more positive emotions than negative ones;
– it fosters motivation as goals which are narratively oriented are more meaningful and understandable for the individual;
– it develops anticipatory skills (predicting the actions or reactions of others) and helps to adjust our behaviour accordingly (Ryan and Irie

2014: 109; Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 18; Trzebiński 2002, 2005; Trzebiński and Drogosz 2005).

Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski (2010: 18) conducted a study in which they asked a group of subjects to tell personal stories for a certain period of time. Their research suggests that generating narratives exerts positive influence on the physical (physiological), affective, and social dimensions of the individual's life. The results observed include the following:

– decrease of visits to the doctor as compared with the period preceding the experimental treatment (i.e., pre-narrative expression);
– physiological symptoms – reducing hypertension, longitudinal improvement of health and resistance, improved quality of skin;
– behavioural symptoms – low absenteeism at work, better job finding skills among those who lost their work;
– affective symptoms – improved mood, reduced periods of sadness, decreasing or eliminating undesirable emotional states.

Pavlenko (2007: 164) focuses on the role of narratives in learning a foreign language. She points out that narratives help to present L2 learners not as unidimensional creatures but as human beings who have feelings, which deepened understandings of the L2 learners and advanced research on relatively new theoretical constructs such as competitiveness and anxiety, emotions, agency, and symbolic domination (Pavlenko 2007: 164). Similarly, Hirsch and Peterson (2009: 524) note that because personal narratives are extremely self-relevant, their content, style, and patterns of word-usage should be more likely to reflect individual differences in personality characteristics (Hirsh and Peterson 2009: 524). Thus, deeper inquiry into the personal characteristics of a learner might help in analysing narratives.

However, we need to remember some limitations that narrative inquiry has, namely, problems with self-concept and self-expression. Narration is always subjective, in a sense that it is largely determined by one's own perception and readiness to disclose oneself. Weaknesses of narrative approach also lie in the very methodology it is based on. Sikes and Gale (2006) question the reliability and validity of the narrative inquiry, saying that the same person may tell different stories about the same thing depending on time or context. They argue that other people might have their own various versions of the story, which does not necessarily mean deliberate deception.

2.3 Tell me your story – Approaches to narrative analysis (researcher's perspective)

Narratives derive from the idea of social constructivism and the theory of the dialogical self (Hermans 1999, 2003; Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski 2010: 40). Narratives are also based on the Jerome Bruner's distinction between paradigmatic and narrative ways of thinking (Barkhuizen et al. 2014: 1). Noteworthy is the fact that Bruner is regarded as one of the fathers of narrative inquiry (Barkhuizen et al. 2014: 1).

The process of narrative writing follows the stages of the Kolb's experiential learning cycle as it allows the students to reflect upon the experience. The very experience is treated as a starting point, yet generating narratives allows the students to reflect upon the experience, learn a lesson (i.e., benefit from it) and finally, make use of this knowledge for some future situations.

Narratives capture the researchers' attention because they offer various possibilities for interpretation. Heikkinen (2002: 15) says that because of their loose frame, narratives can be treated as producers and transmitters of reality. Another dimension relates to individual and collective narratives. The former concerns the individual's description of experiences (e.g., personal writing, diaries), whereas the latter are connected with national narratives (the emphasis is put on some similarities on the societal level). Barkhuizen et al. (2014: 8–9) offer one more interpretive possibility based on the type of study conducted and the focus of the analysis, and they classify them into language memoirs (informally written accounts of language learning experiences), studies of language memoirs (non-narrative analysis is implemented here), autobiographical case studies, biographical case studies, and studies of multiple narratives.

Methodologically speaking, narrative inquiry relies on language devices such as image, metaphor, simile, and description as means of data analysis, as these are the language tools most commonly used by participants to derive meaning from the complicated reality (Jensen 2006: 40).

According to Oxford (1996: 581), the value of self-reports or recollective studies lies in their attempt to capture "situated cognition" (learning occurring in a particular context). Narrative usually consists of two parts:
– telling of the past – for example, describing the problems experienced in language learning;
– anticipating the future – for example, describing their predicted responses to these situations as future teachers.

To analyse and understand a narrative, closer examination needs to be given to its content, context (i.e., global and local influences on the content of individual narrative) as well as to its form. Narrative highlights linguistic, cultural, and genre influences on ways in which people structure their life stories. It also serves as evidence of reinterpretation, which explains similarities and discrepancies between different tellings of the same experience or describing the same experience ("stories") in different languages (Kahno 2003; Koven 2002, 2004, in Pavlenko 2007: 171). Pavlenko (2007: 171) notes that even in one language different renderings of the same story may vary in the amount of detail, reported speech, emotional density, episodic structure, and framing of particular episodes (Chafe 1998; Norrick 1998; Schiffrin 2003, in Pavlenko 2007: 171; Tannen 1982).

According to Pavlenko (2007), paying attention to content, context, and form allows us to notice how storytellers achieve their interactional goals through particular narrative devices (e.g., lexical choice and diversity, utterance complexity, causality markers, attribution, inference and justification) and illuminates individual creativity and agency.

Research by Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski (2010: 20) suggests that those subjects who were involved in producing structured narratives benefitted most from the research. In other words, the more coherent and cohesive the narrative was, the more benefit the individuals gained from the process of narrative writing. As a result, Stempleska-Żakowicz and Zalewski (2010: 21) enumerate some features of a good narrative, which has a clearly stated beginning, a main body, and an ending. Another thing concerns the linguistic aspect, for example, the frequency of key words, understood as the words that correlate positively with the structure of the narrative.

The weaknesses of the content analysis (Pavlenko 2007: 166–167) include the following:
– lack of a theoretical premise, which makes it unclear to where conceptual categories come from and how they relate to each other;
– lack of established procedures for matching of instances to categories;
– the overreliance on repeated instances which may lead analysts to overlook important events or themes that do not occur repeatedly or do not fit into pre-established schemes;
– an exclusive focus on what is in the text;
– lack of attention to ways in which storytellers use language to interpret experiences and position themselves.

Pavlenko (2007: 171) presents three complementary theoretical approaches to analysis of autobiographies:

– cognitive approaches that treat autobiographies as meaning-making
  systems and thus as evidence for how people understand things
  (Bruner 1987; Linde 1993, in Pavlenko 2007: 171);
– textual approaches that see them as a creative interplay of a variety of
  voices and discourses, and thus as evidence of larger social and cul-
  tural influences on human cognition and self-presentation (Bakhtin
  1981; Fairclough 1995, 2003, in Pavlenko 2007: 171);
– discursive approaches that view them as interaction-oriented produc-
  tions, and thus as evidence of the co-constructed nature of our life-
  storytelling (Edwards 1997, in Pavlenko 2007: 171).

As far as narratives produced by a language learner are concerned,
Pavlenko (2007: 165–168) enumerates three interconnected types of in-
formation that may be gathered through life histories:
– subject reality (findings on how things were experienced by the
  respondents) – thematic or content analysis to examine learners'
  thoughts and feelings about the language learning process. Bamberg
  (2007: 1) refers to it as a person or subjectivity centred approach to
  narrative;
– life reality (findings on how things are or were) – interested in both
  subject and life reality (narratives as 'observation notes and tran-
  scripts');
– text reality (ways in which things or events are narrated by the re-
  spondents) – how bilinguals construct selves in their respective lan-
  guages. These studies use a variety of analytical frameworks and
  examine how linguistic features and narrative structure are deployed
  to perform specific interactional and narrative functions. Research-
  ers taking text reality perspective look also at story structure and
  they perform micro analysis (e.g., lexical diversity, utterance com-
  plexity). Bamberg (2007: 1) talks about social or plot orientation (i.e.,
  guiding communities and their members in terms of how to think,
  feel, and act).

In addition, Pavlenko (2007: 165) claims that linguistic biographies
and autobiographies that focus on the languages of the speaker shed
some light on the context and quality of the language acquisition/
learning process. For this reason, analysing the linguistic dimension
(including the language choice for narrativisation), we may ask the fol-
lowing questions:
– Were the stories elicited in two languages or just one?
– What reasons informed the researcher's decision?
– What is the speaker's level of proficiency?
– Did the language of the story correspond to the language in which
  the events in question took place? (Pavlenko 2007: 174).

Georgakopoulou (2007: 1) distinguishes narrative as talk-in-interaction from narrative as telling. She states that there is a point in looking at language forms and structures (tellings) and relating them to socio-cultural processes and self-identities (tellers) (Georgakopoulou 2007: 2). Another perspective is offered by Stokoe and Edwards (2006: 57), who suggest looking at "narratives (i.e., stories and story-elements) as productions tailored for the sequentially organized occasions of their telling." According to the authors, analysis should focus on "*how* stories are told – how they get embedded and are managed, turn-by-turn, in interaction – and *what* conversational actions are accomplished in their telling (e.g., complaining, justifying, flirting, testifying, etc. (Stokoe and Edwards 2006: 57)).

2.3.1 Narrative inquiry: The elements of a good story. Georgakopoulou (2007: 4–5, 86) mentions the following features of narratives:
– narrative is a detached, autonomous, and self-contained unit with clearly identifiable parts. It is embedded in a cultural and local social environment;
– narrative is sequentially managed; its tellings unfold on-line, moment-by-moment in the here-and-now of interactions. As such it can lead to various interpretations, different types of action and tasks for different interlocutors;
– narrative structure is sequential and emergent;
– its structure is temporalised; narrative is dialogic, intertextual, and recontextualisable.
   Wajnryb (2003: 9) differentiates between story (i.e., the raw material) and narrative. According to her, the narrative text is this story moved from the potential to the actual. It is one step further along – the story as narrated or as represented. The representation presupposes a social purpose, a reason for the telling. The narrative text emerges as the product of a number of textual decisions that have to do with the communicative purpose of its representation (Wajnryb 2003: 9). Wajnryb (2003: 14) points out to the two elements, namely, the individual/biographical and the collective/shared experience.
   According to Clandinin and Connelly (1994: 416), narratives are characterised by the following elements: time, place, plot, person, and scene. Similarly, Pavlenko (2007: 166) says that the main analytical step in content and thematic analysis is the coding of narratives according to the emergent themes, trends, patterns, or conceptual categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990, in Pavlenko 2007: 166). Sometimes narratives are interpreted from two perspectives:
– the "how" of narrative – structural analysis, that is, how people tell of their experiences in specific contexts;

– the "about" of narrative – thematic analysis; in other words, what story they have to tell about themselves (cf. Georgakopoulou 2007: 32; Jokikokko 2010: 51; Riesmann 2004).

These characteristic elements may provide some guidelines for the analysis of narratives.

As seen in the literature, the story is the raw material, the theme of the event. Putting a structure to it and arranging it sequentially means producing a narrative (Garvie 1990: 67). Discussing the way narratives can be analysed, we should mention the well-known pattern suggested by Labov who divides the structure of the narratives (*schematic structures*) into:

1. Abstract – it introduces the story and provides essential context. In other words: What is the story about? for example, "Did I ever tell you about…?"; "I remember when I was…"
2. Orientation – the orientation sets the scene for the story by identifying where and when it takes place and the people involved; in short: who, when, where, how.
3. Complicating events – this part refers to the main events of the story and to what makes it intriguing and interesting. In other words: Then what happened?
4. Evaluation – the evaluation is how the storyteller indicates the essential point of the anecdote and why it was worth telling. It can be summarised by a question: How or why is this interesting? for example: "It's not the worst thing that happened to me, but…"
5. Resolution – the resolution tells what happened at the end of the story and how things worked out. It can be summarised by: What finally happened?
6. Coda – the coda signals that the story is over and brings the storyteller and listener back to the present: "Now when I look back and say…" (Byrnes 2008: 114; Labov 1972; McCarthy 1991, 1998 in Salli-Çopur 2008: 34–35; Jones 2001).

These six elements are not always all present. However, according to McCarthy (1998: 134), evaluation is not an optional element, since "without it there is no story, only a bland report." That is, evaluative statements identify the significance of the anecdote and prevent the audience from asking "So what?" (Labov 1972: 366, in McCarthy 1998: 134). In case of oral narratives, evaluation can be either explicitly stated or rendered through implicit devices such as exaggeration, repetition, mimicry, intonation, and figurative use of language. The evaluative element may appear at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the anecdote (McCarthy 1998: 134; Salli-Çopur 2008).

Another way of analysing stories is suggested by Maley (1989, in Wajnryb 2003: 7) who offers a three-pronged approach. It involves:
– framing (getting ready);
– focusing (engaging);
– diverging (moving on).

If we examine narratives as talk-in-interaction, we may adopt the following pattern for their analysis:
– topical analysis;
– formal aspects of conversation (e.g., its structure, rules, sequencing, and turn-taking).

2.3.2 Cultural aspects in the narrative analysis. As the narratives are situationally and contextually based, the reconstruction of the narratives is also determined by the social context (Zølner 2004: 52). As a result, the narratives may reveal certain narrative paths and interpretive perspectives characteristic for a particular society. This particularly applies to narrations concerning intercultural encounters. Blasco and Gustafsson (2004: 14) enumerate the following culture-based problems that may appear in narratives:
– the topic of stereotyping;
– domestication, anchoring, and translation;
– portrayals of the cultural Other;
– representations of the non-European Other;
– the construction of group boundaries through prejudices about Others.

The authors state that "translating and mediating international events and thereby shaping 'global consciousness' is closely connected with maintaining and (re)constructing political and national cultural identity" (Blasco and Gustafsson 2004: 16). Thus, it adds other microsociological and interpretive perspectives to understanding narratives (Schütz and Luckmann 1989, in Zølner 2004: 52).

Hufeisen and Neuner (2004: 68–70) describe language levels at which cultural differences and different communicative preferences are apparent:
1. Discursive levels:
   – development of argument;
   – signaling disagreement;
   – directness vs. indirectness (esp. in the formulation of requests and reproaches, but it also applies to greetings, leave-takings, and even more complex interactive situations);
   – dealing with topics, etc.
2. Realisation of discourse types:
   – oral: class discussions/conversation classes, etc.;
   – written: curricula vitae, academic texts, etc.

3. Realisation of the individual stages of a conversation:
   – conversation openers and greetings;
   – ending a conversation and taking leave, etc.
4. Realisation of individual speech acts:
   – requests;
   – demands;
   – thanks;
   – apologies;
   – offers, etc.
5. Speaker and listener signals:
   – gambits;
   – listener signals, etc.

2.4 Narrative and intercultural learning – The critical incident theory

Stories and narratives have found their place in the field of intercultural training. Similarly, the *critical incident theory* seems invaluable in cultural competency training, despite the fact that it was introduced by Flanagan over 50 years ago in 1954 (Flanagan 1954). The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is recognised for its potential to promote critical thinking and transformative learning as well as to capture and examine intercultural learning experiences (Arthur 2001; Breunig and Christoffersen 2016; McAllister et al. 2006: 371; Méndez García 2016; Pedersen 1995). As noted by some authors, during the intervening years, the CIT has become a widely used qualitative research method in many disciplines, including the intercultural field, and today is recognised as an effective exploratory and investigative tool (Butterfield et al. 2005: 475; Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2013: 224).

Brislin et al. (1986) developed the culture-general assimilator, consisting of a collection of critical incidents to introduce concepts relevant for cross-cultural interaction and adjustment. The critical incident presents a story which involves misunderstanding or miscommunication. A potential reader has to react and respond to the situation appropriately.

Aylett et al. (2009: 330) mention ORIENT (i.e., Overcoming Refugee Integration with Empathic Novel Technology), which is a story-based technique designed on the basis of the Bennett's Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. ORIENT focuses on the promotion of user's awareness, developing intercultural sensitivity and increasing immigrants' reflection about other cultures (Aylett et al. 2009: 331).

Another example how the Critical Incident Technique can be implemented into practice is *The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, a document which is one of the most recent initiative of the Council of Europe introduced by Byram et al. in 2009. *The Autobiography* makes language learners recall and record their personal experiences with others in a systematic and longitudinal manner (ww.coe.int, accessed 30.11.2012). The aim of *The Autobiography* is to develop understanding and competences for the future by reflecting critically on the experience. The potential users are supposed to follow a number of steps, namely, they select and describe specific intercultural encounters in which they have taken part, analyse their experience individually and identify different aspects of their current intercultural competence by referring to:

– attitudes: the user's attitudes and feelings towards the whole experience, reflecting to what degree attitudes, such as respect for diversity, have been developed;
– behaviour: the interpretation of another's behaviour as well as the behavioural patterns followed by the learner in a particular intercultural experience;
– knowledge and skills: the user's knowledge about otherness and how people act in intercultural contact situations; the skills applied during and after the event;
– action: the action taken by the user as a result of analysing the intercultural encounter. This retrospective view of the intercultural encounter favours a critical analysis of the way the user acted at the time, how s/he sees the encounter now and how s/he might respond in the future. *The Autobiography* therefore has the potential to promote change (Spencer-Oatey 2013: 6; http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/lingu istic/autobiogrweb_EN.asp, accessed 10.12.2015).

2.4.1 What is critical about critical incidents? The Critical Incident Theory focuses learners' or language users' attention on an experience or a vivid event identified by them as meaningful, significant, and influential (Tripp 1993; Thiel 1999; Cushner and Brislin 1996; Arthur 2001: 44; Brislin 2002; Arthur 2003; Finch 2010; Shapira-Lishchinsky 2011). Literature review allows us to identify two problems that need to be explained, namely: what is meant by *critical* and what is meant by incident? Tripp (1993: 8) says that critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is a description and an interpretation of the significance of an event. For Tripp (1993) *critical* means important and significant; others use the adjective revelatory (Spencer-Oatey 2013: 2). Webster and Mertova (2007: 74)

claim that "what makes a critical incident 'critical' is the impact it has on the storyteller." In their opinion, the level of criticality becomes evident as the story is narrated (Webster and Mertova 2007: 83). According to Woods (2012: 1), "critical incidents are highly charged moments and episodes that have enormous consequences for personal change and development." This view is also shared by Webster and Mertova (2007: 83) who talk about "life-changing consequences" of critical events.

However, not all of the experiences are equally important. The significance ascribed to the situation varies from observer to observer. In this sense, *critical* may be defined as 'worth noticing' and 'worth recalling.' Schmidt (1995: 29) refers to *noticing* as "the conscious registration of the occurrence of some event." Telling or narrating the event (its description) is preceded by noticing, whereas retelling (destorying) leads to interpretation and understanding.

Webster and Mertova (2007: 74) characterise critical incidents by "time, challenge and change." They maintain that critical incidents are only identified after the event and "the longer the time that passes between the event and recall of the event, the more profound the effect of the event has been and the more warranted is the label *critical* event" (Webster and Mertova 2007: 83, 74). Time is important for critical incidents for one more reason. As noted by Webster and Mertova (2007: 74), "over time, the mind refines and discards unnecessary detail and retains those elements that have been of changing and lasting value."

For some authors (e.g., Webster and Mertova 2007: 74; Woods 2012: 1) criticality is related to informative content and explanatory role. Woods (2012: 1) describes incidents as "unplanned, unanticipated and uncontrolled. Critical incidents are flash-points that illuminate in an electrifying instant some problematic aspects." Webster and Mertova (2007: 74) observe that the critical incident challenges the storyteller's understanding and worldview.

As Spencer-Oatey (2013: 2–3) claims, criticality is also associated with:

– extreme behaviour: Flanagan (1954: 338) defines critical incidents as *extreme behaviour*, either outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to attaining the general aims of the activity;

– emotions (high emotional content) and evaluations: Cope and Watts (2000: 114) write: "the perceived 'critical incident' is essentially an emotional event, in that it represents a period of intense feelings, both at the time and during its subsequent reflective interpretation." Similarly, Webster and Mertova (2007: 83) define critical incident as "intensely personal with strong emotional involvement";

– reflection: criticality is something that emerges through reflection than something that is objectively present (Tripp 1993; Arthur 2001; Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2016: 235).

According to Spencer-Oatey (2013: 3) *critical* is often used to mean 'self-defined,' 'interpreted,' and 'created.' She quotes Tripp (1993) and Cope and Watts (2000: 112) to support her comments. Self-defined criticality of critical incidents manifests itself in the fact that it is the entrepreneur's personal representation of salient moments, which was of prime importance (Cope and Watts 2000: 112).

Another issue worth explaining concerns the meaning of *incident*. Flanagan (1954: 327) claims that critical incident is "any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act." Brislin (2002) provides a short but quite informative explanation that "critical incidents are short stories that describe individuals and give some background about them. There is a plot line developed, and there is an ending to the incident that involves a misunderstanding among people and/or the feeling that the intercultural interaction did not proceed as smoothly as people hoped."

Cope and Watts (2000, in Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2016: 224) talk about critical "periods" or "episodes," because it is often difficult to determine boundaries of some experiences. In addition, asking people to do so will trivialise the diversity and complexity of their experiences (Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2016: 224). Arthur (2001: 44) says that a critical incidents methodology "permits tracking of experiences at various times instead of providing a single snap shot of cross-cultural transition." This view is congruent with the opinions of Wajnryb (2003: 14), who perceives an individual as "the reservoir of countless micro-episodes of experience constituted of recollections of previous (long past and recent past) engagements with people and events." Arthur (2001: 44) points out that the value of a critical incidents methodology lies in the fact that it provides "a running experiential commentary of meaningful events and reactions to those events."

Concluding, researchers vary in defining the concept of incident and there is no one suitable timeframe to use. As Spencer-Oatey and Harsch (2016: 235) observe, some treat the incident as a single, one-off event, while others focus more on an issue and the events that occur around it which might unfold over a short period of time.

2.4.2 Critical incidents and intercultural communication. According to Spencer-Oatey and Harsch (2016: 224), the CIT helps to understand details of interactional events, the cultural values or principles, the

impact of different cultural events, the range and effectiveness of the strategies used for handling these cultural events. The authors mention that research into intercultural communication that implements the CIT concentrates on four main areas:

– the identification of cultural values/standards;
– insights into cross-cultural transition/adaptation;
– insights into intercultural interaction;
– the development and evaluation of training resources (Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2016: 224–225).

Pedersen (1995: 16) discusses the potential of the critical incident methodology to develop and measure the following multicultural competencies:

1. Information source development – the ability to use many information sources within a social and cultural environment; developing information-gathering skills, such as observing, questioning, and careful listening skills.
2. Cultural understanding – awareness and understanding of values, feelings, and attitudes of people in another culture, and the ways in which these values influence behaviour.
3. Interpersonal communication – speaking clearly and paying attention to the expression of non-verbal communication.
4. Commitment to persons and relationships – becoming involved with people from other cultures, giving and inspiring trust and confidence, establishing a basis for mutual liking and respect.
5. Decision making – the ability to come to conclusions based on one's own assessment of the information available; problem solving, which includes learning to be explicit about the problem, working out steps to a solution, and generating alternatives.

Critical incidents play a considerable role in everyday human interaction and cognition, and the emotional and motivational components that they carry provide an incentive to reflect on one's own and other people's concerns, perceptions, and values. Koestler (1967, in Finch 2010) places such moments on "Haha – aha" continuum, where "haha" indicates emotional involvement (not only of humorous nature), while "aha" denotes the scientific dimension (understanding preceded by inquiry). Worth mentioning is the fact that the emotional component includes both positive (i.e., happiness, excitement or amusement) and negative ones (sadness, embarrassment or disappointment). Critical incidents are critical because they are often unexpected as they develop contrary to our expectations; they violate the schema or scenario we are accustomed to. Additionally, stories are concrete, authentic/reliable and inspirational (Heath and Heath 2009: 255–256). These features make critical incidents similar to

anecdotes. However, what differentiates the two is the presence of the individual's reflective process which follows critical incidents and is an obligatory part of it. Another difference concerns the impact on the individual's future action, which is not always the case with anecdotes.

From the methodological perspective the critical incident technique contains autobiographical elements and is embedded within biographical, qualitative approach, emphasising the subjectivity of the opinions and inquiring into inner reflections, experiences, and thoughts (Łobocki 2006: 309). Undoubtedly, one value of critical incidents is that they also may promote metalinguistic reflection, that is, the reflection about the language (Gombert 1996; Simard and Wong 2004: 98), both as guided reflection on the nature and function of particular language items and as cross-linguistic exploration of language and its use (Simard and Wong 2004: 102). Several authors (e.g., Arthur 2001; McAllister et al. 2006: 371) point to the usefulness of critical incidents in intercultural training, particularly in understanding intercultural interactions. Through the telling of the incident and the subsequent discussion of it, the person derives an understanding of the concept of culture and strategies to address cultural issues (McAllister et al. 2006: 371). The process of narrating critical incidents may be either spontaneous or stimulated by a set of focused prompts designed to help respondents uncover their outstanding learning experiences (Arthur 2001: 44).

The critical incidents included in the culture-general assimilator introduce 18 themes divided into three categories:
– people's emotional experiences caused by intercultural interactions (e.g., anxiety, ambiguity, prejudice or disconfirmed expectations, etc.);
– knowledge about cross-cultural differences people find difficult to understand or accept (e.g., values, roles, rituals, time and space orientations, etc);
– ways of thinking and evaluating information about cultural differences (e.g., differentation, cateogrisation, attribution, formation, etc.) (Cushner 1987: 222).

Apart from its considerable benefits, the Critical Incident Technique has some drawbacks, which include the following:
– too personal, too subjective data, the authenticity of which is in question;
– there might be the tendency to manipulate the data (e.g., not to confess or describe data that may be significant to the study, to distort or hide facts that are important);
– reliability of the data is at risk. Drawing general conclusions and implications might be difficult as critical incidents are based on individual interpretations, imagination, and fantasy (Łobocki 2006: 310).

Curiosity and sense-making also lie at the core of critical incidents. Theoretically speaking, curiosity may be related to sense-making (Weick 1996, in Glaser et al. 2007: 23). Sense-making is an attempt to reduce multiple meanings (equivocality) and handle complex information used by people in an organisation (Weick 1996, in Glaser et al. 2007: 23). In Weick's constructivist approach, behaviour comes first, it is observed by the person who then tries to explain the reasons for this behaviour and gives it (invents) thereby a sense (Weick 1996, in Glaser et al. 2007: 23).

The cognitive dissonance theory by Festinger (1957, in Glaser et al. 2007: 23) adds to the sense-making process the concept that human beings actively try to create a consonant picture of their subjective world. In the case of a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behaviour (Glaser et al. 2007: 23). Similarly, in intercultural encounters communicators reconstruct and renegotiate their commonly accepted ways of being, thinking, doing, and communicating and these patterns are likely to be questioned. Focusing on such situational dissonances may shed light on the competence required. However, there are also some additional benefits. Such tasks are supposed to engage the students in self-reflection and consequently develop their critical self-awareness.

Summing up, current tendencies in language research stress the need for biographical exploration or the need for a biographical approach to life and language histories as a way to empower individuals and help them to derive meaning in their own, personal experience. Reflection on experiences is essential for learning to occur (Spencer-Oatey 2014: 169). Without this, self-reflection and learning are not possible. Available tools, for example, *The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (2009), aid memory and enhance the process of reflection. Some other tools that provide prompts for reflection on experience include the following, that is, the 3 Rs (**R**eport the facts of what happened; **R**eflect on why it happened, **R**e-evaluate after discussing with others) and DIARy (Discern, Identify, Adjust, Refine) (Spencer-Oatey 2014: 169; Spencer-Oatey and Davidson 2014; Spencer-Oatey and Harsch 2016: 230). Nonetheless, there are also other reasons for biographical exploration. The analysis of intercultural encounters is based on the idea of biographical exploration and so falls into the category of qualitative interpretive type of research. Some other examples of the types of research in this category include case studies and observation; however, they are not dealt with in this study. The theoretical underpinnings will be tested by the research presented in the following chapters. Another research aim is to raise students' awareness of "Otherness" and provoke a change of attitude.

Chapter 3

The scheme of the research study

The research revolves around the issues of making sense of intercultural encounters and learning from the contacts with "the Other." As noted by Huber-Kriegler et al. (2003: 7), we all belong to and are shaped by a series of interlocking cultures, which influence the way we view the world, make decisions, and interact with others. More often than not, we expect that a good command of a foreign language (or, to be more precise, good linguistic competence) will guarantee effective communication with the representatives of various cultures (Zarate et al. 2004: 59). However, it is believed that national culture pre-determines one's actions, thoughts, attitudes, and emotions so that coming from a different country serves as an excuse for committing *faux pas* and not understanding others. The study (i.e., the presentation and analysis of various intercultural incidents) is likely to provide a spectrum of situations that may possibly lead to miscommunication and communication failure. It also intends to discuss the factors that influence such situations and strategies implemented by the students.

3.1 Research objectives

Direct contact with "the Other" often demonstrates cultural constraints or cultural scripts that play a role in communication and may determine the overall success or failure of it. Consequently, there is a need to examine those factors that may exert any impact on intercultural encounters and may determine contact with the representatives of different cultures. The research objectives are of personal, cultural, and linguistic character. In particular, the research focuses on the following aims:

1. To examine how students of different cultural and linguistic L1 back-grounds (i.e., Polish and Turkish students) self-access their own inter-cultural competence.
   The research aims at measuring students' own perception of whether they are culturally competent. It asks the students about their aware-ness and self-knowledge as well as any other personal factors that may be essential in cross-cultural communication.
2. To increase students' cultural sensitivity and knowledge about cul-tural differences.
    Some detailed objectives include triggering students' reflection about various factors (e.g., linguistic, contextual, cultural factors) that play a crucial role in effective cross-cultural and intercultural communication. In particular, the study also aims at raising students' awareness of intercultural issues, culture-bound behaviour and inter-cultural differences in values, behaviour and ways of thinking. The intention of the author is to identify elements of intercultural en-counters (i.e., rules, patterns of behaviour, problems) that are context-dependent and those that are context-free. The comparison of two dif-ferent contexts, Polish and Turkish, will help to separate context-free situations (i.e., those that are experienced by students irrespective of their cultural backgrounds) from context-specific situations (i.e., those that are determined by the very cultural or linguistic factors, e.g., L1-based constraints).
3. To raise students' awareness of culturally determined aspects of lan-guage use and to develop students' sensitivity towards cultural con-straints on language use. To identify the linguistic challenges in vari-ous types of intercultural encounters.
4. To practise reflection, observation, and interpretation skills as well as critical thinking among the students.
    The aim of the research is to help the students to develop skills nec-essary for intercultural encounters and needed to expand one's knowl-edge after the encounters. In particular, one indirect research objective is to promote the development of sub-skills, that is, to search for simi-larities, to explore and discover, to develop a continuous openness to other cultures.
5. To find out what situations cause miscommunication or communica-tion failure. Consequently, the research is to analyse to what extent pragmatic differences lead to misunderstanding.
6. To develop in the students the awareness of multiple perspectives; to make the students refrain from initial or hasty judgements.
7. To examine how students of English Philology in Poland and Turkey (re)construct their own intercultural experiences. In particular, the

research aims at finding out the most common themes, issues, and topics covered in the narratives of intercultural encounters.

8. To identify what emotions are reported by the students when they narrate the intercultural encounter. The research is supposed to answer whether (and to what extent) meeting "the Other" is viewed as a positive or negative experience and what feelings accompany students when they narrate a this situation?

9. To inquire in what way intercultural encounters have contributed to students' overall linguistic and cultural development.

In particular, the research is to shed some light on the potential benefits the students derive from their intercultural encounters. Another aim concerns the amount of interest the students declare in contact with other cultures as well as the extent to which intercultural encounters serve as learning opportunities for the students. The research is also supposed to examine whether students change and enrich their perspectives after the encounters. They are to state what they have learnt as language learners and future language teachers.

3.2 The subjects

The study proper involved three groups of students, namely: two Polish groups of students of the English Philology Department, aged: 20–22 and 23–25 respectively, and Turkish students of English Philology, aged: 20–22. All of the students specialised in ELT methodology to become future teachers of English, however, they attended teacher training programmes at different levels. One Polish group (hereafter referred to as Polish P1 group) and the Turkish group (referred to as the Turkish group) were enrolled in BA programmes, whereas the other group of Polish students (Polish P2 group) was enrolled in MA programme. Some further biographical data is provided below:

– the Polish P1 group consisted of 50 ELT students; their gender distribution was: 36 females, 14 males.

– the Polish P2 group included 50 students with a gender distribution of 38 females and 11 males. One person did not provide the answer to this question.

– the Turkish group was composed of 50 ELT students, who were foreign language teacher candidates. The gender distribution in this group was 34 females and 16 males. Detailed characteristics of the participants as well as Polish and Turkish educational contexts is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Polish and Turkish participants – characteristics

Contexts/features	Polish context 1	Polish context 2	Turkish context
Number	50 students attending BA programme, specialisation: foreign language teaching (II-year students of BA programme at English Philology Department).	50 students attending MA programme, specialisation: foreign language teaching (II-year students of MA programme at English Philology Department).	The participants of the Turkish context were 50 ELT students attending the final year of Faculty of Languages
Age	20–22	23–25	20–22
Gender	females: 36 (72%) males: 14 (28%)	females: 38 (76%) males: 11 (22%) no answer: 1 (2%)	females: 34 (68%) males: 16 (32%)
Characteristics of the learning context	Teaching training programme (characteristics): the students were exposed to theoretical classes in language pedagogy, methodology of ELT, and theory of L2 learning. During the overall teacher training programme, they got some training in psychology and research methods. Additionally, the students participated in teaching practices (observation of other teachers' lessons; teaching proper).	Teaching training programme (characteristics): the students were exposed to theoretical classes in glottodidactics, language pedagogy, and seminars on ELT during which they got some knowledge about research methods in ELT field. The programme broadens the knowledge gained during the BA studies. Additionally, the students participated in teaching practices (teaching proper). Some of the students are employed at schools as regular foreign language teachers.	Teaching training programme (characteristics): the students were exposed to theoretical classes in language pedagogy, methodology of ELT, and theory of L2 learning. Additionally, they attended the primary and high schools for one day a week during the first term to develop practical skills.

Table 2. Teacher training standards in Poland and Turkey

Teacher training standards in Poland – BA programmes	Teacher training standards in Poland – MA programmes	Teacher training standards in Turkey
Trainees – future teachers of English as a foreign language. Poland: Specialisation in two subjects (in this particular study: English and German).	Trainees – future teachers of English as a foreign language or students who are already teaching (part-time or full-time teachers).	Trainees – future teachers of English as a foreign language. Turkey: Specialisation in two subjects (in this particular study: English and Turkish).
Practical training (180h – observation and teaching under the supervision of others).	Practical training 150h – teaching under the supervision of others or teaching regularly.	Practical training (180h – observation and teaching under the supervision of others).
ICT competence	ICT competence	ICT competence
Command of a foreign language (B2, B2+) (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).	Command of a foreign language (C1 or C2) (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).	Command of a foreign language (B2, B2+) (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).
Poland: after the overall course the students obtain the BA degree. Graduates are qualified to teach at all levels of education. However, they need to enroll for MA programmes to achieve full teaching qualifications and an MA degree.	Poland: the MA programme gives the students the full, necessary qualifications to start teaching a foreign language on a regular basis in any educational contexts, except for pre-primary education.	Turkey: the graduates are teacher candidates and they are to take an examination including basic skills and pedagogical knowledge. If they pass the examination, they are appointed to different levels in schools located in different parts of Turkey. A few of them prefer to work in private schools.
Administration and supervision of the education system Ministry of National Education (Poland).	Administration and supervision of the education system Ministry of National Education (Poland).	Administration and supervision of the education system Ministry of National Education (Turkey).
Separate Ministry of Science and Higher Education (since May 2006 – Poland)	Separate Ministry of Science and Higher Education (since May 2006 – Poland)	The Council of Higher Education (Turkey).

Since Polish and Turkish contexts seem quite distant, both culturally and linguistically, describing the profiles of the training programmes at the universities may not be enough. It seems advisable to discuss the

teacher training standards in both Polish and Turkish countries in more detail. This, in turn, will provide a more comprehensive background, necessary to understand the research results. Table 2 displays the most important requirements concerning Polish and Turkish standards in training foreign language teachers.

3.2.1 Poland and Turkey – Rationale for choosing the research partners. As stated earlier, Poland and Turkey represent different geopolitical and cultural regions. Poland belongs to the central eastern category of countries (together with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and others, Lewis 2006: xi), whereas Turkey is classified as one of the middle eastern countries. This, to a large extent, reflect other differences, which concern various areas, such as values shared, conversational styles, factors affecting communication and attitudes to time and space, to name just a few (Lewis 2006). As far as values are concerned, out of the long list suggested by Lewis (2006), only two are common to both Poland and Turkey, namely: hospitality and pride. Table 3 depicts the most important differences between these two countries.

Despite the differences, the history of Poland is somewhat interlinked with the history of Turkey. In 2014, the 600th anniversary of Polish-Turkish relations was celebrated. Mutual cooperation concerns political (diplomatic), cultural, and educational dimensions (Knop 2014). According to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (www.nauka.gov.pl; accessed 15.08.2015), Turkey is one of the most important partner countries for educational enterprises. It is a very dynamic and constantly evolving country offering many prospects and opportunities for cooperation. Turkish students constitute 20% of all the Erasmus students arriving in Poland. Similarly, Poland occupies the first position in the ranking of the most frequently chosen destination by the Turkish students planning their Erasmus visits (Germany takes the second position; www.nauka.gov.pl, accessed 15.08.2015). The rationale behind inviting Turkish students to take part in this project reflects these facts. In addition, it results from the Turkish students' willingness to take part and contribute. Another explanation concerns the need to have an additional perspective that would serve as a point of reference for data analysis and would indicate the so-called global and local tendencies.

Table 3. Poland and Turkey – the comparison (source: Lewis 2006)

Aspect	Poland	Turkey
Values	The arts, education, rustic simplicity, family-oriented, **pride**, obstinacy, generosity, **hospitality**, sensitivity to criticism, flexibility, humility, bravery, stoicism in adversity, self-sacrifice, tolerance (Lewis 2006: 283).	Belief in one's own honesty, reliability, Western-oriented, modified Islamic tenets, fierceness, tenacity, **national pride**, macho traits, **hospitality**, gallantry, preservation of heritage, male dominance, adherence to Kemal Atatürk's reforms, suspicious of Greeks (Lewis 2006: 389).
Space and time	Proximity: Poles stand and sit closer to each other than Anglo-Saxon and Nordics. In conversation, they often touch each other to give reassurance. Space – a major issue in Poland. Chronemics (Time) – moderate approach ("Polish people are relaxed about time, but not necessarily lacking punctuality" Lewis 2006: 284).	Proximity: high, "Turkey is a large country with a low population density. There is generally a 'distance of respect' of more than one meter between speakers" (Lewis 2006: 391). Mediterrean Turks are somewhat tactile among friends (Lewis 2006: 391). Chronemics (Time) – Turkish people turn up rather late for appointments.
Communication pattern	Polish communication style – enigmatic, ranging from a matter-of-fact pragmatic style to a wordy, sentimental, romantic approach to any given subject. Extensive use of metaphors and other stylistic devices (Lewis 2006: 285).	Turkish style derives from three main roots: Islamic, Mediterranean, and Eastern. They are multi-active and dialogue-oriented. They are also more responsive and reactive than any other Europeans (Lewis 2006: 392.
Listening habits	Polish people are courteous and rarely interrupt (Lewis 2006: 286).	As reactives, Turks are good listeners (Lewis 2006: 393).
Behaviour at meetings and negotiations	Behaviour fluctuates between pragmatism and sentiment (Lewis 2006: 286).	Turks are accommodating people; extremely polite and solicitous. Meetings are conducted in a friendly, semiformal atmosphere (Lewis 2006: 393).

3.3 Research tools and procedures

The research scenario was designed to attract students' interest and trigger their reflection upon their own experiences with the intercultural encounters. It also intended to help students derive new meaning from the encounters in the course of producing a written account of their contacts with foreigners.

The study was conducted in October 2012 – February 2013. The research period included awareness-raising and training sessions, which focused on familiarising students with the notion of intercultural competence and factors that were likely to have impact on intercultural communication. In the second stage of the research, the students were supposed to complete some questionnaires providing background information and measuring the intercultural sensitivity of the students. The third stage of the research concentrated on gathering data for the study proper, that is, asking the students to write a narrative describing their most memorable encounter with foreigners. Detailed information about the procedures and tools implemented is contained in Subchapter 3. The research project was possible thanks to close cooperation with the Turkish partner who agreed to follow the research scenario. As a result, the Turkish students were exposed to the same materials and completed the same tasks in a similar period of time.

The number of tools implemented at particular stages of the research project was to enhance its reliability by collecting data by means of different research instruments. Another purpose was to adjust it to respondents of various backgrounds and minimise any possible doubts and difficulties resulting from the construction of the research instruments. The two reasons enumerated above determined the choice of the research instruments. To collect the data, the author of the project used the following tools:
– discussion-generating tasks based on the Iceberg Theory of Culture;
– a questionnaire examining the students' opinions and attitudes towards intercultural communication;
– the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale, which is the adapted and modified version of Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory (CDAI);
– a written narrative task entitled "My intercultural encounter" (Appendix 6)

The instruments will be presented in the following subchapters.

3.3.1 Discussion-generating tasks. The students were exposed to two tasks, namely: the Form and the Iceberg Model of Culture (both of the tasks are included in the Appendices 2 and 3). The aim of the tasks was

to introduce students to the issue of intercultural competence and to sharpen their perception of the factors (including behaviour and reactions) that are culture determined.

The purpose of Form was to put students into an unexpected situation and evoke their on-the-spot reactions and feelings. The layout of the task (e.g., the mirror reflection of the Form) was to surprise the students and remind them of how it is to face the unknown. Students of foreign languages may feel self-confident thanks to a sufficient command of the foreign language, so the purpose of the task was to let them experience a situation in which they could not rely on L2 knowledge.

The value of the Form task lies in its potential to generate unpredictability, uncertainty, surprise, confusion, etc., and to simulate conditions similar to those experienced during intercultural encounters. However, literature offers a variety of activities and techniques which can be implemented in intercultural training (e.g., Glaser et al. 2007; Hua 2016; Huber-Kriegler et al. 2003; Nam and Condon 2010).

The other task, for example, the Iceberg Model of Culture, was intended to help the students to notice, describe, and interpret the aspects and everyday life situations that are determined by the culture. In addition, the idea was to make the students recognise cross-cultural differences and to derive personal meaning from them. As far as the form of the task is concerned, it was a cue-dependent discussion task, during which the students were supposed to recall some incidents and share them with their colleagues. The graphic presentation of the Iceberg Model of Culture was used as the cue (see Appendix 2a).

Both of the tasks were designed as a complementation to the theoretical training and a kind of preparation for the written output (the written personal narrative), and as such they were conducted during the pre-research stage.

3.3.2 The questionnaire for students. The questionnaire for students was another tool used in the research (see Appendix 5). The objectives of the questionnaire were twofold, namely: to gather the background information about the research participants (bio data) as well as to identify the students' opinions and attitudes towards intercultural encounters. The questionnaire also aimed at helping students examine their beliefs about intercultural competence and realise their individual predispositions towards intercultural encounters.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part, entitled Biographical information, consisted of nine close-response questions and two open-response ones. The close-ended questions inquired about the students' biodata, that is, their exposure to English, the motivation to

study this language and their opportunities for and openness to new encounters (including willingness to contact others and the students' mobility). The open-response questions served as an incentive to share additional experiences or any relevant pieces of information that the students felt might be necessary or conducive to further research.

The second part of the questionnaire (Intercultural profile) focused on intercultural competence, intercultural encounters, factors that may determine intercultural competence, and the participants' evaluation of their own potential to become interculturally competent. This part included a number of questions of various forms, namely:
– open-response questions the aim of which was to generate students' verbal associations about intercultural competence and other issues as well as to allow the students to express themselves freely about their own features of character that would facilitate or impede intercultural encounters (i.e., strengths and weaknesses);
– close-response questions which aimed at eliciting the students' responses;
– ranking questions – they asked about the students' perception and evaluation of the importance of the role some factors play in intercultural communication. The purpose of these questions was to suggest some alternatives and help students rank their answers accordingly.

3.3.3 Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. The reason to include the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (see Appendix 5) was to implement an instrument that would shed more light on the students' beliefs and attitudes on intercultural sensitivity and competence. The questionnaire for students provided essential, yet not satisfactory and complete, data. Written narratives offered insights into some single (occasional), yet particularly meaningful intercultural experiences. However, intercultural competence, because of its complexity and developmental character, requires the use of both qualitative and qualitative instruments to be measured appropriately (Nam and Fry 2010: 12; Matsumoto and Hwang 2013). Taking all this into consideration, the author used the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI), an instrument designed by Kelly and Meyers to help participants understand the qualities that enhance cross-cultural effectiveness and individual's readiness to enter another culture (Fantini 2006).

The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) is perceived as a leading instrument for measuring intercultural sensitivity. Although not devoid of some limitations (see Matsumoto and Hwang 2013), it is widely used by teachers and educators for a variety of research. Its value lies in two facts, namely:

– its structure – the inventory allows one to obtain a self-scored pro-
file (with direct scores distributed within four cross-cultural dimen-
sions);
– its reliability – the inventory was tested on a total of 653 male and
female subjects.

As far as the structure is concerned, the inventory is divided into
four scales, namely: Emotional Resilience (ER), flexibility/openness (FO),
perceptual acuity (PA) and personal autonomy (PA). The short definition
together with the aims of the scales are displayed in the Table 4.

Table 4. Intercultural sensitivity scale-presentation

Scales – names + definition	Aims
Emotional resilience – helps measure the degree to which an individual can rebound from and react positively to new experiences.	– Coping with stress and ambiguity; – Recovering from imperfections and mistakes; – Openness to new ideas and experiences; – Interaction with people in new or unfamiliar situations; – Emotionally resilient people are likely to be more positively inclined and resourceful, and to control negative emotions.
Flexibility/openness – helps measure the extent to which a person enjoys the different ways of thinking and behaving that are typically encountered in the cross-cultural experience.	– Openness towards, and preparedness to learn from, things and people that are different from oneself; – Tolerance of others, non-judgmental attitude towards new experiences; – Flexibility or role behaviour; – The degree to which a person enjoys diverse approaches to behaviour and thinking is analysed.
Perceptual acuity – helps to assess the extent to which a person pays attention to and accurately perceives various aspects of the environment.	– Attention to communication cues; – Ability to recognise the logic and coherence of other cultures; – This dimension examines the ability to accurately perceive cues across cultures.
Personal Autonomy – helps to measure the extent to which an individual has evolved a personal system of values and beliefs while at the same time respects others and their value systems.	– Personal identity independent of environmental indications; – Confidence in one's own values and beliefs. – Sense of empowerment in the context of an unfamiliar cultural situation.

The original version of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was slightly modified (shortened) and adjusted to the purposes of the research. The Inventory implemented in the research consists of four scales which include: eight (instead of 18), eight (instead of 17), seven (instead of 10), respectively. The number of the statements in the last category remained the same, that is, seven. The form of the inventory was preserved, that is, close-ended statements based on the Likert Scale.

3.3.4 Written narrative task: Narrative about intercultural encounters. Introspective, personal narrative based on the subjects' self-report was another research tool. According to Mitton-Skükner, Nelson, and Desrochers (2010), thinking narratively implies an experiential-relational-reflective process. Narratives promote metalinguistic reflection, understood as guided reflection and cross-linguistic exploration of language (Simard and Wong 2004: 102). Simard and Wong (2004) are of the opinion that cross-linguistic difference, associated with strong emotions of both positive and negative character, serves as a trigger and allows learners to reflect on both the nature of language acquisition and multiple aspects of language on a more global level.

Consequently, the first and the utmost function of the personal narrative was to initiate the student's self-reflection and facilitate the students' recall of the incidents. For the purposes of this research, the students were requested to describe the "critical," meaningful, and the most memorable encounter with a foreigner (see Appendix 6 for the task description). The participants were asked to express what happened, how the encounter influenced their lives and how it changed their self-views. The narrative was written at home so as to provide the students with conditions conducive to self-expression and self-production.

The task was structured, that is, the students were provided with some narrative frames. In this particular research, these were the questions to be answered, which could help the learners to organise their thoughts while writing. Narrative frames, defined as "skeletons to scaffold writing," have a supportive and guiding function (in terms of both content and form (Barkhuizen and Wette 2008: 373, 375; Barkhuizen 2013; Barkhuizen et al. 2014: 45). From the researcher's perspective the frames ensure that the content will be more or less what is expected and will be delivered in a narrative form. In this research, the questions were included to clarify the nature of the written task as well as to guarantee that the students would focus on similar issues, provided that the students involved in the project represented different cultural backgrounds (i.e., Polish and Turkish ones). Yet answering the questions

was optional; the students could use them as prompts to construct their own narratives.

Theoretically speaking, the narratives were based on personal experiences and they contained the "past authoring" component, where the participants were asked to write about their past experiences. Recalling and producing the narratives allowed the students to self-consciously examine their "lived experience" as they interacted with the "Cultural Other." According to Kicker (2010: 101), an individual's retrospective view on intercultural encounters fosters critical analysis of the way the user acted at the time and how they might respond in the future.

3.4 Narratives – Analysis and evaluation procedures

The value of personal narratives lies in the fact that they are extremely self-relevant, so their content and style should be more likely to reflect individual differences in personality characteristics (Hirsh and Peterson 2009: 524). That is why the analysis and evaluation procedures involved both content analysis and statistical analysis of the word frequencies. Both of these will be briefly described in the following subchapters.

3.4.1 Content analysis. Content analysis is adopted to categorise qualitative data and helps to organise the data, identify the leading themes and interpret them appropriately (McAllister et al. 2006: 373). Content analysis involves a series of steps or procedures, namely:
– identifying themes;
– identifying patterns;
– describing situations;
– creating codes to define categories;
– counting instances to see frequency;
– coding and recording to see the range;
– making comparisons between groups (for details see: Barkhuizen et al. 2014; McAllister et al. 2006; Ritchie and Lewis 2003).

In this research, special attention will be paid to identification of themes and patterns, description of the situations and comparisons between the groups (i.e., Polish and Turkish students).

3.4.2 Statistical analysis: LIWC software – Brief characteristics. To make the text analysis reliable, the LIWC programme, designed by Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 27) was implemented. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 24), LIWC is a programme for text analysis. It counts

and classifies words in psychologically meaningful categories. Although relatively new, LIWC is widely recognised by researchers for its potential to detect meaning in a wide variety of experimental settings. LIWC software helps to specify attentional focus, emotionality, social relationships, thinking styles, and individual differences (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 24; Pennebaker and King 1999: 1298).

The purpose for applying LIWC for this particular analysis was twofold. Firstly, the intention of the author was to use a programme that would cater for cross-cultural differences among the research participants. Undoubtedly, the words we use in daily life reflect who we are and the social relationships we are in. The study by Hirsh and Peterson (2009: 525) proves that there is a correlation between self-reported personality traits and word use during the production of self-narratives. This corresponds to the opinion of Polkinghorne (1995, in Barkhuizen and Wette 2008: 373) who claims that stories are the linguistic form of the real human experience. Secondly, the implementation of a statistical measure affects positively the reliability of the findings.

The primary function of LIWC software is to analyse the word frequencies in the narratives (Hirsh and Peterson 2009: 525). The LIWC program has two central features – the processing component and the dictionaries (a collection of words that define a particular category; Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 27). The LIWC programme provides the statistical frequencies in all of the following categories:
– linguistic processes (including word count, dictionary words, total function words, pronouns, verb tense, etc.);
– psychological processes (including affective, social, cognitive, and perceptual processes);
– personal concerns (including self-focus, cognitive complexity, social references, and emotional tone of the language used);
– spoken categories (including tentative language, fillers, and features of language style).

The LIWC analysis is based on the assumption that the words people use shed some light on their thought processes, emotional states, intentions, and motivations. Language style conveys subtle information about social relations. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 30) state that the language people use in daily life reflects what they are paying attention to, what they are thinking about, what they are trying to avoid, how they are feeling, and how they are organising and analysing their worlds.

The identification of the categories in the LIWC programme was preceded by a number of studies conducted by its authors. As a result of these, it was observed that attentional focus manifests itself in

a particular use of pronouns and verb tense. This, in turn, reveals information about the individual's priorities, intentions, and thoughts. For example, content word categories explicitly indicate what individuals are focusing on. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 31) claim that people thinking about death, sex, money or friends will refer explicitly to these topics in their writing or conversation.

Similarly, function words, such as personal pronouns, and verb tense are useful linguistic elements that can help identify focus, which, in turn, can show priorities, intentions, and processing. They also reflect attentional allocation (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 31). The examples provided concern the use of first- and third-person pronouns, which was determined by who was the victim of the event. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 31) say that participants used more first-person singular and fewer third-person pronouns (e.g., "he," "she") when describing an event when they were being teased compared with the situation when they described an event when teasing someone else. There was a correlation between gender and use of third-person pronouns; male participants tended to provide more third-person pronouns when describing an event in which they were being teased than female participants. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 31) claim that analyses of the tenses of common verbs can tell us about the temporal focus of attention. Participants of the experiment the authors conducted used more past tense in discussing a disclosed event and more present tense in discussing an undisclosed event. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 31), verb tense differences indicate increased psychological distance and a higher degree of resolution for disclosed events compared with undisclosed events.

As far as psychological processes are concerned, the language we use reflects our emotionality. The analysis of the language allows us to examine the degree to which people express emotion and how they express emotion. The valence of emotions sheds some light on how people are experiencing the world (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 32). People react in radically different ways to traumatic or important events. According to Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 32) the character of emotional response as well as the type of language used may say a lot about how people react to and cope with the event. It also reveals how significant and meaningful the event is for them. Research suggests that LIWC accurately identifies emotion in language use (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 32). LIWC ratings of positive and negative emotion words correspond with human ratings of the writing excerpts (Alpers et al. 2005).

Social processes, which constitute part of the psychological processes category, relate to the most basic function of a language, that is,

communicating. Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33) are of the opinion that words provide information about social processes, namely, status, grouping patterns, group cohesion and the quality of relationship between group members. Word count explains who is dominating the conversation and how engaged they are in the conversation. Assents and positive emotion words measure levels of agreement. In some circumstances, more first-person plural may show group cohesion; and assents and question marks show how individuals are responding to each other (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33).

Interesting findings concern the use of first-person plural pronouns (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33). If "we" is being used to promote interdependence (as in "we can do this"), it may increase group cohesion. Yet, if it is being used to indirectly assign tasks, it may lead to resentment. Increased use of assents (e.g., agree, OK, yes) could signal increased group consensus and agreement; however, the timing of assents is important. Later in a group task, assents may signal consensus; early assents may indicate blind agreement by unmotivated group members (Leshed, Hancock, Cosley, McLeod, and Gay 2007; in Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33).

When it comes to status, research shows that higher-status individuals speak more often. They are also more willing to make statements that involve others. Lower-status language is more self-focused and tentative (Kacewicz, Pennebaker, Davis, Jeon, and Graesser 2009, in Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33).

Motion, exclusion, and sense words all indicate the degree to which an individual elaborated on the description of the scenario (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33).

Thinking can vary in depth and complexity; this is reflected in the words people use to connect thoughts. Language changes when people are actively re-evaluating a past event. It can also differ depending on the extent to which an event has already been evaluated. Depth of thinking can vary between people and situations; certain words can reveal these differences. Cognitive complexity can be thought of as a richness of two components of reasoning: the extent to which someone differentiates between multiple competing solutions and the extent to which someone integrates among solutions (Tetlock 1981, in Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 33). These two processes are captured by two LIWC categories: exclusion words and conjunctions. Exclusive words (e.g., but, without, exclude) are helpful in making distinctions. Indeed, people use exclusion words when they are attempting to make a distinction between what is in a category and what is not in a category. Exclusive words are more frequent among people telling the truth (Newman et al.

2003; Pennebaker, Slatcher, and Chung 2005). Conjunctions (e.g., and, also, although) join multiple thoughts together and are important for creating a coherent narrative (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, and Cai 2004). Prepositions (e.g., to, with, above), cognitive mechanisms (e.g., cause, know, ought), and words greater than six letters are all also indicative of more complex language. Prepositions, for example, signal that the speaker is providing more complex and, often, concrete information about a topic. The use of causal words (e.g., because, effect, hence) and insight words (e.g., think, know, consider), two subcategories of cognitive mechanisms, in describing a past event can suggest the active process of reappraisal. In a reanalysis of six expressive writing studies, Pennebaker, Mayne, and Francis (1997) found that increasing the use of causal and insight words led to greater health improvements. This finding suggests that changing from not processing to actively processing an event in combination with emotional writing leads to better outcomes (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 35).

Gender determines the quality of the language to a large extent. It particularly seems to affect the complexity of the language used and the degree of social references (Newman, Groom, Handelman, and Pennebaker 2008, cited in Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 35). Research shows that women use more social words and references to others, and men use more complex language. Males display the tendency to frequent use of large words, articles, and prepositions. In contrast, females' language is characterised by higher use of social words and pronouns, including first-person singular and third-person pronouns (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 37).

Another category in the LIWC programme relates to personal concerns, which indicate individual differences. Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 36) say that certain linguistic characteristics, such as the self-focus, cognitive complexity, social references, and emotional tone can help to identify individual differences and describe some causal processes that affect these differences. For example, as people grow older, they become less self-focused, refer more to the moment, and do not decline in verbal complexity (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 36). Similarly, Beaudreau, Storandt, and Strube (2006) found that in recounting a personal story younger participants used more filler words compared with older participants. However, there was no difference in filler words when the two groups described a story based on a picture. In this experiment, the use of filler words may have suggested the degree to which the story was well formed; presumably older participants had broader perspective on the personal life events and may have recounted them many more times than the younger participants (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 37).

The last section concerns spoken categories and focuses on patterns of language use as a means of studying interactions. However, as Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010: 35) indicate, language use depends on the situational context. For example, in a cooperative coordination context, higher total word count may signal better communication and agreement, whereas in a negotiation context it may signal a breakdown in agreement (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 35).

Another tendency observed is the use of tentative language. When people are uncertain or insecure about their topic, they use tentative language (e.g., maybe, perhaps, guess) and more filler words (e.g., "blah, blah, blah," I mean, you know). Higher use of tentative words suggests that a participant has not yet processed an event and formed it into a story. Participants who recounted an event that they had already disclosed to someone else used fewer words from the tentative category than participants who recounted an undisclosed event (Pasupathi 2007, in Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010: 35).

3.5 Stages of the research project

The research project involved a series of stages concerning sensitisation to culture and data collection. The thorough description of the research stages is presented in Table 5.

The research proper lasted between October 2012 and February 2013. Yet it was preceded by the preparation stage and the pilot study. The preparation was devoted to the project partners' seeking and discussing the terms and conditions of cooperation. The pilot study aimed at pretesting the research tools and examining their usefulness.

Table 5. Stages of the research project

Stage number and its name	Objectives	Tools and procedures	Timing
1	2	3	4
1. Awareness-raising; sensitisation to culture	– to raise students' awareness about intercultural issues and culture-bound behaviour; – to help students to identify the elements of intercultural encounters (i.e., rules, patterns of behaviour, problems) that are context-dependent and those that are context-free.	The Iceberg Model of Culture; presentation of the model, discussion and group sharing.	ca. 1 month (2–3 sessions)
2. Questionnaire distribution part I	– to elicit students' beliefs and attitudes towards intercultural competence; – to increase students' self-knowledge, their cultural sensitivity, and knowledge about cultural differences.	questionnaire part I; completion of the questionnaire.	1 session (1.5 hour)
3. Questionnaire distribution part II	– to examine students' sensitivity towards intercultural competence; – to raise students' awareness about their predispositions towards intercultural encounters.	questionnaire part II; completion of the questionnaire	1 session (1.5 hour)
4. Training devoted to intercultural competence training	– to increase students' knowledge about issues determined culturally; – to prepare students cognitively to participate in intercultural encounters and to have the theoretical preparation to interpret intercultural encounters; – to help students to identify and change their attitudes towards the Other.	– verbal presentation (lectures), audio-visual materials; – a series of lectures, followed by discussion, ideas sharing and answering questions.	2–3 months

Table 5 continued

1	2	3	4
5. Narrative writing	– to equip the students with the skill of critical analysis and interpretation; – to promote students' reflection about strategies implemented during intercultural encounters; – to trigger students' reflection about factors that play crucial role in effective cross-cultural and intercultural communication.	– written task; – presentation of the task to the students, students' individual work on the task.	1 month
6. Follow up	– to disseminate the research project results to the project partners; – to identify elements of intercultural encounters (i.e., rules, patterns of behaviour, problems) that are context-dependent and those that are context-free; – to prepare students cognitively, affectively, and strategically for intercultural encounters; – to equip the students with the skill of critical analysis and interpretation.	Presentation of the research results; followed by discussion and ideas sharing with the students.	2–3 sessions (1.5 hour each)

3.6 Data evaluation procedures

Data obtained in this research are analysed qualitatively (e.g., content analysis) and quantitatively. Quantitative analysis involves the implementation of LIWC and the calculation of the Pearson-moment correlation coefficient. Correlational analysis was conducted to examine data obtained by means of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. The Pearson-moment correlation coefficient was calculated for the answers obtained in Polish P1 group, Polish P2 group, and the Turkish group in order to determine the degree of relationship between the sets of data. The Pearson r was calculated to find out to what an extent they correlate. The Pearson-moment correlation was calculated for the four scales, namely: Emotional Resilience (ER), flexibility/openness (FO), perceptual acuity (PA), and personal autonomy (PA).

Chapter 4

Narratives – Data presentation and analysis

Quantitative and qualitative types of narrative analysis constitute an important part of the research. Statistical (including structural and linguistic) analysis examines certain processes that are activated in the course of narration. Qualitative (i.e., content) analysis allows us to scrutinise the topics that the students generate. Consequently, it sheds some light on the process of the students' reflection. It also helps to trace how the students derive personal meanings from intercultural encounters. The following subchapter will be devoted to a brief discussion concerning both the statistical analysis and content analysis, respectively.

4.1 *Statistical analysis of the narratives – General characteristics*

Data displayed in Table 6 presents the general statistical characteristics of the students' narratives. The following subcategories are identified: the level of text formality; certain structural features such as the nature, type, and quality of the register used to produce the narratives. The description involves all of these categories.

Table 6. LIWC2007 Output – general characteristics

LIWC Dimension	Polish P1 group	Polish P2 group	Turkish group	Personal texts	Formal texts
Self-references (I, me, my)	7.92	7.20	8.92	11.4	4.2
Social words	9.69	8.12	13.54	9.5	8.0
Positive emotions	2.30	1.96	2.09	2.7	2.6
Negative emotions	1.26	1.30	0.74	2.6	1.6
Overall cognitive words	7.61	7.08	7.36	7.8	5.4
Articles (a, an, the)	5.90	7.09	5.24	5.0	7.2
Big words (> 6 letters)	21.69	22.73	20.47	13.1	19.6

The statistical analysis conducted by means of LIWC2007 software allows us to notice several tendencies.

1. The narratives produced by the students in the three groups can be classified neither as personal texts nor as formal texts because they display features characteristic for both of these types, depending on the category we take into account. Formality is indicated by the length of words, the frequency of articles, and the proportion of positive and negative words. The personal character of the narratives is expressed in the overall use of cognitive words, social words, and self-references (in particular the use of personal pronouns).

2. As far as formality of the narratives is concerned, the following categories can be identified:
   – the length of words – the students in the three groups tend to use words longer than six letters, which is typical for formal texts. However, even within this category, there are some differences, with Polish MA students achieving the highest rate (Polish P2 group – 22.73), followed by Polish BA students with a slightly lower rate (21.69) and then, the Turkish students (the lowest rate which amounts to 20.47). The length of the words indicates the high formality of the narratives generated by all the three groups. Minor differences in terms of the score may be ascribed to the level of proficiency or the experience of writing academic texts, which may vary across the groups;
   – articles – the narratives of only the Polish P2 group fall into the category of formal texts (rate = 7.09). The narratives produced by the other two groups tend to display the characteristics of the personal text (Polish P1 group – 5.90 and Turkish group – 5.24, respectively);

– the proportion of negative and positive emotions. The quality and the quantity of the positive and negative emotions described in the narratives make the texts rather formal. Yet even in this case the frequencies differ depending on the group. If negative emotions are taken into consideration, the ranking from the lowest rate to the highest one is as follows: Turkish students (0.74), Polish P1 group (1.26), and Polish P2 group (1.30). However, when it comes to positive emotions the ranking is different, with Polish P2 group achieving the lowest frequency (1.96), then followed by Turkish students (2.09), and finally Polish P1 group (2.30).

3. As Salo-Lee (2007: 74) states, multicultural and intercultural interactions serve as opportunities for dialogue and creativity. Consequently, this point deals with the analysis of the personal elements included in the students' narratives. The following tendencies are observed:
   – overall cognitive words – the analysis of the overall use of cognitive words allows us to put the narratives produced by the three groups into the category of personal texts. However, the personal character of the texts is not the same for all three groups as the frequencies vary among the subjects – with the lowest rate in case of Polish P2 group (7.08, i.e., indicating more impersonal features), followed by the Turkish group (7.36) and Polish P1 group (7.61), respectively;
   – social words, except for the narratives produced by Polish P2 students. The narratives written by the Polish P1 group as well as the Turkish group show a strong tendency towards personal texts (with a frequency of 9.69 and 13.59, respectively). The Polish P2 group is the exception, as the frequency is 8.12, which places the narratives within the formal category. Worth mentioning is the fact that the Turkish score greatly exceeded the other scores (13.54 as contrasted with 9.69 and 8.12), which may indicate some cultural differences.

4. The examination of data in the self-references category gives inconclusive results as the frequencies in the three groups place the narratives somewhere between formal and personal types of texts.

5. Taking the subjects' perspective into account, the narratives fall into two categories of formal and personal texts. Polish P2 students tended to produce more formal narratives, whereas Polish P1 students and the Turkish students displayed a tendency to generate more personal narratives.

   To inquire into the character of the texts and observe some mechanisms operating on the text level, it will be necessary to examine the following categories: linguistic processes, psychological processes, per-

ceptual processes, biological processes, personal concerns, and spoken categories. The statistical analysis of the narratives with the values is included in Appendix 7.

As far as the category of linguistic processes is concerned, Polish P2 students achieve the highest scores in various subcategories. The second place is taken by Polish P1 students and the third by the Turkish students. Polish P2 students also outperform the other two groups in the following aspects:

– total number of words and sentences;
– total number of dictionary words and words longer than six-letters. At the same time, the score indicating the frequency of common verbs is the lowest for this group.

The second category concerning psychological processes is further subdivided into social, affective, and cognitive processes, respectively. Data obtained in this category varies depending on the subcategory. The Turkish students gain the highest score in social processes and they significantly outperform the other two groups (i.e., Polish P1 and Polish P2). However, when it comes to the other two subcategories, that is, affective and cognitive processes, the highest score is achieved by Polish P1 group, followed by Polish P2 students. The Turkish students gain the lowest scores in the affective and cognitive subcategories. However, the discrepancies between the scores are not significant. Some further comments concerning the nature of the emotions reported by particular groups are provided in Chapter 6 (Conclusions).

Commenting upon the cognitive processes, the following tendencies are observed:

– The three groups can be characterised by a relatively high tendency for introspection. The mean values describing the level of insight are 4.03; 3.75, and 4.01 for the Polish P1, Polish P2, and Turkish groups respectively. In this area, Polish P2 students achieved the lowest score, which stands in opposition to other scores gained by these students as well as their level of verbalisation and the character of the narrative content. This indicates that the level of language proficiency is essential but it is not the only factor that can explain various processes and the behaviour of the students.
– All three groups display low levels of inhibition. The mean value for inhibition is lower than 0.4 in each of the three groups.
– There are some differences between the Polish groups (i.e., Polish P1 students and Polish P2 students) and the Turkish group in the areas of certainty and tentativeness. The Polish respondents displayed significantly higher scores in both of these areas than the Turkish students.

– As far as the category of inclusive processes is concerned, the Turkish students significantly outperform both Polish groups. The Turkish score is 7.25 as contrasted with 5.37 and 5.23 for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups, respectively. Meaningful is the fact that data obtained in the inclusive processes category corresponds to data from the social processes category, and to the content analysis of the narratives, respectively. Some further comments about these issues are included in the Conclusions (Chapter 6).

Discussing the category of exclusive processes, it must be said that the highest value is achieved by the Polish P2 group (2.80), followed by Polish P1 students (2.53) and Turkish students (1.93). These values are not surprising and they reflect to a certain extent the tendencies observed in the inclusive category (with Turkish students gaining the highest value).

Another category that will be briefly characterised relates to perceptual processes. The aim of this category is to indicate students' sensitivity to external sensory stimuli that in turn may have some impact on intercultural interaction. The scores gained by the three groups are similar, with minor differences between the values in each of the groups. The Turkish group obtained the highest score (2.75), which was followed by the Polish P1 group (2.25) and Polish P2 group (1.93). The scores correspond with the previous outcomes, that is, the high scores gained by the Turkish students in the social processes category. However, all the three groups seem to be curious, observant of some contextual cues, and context-sensitive. This may explain minimal differences in the values gained by the three groups.

Taking biological processes into account, Turkish students outperformed the two Polish groups, gaining 1.44 as contrasted with 0.76 and 0.75 for the Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups respectively. A possible interpretation is that Turkish narratives were frequently focused on everyday culture (including eating habits) as well as social interaction. However, what needs to be noted is that the overall values achieved in this category were rather low in all the three groups.

The category labelled relativity requires major comments as the values obtained by the respondents in this category are the highest for all the data examined statistically. They amount to 11.50, 12.16, and 12.10 for Polish P1, Polish P2, and Turkish groups respectively. The category itself focuses on how the concepts of space, duration, and motion are verbalised and interpreted as a number of statements. It also concerns the general results (the so-called absolute results), which turn out to be observer-dependent. In this study, the statements about space and time, distances and duration seem to be relative. According to the statistical

analysis, the concepts of time and space gained the highest values in all the three groups. When it comes to the detailed analysis, values describing duration were as follows (the ranking arranged according to frequency): 5.80 for Turkish students; 5.21 for Polish P2 students, and 4.98 for Polish P1 students.

As far as the concept of space is concerned, the values obtained are as follows: 5.26 for Polish P2 students; 4.98 for Polish P1 students and 4.59 for Turkish students. High values in both categories may be due to the themes of the narratives, that is, having to describe an encounter with foreigners, which imposes particular temporal and spatial structures. Turkish students seem to be time and chronology sensitive (the highest value in duration), whereas Polish P2 students are more spatially oriented. Interesting is the fact that Polish P1 students gained the same value in both time and space categories. Another tendency that may be observed concerns the minimal discrepancy between the values in all the three groups. Although the groups vary in their levels of language proficiency as well as the experience with intercultural encounters, the way they describe them and verbalise their ideas about their own personal experiences does not differ much, with statistical values grouped around the same number (5) among the groups.

Personal concerns constitute the last but one category. The values gained by the three groups are low in the majority of the subcategories enumerated in the statistical analysis. However, two subcategories need to be commented upon, namely: work and achievement. The former related to the most popular category in all three groups. Polish P1 students gained the highest value (3.34), followed by Turkish students (2.75) and Polish P2 students (2.61). The latter, that is, achievement, was the second most frequent subcategory. The ranking order was the same as in case of the previous example, yet the values themselves were slightly lower, that is, Polish P1 students (2.10), Turkish students (1.80) and Polish P2 students (1.71). The most frequent topics mentioned in the category of personal concerns (i.e., work and achievement) may reflect the most common contexts of conversation. They are also parallel with the themes appearing in the content analysis described in the next subchapter.

The last aspect of the statistical analysis (Spoken categories) will not be discussed for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the values obtained in each of the three groups are relatively low, probably due to the fact that the task concerned a written narrative which imposed the use of more formal language. Secondly, the values shown in the statistical analysis may indicate examples of dialogues or samples of authentic language that the respondents quoted in their narratives (quotation of authentic,

real conversations that they experienced), which as such are not the main focus of the research. Consequently, it would be better to examine content analysis of the narratives as this will provide more insights into the issues under study.

4.2 Content analysis of the encounters

Narrative inquiry is a valuable means of gathering information as it allows for the study of the problem from different angles. Details are presented below:

1. Narrative inquiry allows us to capture change of perspective (students gain better awareness and knowledge, which they explicitly disclose in their writings).
2. Data collected offer various perspectives, namely:
   – subjective reality – how things are perceived;
   – life reality – how things are;
   – text reality – how things are presented in a text (macroanalysis, e.g., story structure and microanalysis, e.g., lexical diversity, utterance complexity).

The following subchapter is devoted to the topical analysis of the narratives as well as to a structural examination of the writings produced by the students in the three groups.

4.2.1 Topical analysis – Background about the nature of the encounters. Topical analysis treats the "story as theme" (Garvie 1990: 67) or "talk-in-interaction" (Georgakopoulou 2007). In other words, a narrative discloses quite a lot about its author, his/her personal features (certain individual traits, identity profile) as well as skills/interpersonal and communicative abilities (the way (s)he managed with a particular situation or problem). In addition, the narratives show how and to what extent the author is able to narrate the whole story. Georgakopoulou (2007: VIII–IX) points out that essential in the narrative analysis is the awareness and recognition of certain interactional features or "ways of telling" of small stories because they can denote some personal character of their authors. Consequently, Georgakopoulou (2007: VIII–IX) reminds us of the fact that small stories serve as points of entry into identity work.

Narratives can be also treated as temporalised activities, in which the process of (re)contextualisation of stories is relevant. This helps the authors of the narratives to gain more insights into their own processes of thinking and decision-making.

In this study, the focus will be given to the analysis of themes that most frequently appeared in the narratives produced by Poles and Turks ("storying" or "storylines"). Some attention will be also paid to the identity component, namely, the impact the situations described had on their authors (so-called de-storying) and their perception of their social and professional roles (i.e., "me as a language learner" and "me as a teacher").

The first step in the content analysis relates to the general characteristics of the nature of the intercultural encounters. The following aspects were taken into consideration:

– the type and overall evaluation of the encounter (positive, negative or neutral);
– recency (referring to the order of intercultural encounters in one's life, i.e., whether the narrated encounter was the first in one's experience or not),
– their context and country location,
– the character of the encounters: direct or face-to-face meeting vs. indirect or computer-enhanced encounter.

The choice of the aspects was determined by the study itself. However, it needs to be mentioned that some researchers suggest completing communication records prior to content analysis (for details see: Revised Iowa Communication Record by Gudykunst 1992, in Gudykunst and Shapiro 1996: 19).

As far as the type and the overall evaluation of the encounter are concerned, positive encounters prevail in all the three groups (Polish P1: 84%, Polish P2: 53%, and Turkish group: 92%, respectively). However, it should be noted that the largest percentage of them is reported by the Turkish group. Worth mentioning is the fact that in two groups, namely Polish P1 and Turkish, positive encounters constitute the vast majority of the examples, with negative encounters amounting to 14% in the case of the Polish P1 group and 6% for the Turkish group. When it comes to the Polish P2 group, however, the discrepancy between the positive and negative situations is not that sharp as the percentage of negative encounters described in this group reaches 40%. This may indicate the fact that Polish P2 students are more sensitive, mature, and skilful, and thus they could notice various, even subtle dimensions of intercultural encounters. They may also exhibit better interpretive skills. What needs to be mentioned is that some students, due to misunderstanding of the task or for some other reasons, expressed some comments or personal reflections instead of providing a description of the situation itself. Fortunately, the percentage of such instances is relatively low; it constitutes 2% for Polish P1 group, 8% for Polish P2 group, and 2% for Turkish group.

Recency, that is, whether the narrated encounter was the first or any other experienced in the respondent's life, was the second aspect to be analysed. There is a striking similarity in the answers provided by the members of the three groups; however, the percentage rates might vary slightly in all three groups. For the majority of the respondents, the situations they narrated concern an encounter they have experienced at any point in their lifetime (Polish P1: 56%; Polish P2: 60%; Turkish group: 52%). At the same time, 40% of the respondents in the Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups as well as 46% of Turkish students described their first meetings with foreigners. This stands in contrast to the study described by Allen (2003), in which the majority of the study participants reported their first encounters.

The third aspect that was examined relates to the general context in which the reported encounter took place. This issue needs to be discussed separately for each particular group as the subjects exhibit some group-specific features. As far as the Polish P1 group is concerned, 54% of the students described meeting a foreigner abroad, and 46% a meeting in their own country. In the case of Polish P2 students, 58% reported that the intercultural encounter took place abroad and 36% in their own country. The remaining 6% mentioned indirect (computer- or telephone-enhanced) conversations with both of the interlocutors being in their own countries. For the majority of the Turkish students (76%), their own home country was the most frequent place for the reported intercultural encounters. At the same time, 22% of the Turkish students described meeting foreigners abroad, whereas 2% provided unclear data about the context of the meeting. As the data indicates, Polish students (P1 and P2 groups) displayed a similar tendency of meeting foreigners abroad (Polish P2 group was more diversified than Polish P1 group). In contrast, Turkish students experienced their contacts mostly in Turkey, their home country.

The analysis of the encounters clearly shows the diversity of the contacts the students of the three groups experienced in terms of the country of origin of their interlocutors and the character of the encounter itself. The first issue to be commented upon relates to the nationality of their interlocutors. The students in the three groups described encounters with representatives of as many as 33 countries. The list of countries is extensive and it includes examples of neighbouring countries as well as some distant, exotic places (e.g., Brazil, China, and Nigeria). The data indicates some differences between particular groups of the students participating in the study. Looking at the findings, it seems that the Polish P2 group is the most mobile of the three groups. Polish P2 students had the most diverse experiences with foreigners in terms of

quantity and variety. They reported meeting both representatives of various English-speaking countries as well as some exotic countries with English playing the role of lingua franca. The Polish P1 group reported a slightly less diverse number of countries visited and nationalities met; however, the list provided by these students is also impressive. The situation is different in the case of the Turkish students, the majority of whom experienced the encounters with foreigners mostly in the context of their home country. Consequently, Turkish students mentioned only 16 examples of nationalities, that is, half as many as the two Polish groups.

When it comes to the proportion of encounters with native vs. non-native speakers of English, contacts with native speakers of English constitute one third of the overall number of encounters. This issue also shows some differences among the groups, namely: Polish P2 students reported the most frequent and diverse encounters with native speakers of English in comparison to the other two groups. A detailed analysis and percentage distribution of the data is as follows: Polish P2 students narrated meetings with Englishmen (42%), Americans (34%), Australians (6%), and finally, Canadians (2%). For Polish P1 students, Englishmen were also the most frequent group of native speakers met (36%), followed by Americans (16%) and Canadians (4%). The frequency of encounters as well as variety is slightly lower than in the case of Polish P2 students. In contrast, Turkish students reported meeting Americans the most frequently (24%), followed by Englishmen (12%) and Canadians (2%).

In their narratives the students communicated meetings with interlocutors representing countries taking part in the research, namely: Polish students described incidents with Turks, and Turkish students related their meetings with Poles. Yet such encounters are not numerous. What also needs to be mentioned is the fact that the students included meeting multicultural groups in their narratives. There were some few cases of students who did not specify the nationality of their interlocutors. The second issue worth commenting upon deals with the very character of the encounter (direct or face-to-face meeting vs. indirect or computer-enhanced encounter). Direct encounters prevail in all three groups. Indirect meetings amount to 6% and are recorded by Polish P2 students only.

Pavlenko (2007: 166) is of the opinion that the main analytical step in content and thematic analysis is the coding of narratives according to the emergent themes, trends, patterns or conceptual categories (Strauss and Corbin 1990, in Pavlenko 2007: 166). This helps the researcher to identify the most characteristic features of the narratives under study

and consequently to analyse them. Narratives give account of our understanding and help us make sense of the world as we perceive and experience it. Consequently, the analysis of the themes emerging in the narratives will allow us to notice particular meanings and values the subjects attribute to intercultural encounters.

As far as content analysis is concerned, the topics covered in the narratives vary to a great extent. The most frequent themes mentioned by Polish P1 students and Turkish students concern the following (the themes are listed according to the frequency of mention):

– successful communication – this is the first of two most common topics for both Polish P1 students and Turkish students. Successful communication is associated by the respondents with effective interaction (including understanding one's interlocutor) and subsequent benefits, such as: gaining confidence, improving one's language skills, and testing one's language abilities and communication skills in practice.
– culture – understood as behaviour, that is, reactions and ways of responding which are determined culturally.

In contrast, Polish P2 students mention the following topics in their narratives, namely:

– expanding knowledge about different cultures (i.e., learning something new about various cultures, getting more information);
– raising one's own language awareness (noticing certain mechanisms and peculiarities about the use of the language).

Some other themes appearing in the narratives are as follows:

– learning about new cultures as well as verbal and non-verbal communication for Polish P1 students (this mostly concerns exotic and distant countries, e.g., China, Nigeria).
– culture-determined behaviour and the affective response that it evokes, for instance, attitudes and stereotypes (developing awareness, verification, change). This was particularly common in the Polish P2 group.
– interacting with a complete stranger and extending knowledge about Big C culture (monuments, recognisable elements of the culture – these were the most frequent themes for Turkish students).

For clarity, the analysis will be limited to the five most frequent themes in the three groups. Table 7 presents more detailed information about the themes raised in the narratives.

Table 7. The most common themes mentioned in the narratives and the frequency of occurrence

No./ frequency	Polish P1 group	Polish P2 group	Turkish group
1.	successful communication – 42	learning about new cultures, stereotype confirmation or rejection – 34	successful communication – 31
2.	culture behaviour – 26	language awareness – 28	culture behaviour – 30
3.	learning about new cultures, stereotype confirmation or rejection – 20	culture behaviour – 25	cooperating with the foreigner – 12
4.	culture and the communication process: eye contact and body reactions – 14	changing attitudes – 24	culture and the communication process: eye contact and body reactions – 8
5.	language awareness – 13 cooperating with the foreigner – 13	successful communication – 18	learning about new cultures, stereotype confirmation or rejection – 5

Certain emergent themes identified in the course of content analysis will be briefly commented upon in the following subsections. In particular, the discussion will revolve around the following:
– intercultural encounter as an experience raising students' language awareness;
– intercultural encounter as an opportunity to communicate;
– intercultural encounter as a lesson of culture.

4.2.2 Intercultural encounter as an experience raising students' language awareness. Language awareness, including interpretation and sensitivity to linguistic aspects, is one of the most frequent themes emerging in the students' narratives. Language awareness is defined as a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life (Donmall 1985: 7). The analysis showed that the students in all three groups are linguistically aware; however, the differences observable relate to the degree of explicitness as well as some specific characteristics. In particular, Polish groups, that is, P1 and P2 students, were more direct in verbalising their reflections about language itself and its use. They noticed and reported more examples connected with

language-based incidents. They talked analytically about language, its mechanisms and patterns, more frequently than the Turkish students, who did not report overtly upon the language and linguistic patterns. Polish students were also more involved in exploration, discovery, and verbal description about the language and its use during their intercultural encounters. If we take into account five features of Language Awareness methodology (LA methodology, cf. Borg 1994: 62), Polish P2, and Polish P1 students (the latter to a slightly lesser degree than Polish P2 students) displayed all of the features of LA methodology, namely, description, exploration, languaging (i.e., talking analytically to each other), engagement, and reflection. Consequently, the themes appearing in the narratives fit into the three domains that language awareness encompasses, that is, affective (referring to attention, curiosity, and forming attitudes), cognitive (sensitivity to linguistic patterns), and social (it influences students' performance as communicators) (for further characteristics of the three domains, see: Donmall 1985).

In contrast, Turkish students described incidents that predominantly fall into the social domain, rather than the affective and cognitive ones. Their narratives focused mostly on descriptions of how language is used rather than its investigation and discovery. The Turkish students also tended not to provide any overt comments upon the language used, and consequently were not engaged in languaging (talking about the language). Instead, they concentrated rather on the very process of communication and the results of it.

Language awareness in the sense of discovery, reflection, and languaging is the most frequent theme in the case of Polish P2 and P1 students. The linguistic aspects most commonly discussed in the Polish P2 and P1 groups concern the following (ranking presented according to the frequency of occurrence):

– pronunciation – the narratives include pronunciation of particular words, that is, intonation (or the so-called melody of the language), but also comprehension. In addition, this category covers some social consequences of mispronunciation and miscomprehension of the words (see P2.62);

– language accuracy, including students' attitudes towards it and their perception of errors. This is best exemplified by the statement "grammar is not enough to communicate" (see P1.32);

– language dialects (including: differences of accents and their impact on the meaning of the message conveyed; recognition and awareness of the variety of accents; AE vs. BE varieties) (see P2.72, P1.48, P2.87);

– language register (in particular: degrees of formality, politeness, frequency of occurrence of particular forms – e.g., "please");

– social and metaphorical meanings of words and their impact on con-
versation (cross-cultural differences in connotations and denotations
of the words);
– non-verbal communication and context-dependent factors that affect
its meaning;
– critical language awareness – the awareness of L1 and L2 norms af-
fecting the language use (see P1.50);
– culture-specific features of language, including language use (e.g., on-
omatopoeic words).

The following samples from the students' narratives best illustrate
the points discussed above.

P2.62: *When I was expressing my great enthusiasm about the canals, my
interlocutor seemed a bit confused. He asked: "Bridges and what?" And
again, I answer* **"canals."** *He still could not get my point. I tried to explain
that I mean the watercourse in the city centre. Only then did my supervi-
sor catch my idea and said: "Oh, canals!" Suddenly, I realised that he
used exactly the same word but differently stressed. I put the stress on the
first syllable, whereas the correct pattern of pronunciation required stress-
ing the second syllable* **/kə'næl/.**

*I felt extremely embarrassed that I made such a mistake. At first,
I thought that the word is not appropriate here and that I said a false
friend of the Polish word* **kanał.** *My supervisor reacted very naturally, he
explained that he could not understand, because of my mispronunciation
of the word and the conversation continued.*

*Never before have I thought that pronunciation and word stress have
such an important role in communication. So far the teachers (mainly
Polish) have hardly recognised wrong stressing or corrected such mistakes.
The pronunciation section in the coursebooks were often omitted, there
were treated without explicit explanation.*

*After a second thought, I became aware that knowing a language is not
only grammar and vocabulary. The third sub-system is equally important
as the other two. I decided to pay more attention to this part of language,
also check the pronunciation pattern of unknown words in a dictionary
and be more careful while speaking. I also introduced pronunciation prac-
tice to my teaching.*[1]

P1.32: *As a learner, I experienced lots of surprises in England. I think
that Polish people mostly pay attention to grammar, which not all Brit-
ish people use correctly, for instance – "she don't." But not only language*

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[1] For the purposes of the research, none of the subjects' responses were corrected or
modified, and they may therefore contain some mistakes.

issue surprised me. Also, it turned out that British people are very kind and out-going. They are helpful if we have problems with finding a place, to which we want to go.

P2.72: *Generally, American dialect, apart from slangish words, is simpler. American people do not use sophisticated words, because they do not think it is necessary. Communication is simple. Principle of minimum effort. Lots of abbrevations. There are some nice expressions and idioms that American people would never use as "to give somebody a fright" – they consider them rather snobbish. And when I once said "I'm not from this neck of woods" my American friends nearly fell of their chairs :)*

The problem that I experienced when I was in Canada was with the accent. I always learned British accent and I had only British phonetics and I always preferred British accent to the American one. But sometimes when I tried to talk to American people with the British accent, they did not understand me. I am not sure if they really did not understand me or they were just pretending. I learned somewhere that American people do not really like when someone talks with a fake British accent. Since that time, I always try to switch to American accent whenever I meet an American native speaker.

P1.48: *Then I asked him about Gaelic language, I always wanted to learn it, but here in Poland, it's impossible to find a teacher. He said that he used to learn it at school and that it was a subject in school. Children have to learn it at schools, however now the government is going to change it, and children will be able to choose whether they want to learn it or not. I told him that this is a pity, because not many people are aware of their beautiful culture, they know nothing about the language, history, music or dance. Moreover, he said that it's really difficult to find a book about Irish history.*

*Séadna was surprised that I know a lot about his country and that I love their culture. I surprised him with some facts, for example what the colors of their flag means, or what **Claddagh ring** is and what is its meaning, what "**the lord of the dance**" is etc. He told me that there is a lot of Polish people in Ireland, but they don't seem to be enthusiastic about their staying there, they are only interested in earning money.*

Séadna tried to teach me some Irish, I remember some words like slán – bye, nil – no, Tá – yes, Dia dhuit – hi. We both had fun with teaching him Polish. I tried to explain him Polish endings. He laughed and couldn't understand why we like to complicate our life with these rules ☺. He still remember words like "cześć" or "dobranoc." It's fun listening to him talking Polish ☺

T13: *I want to tell you the most memorable encounter of mine with a foreigner. The season was summer. I was working in a market as a cashier. A Chinese man came in and asked me for macaroni. He was wearing a weird hat and a big bag on his back. I did not know English. I brought a macaroni and asked him with my body language whether he knew where to go. He said that he had been living in Turkey for a year and he went. It was the first time I had talked or even seen a foreigner. I became exited. Because I did not know how to communicate with him. But I did and I told myself that he was a human, too. The language, culture or environment that he grew up don't make him something different from a normal human.*

So, we shouldn't be afraid of talking to a foreigner. Their culture, language may be different from ours but we have body language, too. At least, we can communicate them with our body language.

T14: *[…] I started my journey with the expectation that I would be able to travel and experience life in USA. […] So when we arrived to New York, I found the hotel's address, which we stayed for orientation, by asking anybody. There were a lot of Turkish people around me but I felt really alone. At the first day I thought that l should go back but after two days I had to go to Cooperstown to work.*

*Cooperstown is a small town […]. I was living with 30 people in the house, 10 of them were Turkish ☺ The others were from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Mongolia, Jamaica, Russia, Poland, […]. All of us were working at McDonald's, I was the cashier. When we came home from work, we used to sit at the garden, we talked about our countries, sometimes we cooked meals, we danced, we taught our cultures to the another. One day while we were talking, we recognized that we have a lot of common words with Bulgarian and Macedonian. Such as **tencere, şapka, bagaj** […].*

4.2.3 Intercultural encounter as an opportunity to communicate. Communication with the representatives of other countries is another issue that requires further comments as it frequently appears in the students' narratives (the most common theme in Polish P1 and Turkish groups). Almost 60% in Polish P1 group, 62% of the Turkish students, and 36% of Polish P2 students tackled the topic of successful communication during the encounter with the Other. The analysis of the data shows that intercultural encounters are perceived by the students as the test of their linguistic and communicative skills. In addition, the issue of successful communication was interpreted as the students' ability to deal with on-the-spot communication, that is, maintain the conversation and, at the same time, overcome some possible linguistic deficiencies and problems

with comprehension and language production the students might have. Another issue mentioned in the narratives deals with the impact of intercultural encounters on:

– the students' linguistic self-esteem (e.g., gaining confidence);
– the students' self-knowledge about their behaviour (including linguistic behaviour) and reactions during intercultural encounters;
– the quality of the students' language (e.g., immediate feedback received from the interlocutors resulted in improvement of language skills);
– their persistence and motivation (a powerful and memorable incentive to study harder and to extend one's language skills);
– recognition of factors that play the role in the process of communication with foreigners (e.g., body language, communicative intent);
– noticing strategies for effective intercultural communication.

The samples presented below illustrate various benefits (or gains) of successful interaction with the foreigner that the students reported.

P1.23: *At the beginning it was very stressful for me. In such a new situation I couldn't rely on my innate language. I wasn't sure enough about my language skills and I was afraid of failure. But what I knew was that I have to adjust and overcome this barrier.*

P1.33: *I was really glad to listen to him, because I could comprehend everything he said, I thought "If I can understand a guy from the USA I will understand anyone!" Also his stories about the life of the University assured me that this place can certainly meet my expectations.*

P1.41: *I have taught myself never to miss an opportunity to practice my English on foreigners. I always try to spot "tourists in distress" and provide them with the assistance they need.*

P2.95: *To be honest, I was afraid that I would not be able to express clearly my opinions in foreign language. I did not know what to talk about with that woman and what is more, how to bridge the generation gap. My fears turned out to be entirely unfounded. The woman was so talkative, friendly and young at heart that our conversation lasted hours. She talked about her business trips to innumerable countries all over the world. I was delighted with her stories and rich experience as well as her incredible courage when she had been travelling completely alone in Africa or Asia. It turned out that my English was not so bad, on the contrary, I realized that the conversation in English really pleased me and it was a motivator for further studying. We spent really nice afternoon together and at the end of the meeting I felt as if the woman had been my close relative, not a stranger. Now when I am*

an English teacher I draw on that experience and I encourage my students to benefit from any opportunity to speak target language.

T17: *Speaking in English with a foreigner was exciting for me but unfortunately, I couldn't speak. I had thought I could speak with her. I was disappointed. As an English learner, I noticed English has different accent around the world. I also discovered that grammar wasn't important in speaking but body language, facial expressions and eye contact is very important to communicating with a foreigner. But as a learner, I have always taken attention grammar while speaking.*

The analysis of narratives shows students' linguistic problems, deficiencies of pragmatic competence and other difficulties that the students have a fear of or experience when meeting representatives of another culture. The unique character of the intercultural encounter lies in its unpredictability and the need to respond quickly both verbally and non-verbally to a context-specific situation. Although, as Niżegorodcew (2011: 37) points out, an interculturally competent speaker is able to consciously adapt their cultural norms embedded in language to the interlocutors/addressees, occasionally s/he may fail to do because of the impact of affective or situational factors. Differences in linguistic and cultural backgrounds can produce misunderstandings because they imply different rules of interaction and the use of different linguistic terms to convey meaning (Cenoz 2008: 126).

In the case of limited cultural knowledge, the students are likely to transfer the behaviour they are familiar with in their L1. Pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics refers to this influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and learning of L2 pragmatic information (Kasper 1992: 207).

Pragmatics deals with "the communicative action" (Deweale 2007: 165). Pragmatic knowledge is defined as "a particular component of language users' general communicative knowledge, that is, knowledge of how verbal acts are understood and performed in accordance with a speaker's intention under contextual and discoursal constraints" (Faerch and Kasper 1984: 214). Celce-Murcia et al. (1995: 17) point out that pragmatic competence manifests itself in understanding communicative intent, that is, matching actional intent with linguistic form. Intercultural encounters provide the students with an opportunity to immediately verify their pragmatic competence and recognise the effects of their linguistic behaviour. Research shows that the context of acquisition greatly influences the three constituent parts of pragmatic competence in the L2: self-perceived proficiency, communicative anxiety,

and perception of the characteristics of the L2 (Deweale 2007: 181). In Deweale's study, the students acquiring language in the naturalistic setting (L2 context) were more proficient and less anxious than students learning language in the classroom context. In addition, the authentic use of L2 during the process of learning it contributes to attaining high levels of it (Deweale 2007: 181).

Analysing the students' personal narratives we can see how meaningful and informative the intercultural encounters are for the students.

T21: *When we were drinking tea, I was thinking how to offer tea to her, because I knew the each word separately, but couldn't combine to make a sentence. That day was a real shame for me. I realized that I didn't know anything related to real life language. That experience was the boiling point for me. As a student, I saw my deficiencies clearly. Language should help to make life easy and communicate with others. As a core, I learned that the important one is not to know lots of words, prepositions, etc., it is to know how to use them in real life.*

Pragmatic competence consists of two dimensions, namely:
– pragmalinguistic competence – refers to the linguistic elements used in the different languages to perform speech acts. "Pragmalinguistic knowledge requires mappings of form, meaning, force and context" (Kasper 2001: 51, in Cenoz 2008: 125). For example: greetings can be expressed in different ways in languages and in many cases it is not possible to have direct translation;
– sociopragmatic competence (Leech 1983; Thomas 1983, in Cenoz 2008) – the sociopragmatic or cultural component is related to implicit social meaning, and there can be different assessments of the social aspects of the context, such as the social distance between the speaker and the addressee. Sociopragmatics refers to the link between action-relevant context factors and communicative action (e.g., deciding whether to apologise or not) and does not necessarily require any links to specific forms at all.

Pragmatic competence also includes paralinguistic or non-linguistic features which vary depending on the mode of conveying the messages (Chłopek 2011: 258). In speaking, paralinguistic/non-linguistic features include the following: body language (with mimicry and facial expressions), intonation (i.e., intensity, vocal speed, vocal loudness, pitch), non-verbal sounds (e.g., hissing, grunting, puffing), chronemics, proxemics. In writing, paralinguistic/non-linguistic features include the use of special fonts (e.g., italics) or the use of symbols (e.g., emoticons).

This research shows that the structure of the students' narratives contains some paralinguistic or non-linguistic features, however, the

types of features as well as the frequency of their occurrence vary depending on the group of students. The analysis of narratives indicates that Polish P2 students included the biggest number of paralinguistic/non-linguistic features in their narratives in comparison to the Polish P1 and Turkish groups. Intercultural encounter is perceived by the students as a test of their speaking abilities and communication skills. This attitude was particularly common in the Polish groups. It can be exemplified by comments of Polish P1 students such as: *speaking to a native speaker is easier than to a non-native speaker.*

P2.80: *What struck me most during my first stay in England was the very frequent use of "please" while speaking. The situation that I described seemed to be funny and entertaining at the beginning but then I realized how important it was for me and other students as far as learning the target language culture is concerned.*

When I went to Hastings I was just 17 and my English was at intermediate/upper-intermediate level, whereas my knowledge of English culture was basic. I regarded and still regard myself as a polite and good-mannered person. All the other students that I lived with were also very polite. However, the word "please" was a bit problematic for all of us.

When Mr Taylor corrected Donni's sentences and emphasized the word "please" I thought it is because of Donni's age (10 years old). I thought it comes from parental care and the need to educate the boy. However, when Mr Taylor corrected not only Donni but also all the other students including me, it made me think it all over again. I observed people in the street, in shops, I analysed the way people make requests in Polish and in English and I came to conclusion that Poles do not use "please" that often while asking for something in Polish. In Polish we sometimes use this word but it usually occurs at the beginning of the sentence and never at the end. Yet, we mostly express a polite request adding particles to the verb forming, e.g., "mógłbyś," "mogłabyś." Probably that is the reason why Poles tend to forget about the word "please" at the end of their English utterances. This may be the same with Bulgarian language since Donni made the same mistake. But what also comes to my mind is that not much attention is paid to the word "please" while teaching English. I think my teacher concentrated mainly on the structure "Can I…" and not on "please."

What I also observed while being in Hastings is that the word "please" used by the British was as if taken for granted and rooted in their culture. I noticed that the British have many polite expressions that they constantly use and they cannot imagine life without them. Maybe they assume that politeness costs nothing but makes their lives pleasant. One thing is cer-

tain, I will pay a lot of attention to the use of "please" and to making requests while teaching English to students so that they avoid a situation where they are thought of offending others or of being ill-mannered.

4.2.4 Intercultural encounter as a lesson in culture. Meeting the Other provided students with the opportunity to extend their knowledge about new cultures (big C culture) and learn about different cultures, their habits, and daily routines (the small C culture). This was one of the most frequent responses in all the three groups; however, the frequency of occurrence was the highest in the Turkish group.

Apart from English-speaking countries (e.g., the USA, England, Scotland, Canada, Ireland), the students improved their knowledge about other, sometimes more exotic countries, namely:
– Polish P1: Mongolia, Bulgaria, Germany (P1.38); the topics related mostly to celebrating festivals, for example, Thanksgiving, Christmas.
– Polish P2 group – Thailand (non-verbal communication), Muslim countries, France (attitudes of French people towards English people), openness and willingness to help as shown by native speakers of English towards non-native speakers; low level of general knowledge among representatives of other countries, festivals (e.g., celebrating Christmas in Australia and Nigeria).
– Turkish students – Moroccan culture, festivals, for example, different ways of celebrating Saint Nicholas Day; differences in religions (e.g., Muslim vs. Christian; a sacrificial lamb); everyday manifestations of culture (e.g., music).

Samples of the students' responses best illustrate the point.

P1.3: (about meeting an American) […] *the possibility of having a free conversation with a native speaker made me quite elated although I was nervous as a turkey at Thanksgiving. I was not sure of my language skills and I did not want to make fool of myself. However, my first reaction upon hearing from him, quote "We Americans have no culture, we have McDonald's" unquote, was dissolving into laughter. As luck would have it, I had a pleasure of coming across someone with a tremendous sense of humour and distance to himself, as well as someone who possesses and is willing to share his terrific knowledge* (the student's reaction was laughter, then reflection).

P2.58: *Recently I have met a Nigerian native speaker who told me about customs connected with celebrating Christmas in Nigeria. It seemed to me that Christmas is very important holiday for Catholics in Nigeria but it looks the same as in Poland. What was really new and to a certain extent astounding to me is the fact that they celebrate Christmas in the streets.*

The atmosphere of Christmas is completely different than in Poland. It is almost certainly connected with the climate and ethnic origin. During Christmas everyone gathers together in the streets and celebrate cheerfully on parades wearing colourful, self-made outfits. The most important about Christmas in Nigeria is spending time with the whole family, appreciating every moment because very often families can meet only during Christmas once a year or even more rarely. It seems that Christmas in Nigeria is not preceded by a fever connected with buying presents and food. These are actually the least important. Sometimes the biggest gift is when a relative from a far away region of the country visits his or her family during Christmas.

T18: (about meeting a Moroccan girl) *Firstly I learned about their meals, they usually use heavy oil with meals and eating lots of oily meal. Secondly she talked about their life style and wedding ceremony. It was very interesting to me to hear that "I learned that all morocco girls like gold and silver."*

In addition, intercultural encounters are lessons in culture in the sense that:
– they give students the opportunity to evaluate (i.e., to confirm or reject) the cultural knowledge gained from other sources, and to modify it accordingly. Cultural encounters make students test cultural facts, beliefs, and opinions against reality. This tendency was particularly frequent in the Polish P2 group and Turkish group.
– developing cultural awareness, in particular the awareness about culture-bound behaviour as well as culture specific norms, routines, etc.
– developing critical cultural awareness, which is defined as finding things in common between L1 culture and other cultures (see the sample from T33 narrative). It is also connected with realising similarities with the representatives of other cultures. One of the examples concerns incidents described by a Polish P2 student about Muslim religion and fasting as compared to Polish traditions of fasting.

T33: *We learned the synonyms of words in other languages, we made jokes, we invented new jokes with the mixture of the three languages. It was one of the funniest nights I had had so far. […] At the beginning of the night all of us were worried due to the ineffective communication but as time passed and as we destroyed all the barriers we faced we felt happier and more relaxed. Sometime later we all enjoyed the night.*

4.2.5 Affectivity in intercultural encounters. One of the characteristics of intercultural interactions is ambiguity and uncertainty concerning the

background rules by which the interaction will occur and the meaning of signals (Gudykunst and Nishida 2001, in Matsumoto et al. 2005). It embodies the opportunity for experiential learning beyond the largely cognitive orientation of the classroom. It is a powerful source of affective and unconscious learning. Teachers who take responsibility for this kind of experience – sometimes related to a foreign language but often not – expose young people to culture shock and an experience which may be crucial for the development of a new relationship with otherness, a new understanding of the self and its relationship to the accustomed social environment and a new perception of what was hitherto taken for granted. Yet a visit to a foreign environment does not of itself produce positive representations nor favourable attitudes (Byram and Zarate 1995: 13).

Another feature of intercultural encounter relates to the inevitability of conflict and misunderstandings. During the intercultural interactions chances are great that others' behaviours will not conform to our expectations. They produce negative emotions which are upsetting to our self-concepts (Matsumoto et al. 2005). They are bound to accentuate differences in the process, which inevitably leads to conflict and misunderstanding. People may become impatient with or intolerant of ambiguity, leading to anger, frustration, and resentment (Matsumoto et al. 2005).

According to Matsumoto (2005), emotion regulation is indispensable in dealing successfully with intercultural communication (Matsumoto 2005). Research shows (cf. Matsumoto 2005; Alagic 2009) that "negative feelings" such as anger, frustration, and resentment can easily take over our thoughts and feelings about the conflict. This may explain why interactions with foreigners generated so many negative emotions. This also corresponds with the statistical analysis, presented earlier in this chapter (see 4.1), where the category of negative emotions was discussed in detail, with the enumeration of particular emotions, and where anxiety received the highest scores in all the three groups.

The individual's identity also plays a role in intercultural communication and influences communication behaviour (Gudykunst and Shapiro 1996: 21). The authors highlight the fact that the individual's identity may vary depending on whether communication is interpersonal or intergroup. Gudykunst and Shapiro (1996: 21) note that social identities predominate over personal identities in initial interactions with strangers. This correlates with the research data, which shows the students' tendency to discuss the encounters from the social perspective (with interlocutors bearing features typical for a particular society). It also manifests itself in research subjects' attempts to verify stereotypes and provide generalisations.

Finally, intercultural communication is dependent on expectations, which involve looking forward or anticipating something in the future. Expectations stem from the individuals' knowledge, beliefs, stereotypes, self-conceptions, roles, prior interaction, and characteristics of the communicators. Gudykunst and Shapiro (1996: 23) state that expectations are created on the basis of an individual's stereotypes and attitudes. They are also influenced by the individual's identity, like the amount of uncertainty and anxiety, and the satisfaction with communication (Gudykunst and Shapiro 1996: 21).

4.3 From "Haha" to "aha" – Intercultural encounters as an incentive to reflect, restructure, and learn from the experience

Intercultural encounters provide an incentive to test the learners' individual beliefs and change their future actions. The respondents were supposed to say how intercultural encounters affected them and their behaviours as learners. The respondents enumerated the following categories: knowledge extension (including cultural knowledge extension), communicative skills development, self-knowledge increase, evaluation of stereotypes, and change of attitudes. They will be briefly discussed below.

4.3.1 Knowledge extension. Intercultural encounters give students the opportunity to expand their knowledge, to acquire new facts and skills. According to data analysis, learning was also understood by the subjects as:
– Learning from native speakers, either by imitating their behaviours or receiving overt verbal instruction (explanation) from them. Intercultural encounters provide learning and practice opportunities in terms of production, communication, and repair strategies (e.g., responding to unexpected behaviour, avoiding mistakes) (see the comment by a Turkish respondent).

T24: *Life is a puzzle, sometimes it makes us laugh, sometimes it makes us cry. We need to pick out the right pieces to make it right, even though sometimes we pick out the wrong ones. We can learn from these events to avoid future mistakes because we do learn from the choices we make. We should know how to deal with different cultures. I have been through an event that influenced me.*

– Improving one's own language in the sense of adjusting the language (tuning it) to the cultural context. This also includes realising the

importance of cultural knowledge as exemplified by the comment: "Language itself is not enough." Polish P2 students appreciated the fact that intercultural encounters provided them with the opportunity to gain knowledge, especially the knowledge about the language and words or about authenticity and natural communication (P2.75).

– Raising awareness of culture-bound language behaviour, developing sensitivity to language and cultural constraints. This also refers to noticing cultural differences and their influence on communication; developing sensitivity to cross-cultural issues (learning that certain reactions are culture-specific or determined by L1 culture). Among the examples mentioned we can find the following: the behaviour of old people, politeness norms (the use of "please" in the UK), and the need to leave tips in restaurants (for details see the extracts below).

P1.27: *Then, after being there for some time I got used to their being polite and saying "thank you," "excuse me Sir/ Madam" and "thank you" everywhere and night or day. To my mind, I wanted to look for similarities between people and culture from Poland and England.*

Differences in behavior frustrated me because, as I have already said, I was not aware of them earlier. And that is why I've learned from that situation a lot, not only as a learner of second language but also as a future teacher. We should make students aware of certain aspects of English culture and people's mentality. It is crucial not to leave some matters out so that they don't have to be subject to confusion, shock or even disillusion.

P2.57: *When I finished my second year of studies I decided to go abroad to master my language. So I went to London for the summer holidays to work as an au pair and take care of three children, live with the British family and first and foremost interact with them. My command of language was quite good then, so I thought that when we overcome first difficulties connected with foreign accent and the speed of speech, everything will be a piece of cake for me. So it was quite good for the first couple of weeks and everybody seemed to be glad with our cooperation until one day came. I was talking with my employer when she suddenly said in an angry manner that I'm rude. I was quite shocked and surprised because I didn't perceive myself as somebody who is forgetting my manners, so I asked her why she thinks that. "Because you don't say 'thank you' enough," she replied. Since that day I was on tenterhooks every time I had to talk with her.*

Comments: This critical incident presents the classic example of cultural differences between Poland and Great Britain. It is not the result of one of the sides being rude or impolite but it is the consequence of the fact that some people do not realise these differences. Although I was aware

that Polish people might be perceived as rude by the British, English was an artificial language for me and I was unable to feel the distinction between my language being polite or impolite. This "politeness" of the language may be naturally acquired when the second or foreign language is acquired in the target language environment not learned in the classroom context. That is why using more authentic material, sharing experience of living abroad and encouraging students to find out information about the culture of the English-speaking countries might help to avoid such unpleasant situations in the future.

4.3.2 Self-knowledge. Developing self-knowledge is another aspect of learning from intercultural experiences. The analysis of the students' narratives show that quite many comments are connected with developing the students' self-knowledge, namely:

– Realising or identifying one's own individual personal limits, especially in reference to emotions (e.g., identifying the degree of stress or anxiety that intercultural encounters evoke). This also includes developing self-knowledge about one's own features and predisposition (P1.41, T.42) or the idiosyncratic character of the language one is using (P1.52; P2.83).
– Gaining self-confidence and a sense of achievement (the extract P1.26 below illustrates this point).

P1.26: *As time went by and I was exposed to the local variety of English, I began noticing changes in my use of language. Certain phrases local to the area I stayed in entered my vocabulary and my pronunciation stopped being a blend of British and American English, instead taking a shape somewhat similar to the local variety of English, I distinctly recall hearing that I "sounded Welsh" on a few occasions and it always filled me with glee.*

– Finding some coping mechanisms and emotion-regulation strategies that can be implemented in prospective intercultural encounters, for example, experiencing less stress when communicating with a non-native speaker.
– Specifying ways of self-direction and self-development, including linguistic development (see T.38), setting personal goals.

P1.41: *It turns out Poles do know English, yet they cannot speak it. I think the problem lies in timidity. A teacher should always try to encourage their students to speak and convince them not to be afraid of making mistakes. I also believe that besides teaching the language, the teacher should make an effort to build the learner's self-confidence.*

T42: […] *That day was so important for me because in that day I decided to be a language teacher. […] Now I wonder that if I didn't go to that seminar what kind of job I would be choosing. […]*

P1.52: *Since we became friends very fast, we were usually honest with each other and we didn't feel inhibited to talk about mistakes that we make. This evening she told me that she had no idea why during the last lecture I was using the phrase "et cetera" very often. I was really surprised and at first I said that it is not true. After a moment I realised that it was actually true, which surprised me a lot because I had never noticed before that I had a phrase in English which I used a lot.*

I was thinking about that incident for a long time and I came to a conclusion that I do not use "et cetera" all the time. It was just during this one lecture and it does not happen that often on other occasions.

P2.83: *Hence, being in England I had to recall and reflect upon some situations and remember using the polite phrases like Thank you, Please, Sorry, How are you? Sometimes even more than just once, in order not to be regarded as someone rude or a stranger. And even though, I perceive myself as a quite polite person, the overwhelming amount of their politeness sometimes made me a little bit confused.*

T38: *As a learner, I learned from this event that learners shouldn't be bounded to what they are taught in the school.*

4.3.3 Redefinition and modification of stereotypes. Intercultural encounters enable the students to compare their beliefs and opinions with reality. As a result, the students claimed to realise that some stereotypes are wrong or false. The participants of the study recognised the need for not being guided or misled by stereotypes. They also stressed the need to withhold their initial judgements. The samples provided below best illustrate this point.

P1.25: *I also learnt the well-known lesson not to judge the book by its cover. Marek seemed arrogant and mean to me but when I got to know him better he turned out to be nice.*

P1.8: *Cultural diversity could be a source of problems, but in order to understand another person we have to find some empathy in us. Sometimes we have to step outside of our cultural boundaries in order to realise the impact that our culture has on our behaviour.*

P2.72: *When it comes to cultural differences, I did not notice many of them. In terms of temperament, paradoxically, American people seem to be closer to Polish people than the British. They are easy-going and hos-*

pitable, just as Polish people. When I was in Canada, I could pay a visit without making an appointment in advance and it was not considered rude. In Britain, every time I dropped in somewhere uninvited I felt somehow out of place. It is not that British people are impolite, on the contrary, they are very nice. But the smile is often fake. From what I experience, American people are more sincere and authentic.

T16: *Normally I would think that Lithuanian people are cold blooded and unfriendly but I was wrong. She was such a nice friend. After this situation, I learned whatever happens and whoever she or he is, we should leave our prejudices.*

The students admitted to benefitting from the intercultural encounters as they revealed their own feelings and prejudices they were not aware of before. This "lesson" was accompanied by strong emotions ranging from surprise to disappointment and anger. A relatively high personal and emotional load is easily noticeable in the samples presented below. This theme appeared in all of the three groups, yet with varying degrees of frequency (for the Polish P2 group it was the most frequent, for the Turkish group – the least frequent).

P2.87: *It is not that I feel ashamed of the way I reacted during this incident in Newcastle because till now, every time when I am misunderstood by a native speaker of English I feel embarrassed and disagreeably surprised that the time I devoted to study English is not enough to communicate successfully. I would probably have similar impressions if it happened again. But since that time I have learnt that I should try to adjust the way I speak to the particular people with whom I communicate. As proof I can say that it is natural for me now, while leaving any shop in Newcastle to say: thank you very much! /mut!/?*

P2.90: *As soon as I realized that I don't understand people living in Belfast, I felt inhibited. I was afraid to say a word. And to the end of my "holidays" I did not say a word, I was avoiding contact with people living around, native speakers of that language. To make things worse, my friend, with whom I was visiting my sister, was doing great – he had some minor difficulties with communication, but the speed of speech, accent or strange dialect were not a problem. I must add that we were at the same group in our studies, we were at the same level. When I came back to Poland and the term started, I was unable to force myself to use the language during classes. I refused to work, my grades deteriorated, I almost lost the battle. It took me a year to be back on my feet. After finishing the college, I paid my sister another visit and despite many doubts, it was better than for the first time. I cannot say that I understood each word, but I overcame my*

fear and started to communicate with people, especially in everyday situations. It was not so bad. When I managed to deal with the smallest goal, I treated it as a success. I came back to Poland with the impression that there is still much to be done, but the visit was nice and fruitful anyway. Few weeks ago I went to Venice, where I, of course, had to communicate in English. I would say that it was easy, mainly because of the fact, that it is easier to speak English in a country, where English does not function as the official language. People that I talked to were in the same situation as me and it was not as stressful as in the case of Northern Ireland, where people speak English officially, fluently and have different accents within a radius of 2 kilometres. The whole experience affected me mostly in a negative way, as a consequence I lost my self-confidence and faith in my language abilities. Only due to hard work and real-life experience a man can learn a real language.

T8: *As a learner, I learned that I should evaluate every event not just according to me. I should think emphatically. And I suggest that we shouldn't judge people according to our habits and traditions. Because, prejudice is one of the biggest barriers in front of the successful communication.*

4.3.4 Change of attitudes. Attitude is defined as an internal affective orientation that can explain the actions of a person or determine his/her response tendency (Reber 1995: 67). According to Reber (1995: 67), the notion of attitude includes four components, namely: *cognitive* (consciously held belief or opinion); *affective* (emotional tone or feeling); *evaluative* (positive or negative) and *conative* (disposition for action). The experience of intercultural encounters promoted a change of attitude in the students, which was described by them as beneficial. The change of attitude is observable in all of the components, that is, cognitive, affective, evaluative, and conative. Some specific examples include the following:

– Different perspective-taking, understood as a change of perception, cognition or opinions. This refers to realisation of certain barriers and identification of what is crucial for intercultural communication. The respondents claim that interaction with foreigners is manageable, provided one is open-minded, tolerant, and flexible. Communication is possible despite some minor linguistic deficiencies.

P1.11: *First of all I started to notice cultural differences between our countries, which weren't barriers to our communication. Difference doesn't mean difficulty.*

P1.3: *As a learner I noticed that, except mentioned attitudes and distance, everyday English is well and truly different from what we get at the university. A student of English philology knows what a stream of consciousness is but does not know a proper name of a plastic sleeve. I suppose it could be also applied to teaching: first a broader picture, later major details.*

P1.7: *As a learner, and also as a human being, I have seen that we should not be afraid of foreigners but rather open to their cultures. What is more, Dorothy's parents have taught me that learners of a foreign language should speak despite their grammatical mistakes or wrong pronunciation. If we are forced to live in a different country, we will have to communicate.*

– The importance of behaviour, realising how to behave and what actions are appropriate (the conative component).

P1.19: *I always keep in mind that one has to be flexible and able to react in various, not only linguistic, situations.*

P1.43: *The next person that influenced my life was Ricardo. I have never met such a character before! When talking to him for the first time I was surprised: how could anyone be so open-minded and organised at the same time? How was it possible to have so many ideas and put them all into practice? His attitude – open and free from prejudice – was rather strange to me. He also tried to help you as much as he could and always found time to listen to you attentively. It was amazing.*

T9: *People who have different cultures, religions, and ethnics can socialise, make friends.*

– Recognising the feelings one brings to intercultural encounters (the affective and evaluative components). This subcategory also refers to noticing the evolution of feelings as exemplified by the following comment: **T6**: *foreign cultures are exciting, unique at first, later on, you realise that it is something normal (that you have a lot of things in common).* Further examples are included below.

T36: *We rented a home and started to live together. I was excited at first to have foreigner home mate. But then it turned into a normal thing.*

P2.69: *Overall, it has had a positive impact on my cultural awareness which definitely increased and made me realize that even minor differences between cultures in their value systems might prevent from establishing communication and understanding. On reflection, I know that I should have prepared myself better to my stay in the US and not take things for granted though the two cultures are similar in many respects. Since that*

time I always start my journeys abroad by reading a guide which explicitly presents cultural differences in a variety of life spheres.

P2.73: *This particular incident taught me that there is nothing in this world that cannot be achieved and no barrier that cannot be bridged. As far as communication problems are concerned, there is no way they cannot be resolved. The key requirements are attitude and willingness of the interlocutors.*

– The change of self-evaluation (self-perception) and one's own linguistic self-judgement (the evaluative component).

Some students treated intercultural encounters as tests of speaking/conversational skills. Consequently, a sense of achievement coming from successful communication made students believe that language can be improved as a result of intercultural encounters. The two Polish groups stressed the role of feedback received from the interlocutors during the intercultural encounters, whereas Turkish students focused more on building an appropriate atmosphere and relationships (social aspect) during such encounters.

For some of the Polish participants intercultural encounters served as an incentive to learn more, motivation to visit a country or a factor triggering their curiosity to learn and broaden their knowledge. The students' comment captures the point.

P1.2: *It* [intercultural encounter] *gave me motivation to learn the English language more intensively, and although my pronunciation and communication skills are not perfect, I think they get better almost every day.*

4.4 Intercultural encounters – Reflection for action – Teacher's perspective

This subchapter discusses the possible impact of the intercultural encounters on the future teaching profession of the research participants. The process of constructing critical incident narratives is as crucial as the intercultural experience itself because it enables their writers to narrow down their thinking to the most important issues. Tripp (1993: 33) refers to it as "focusing" (i.e., concentrating on a detail so as to derive the knowledge from it) and "enlargement" (i.e., changing the proportion or the size of the things to make then more comprehensive). Asking the subjects of the research to comment upon the influence of the intercultural encounters on their future teaching makes them reconsider, assess, and possibly redefine their teacher roles. The analysis

of the narratives shows some similarities among the three groups. The observed tendencies also to a certain extent correspond to the content analysis presented in the previous subchapters. In particular, personal experiences help students to filter what is relevant in the process of intercultural communication, and consequently, what needs to be selected for teaching. Hands-on interaction with foreigners, often accompanied by miscommunication or communication failure, enables the students to verbalise what requires explicit attention and training. The research participants unanimously claim that intercultural encounters empowered them by extending their cultural knowledge. In particular, the respondents learnt about cultural facts, daily routines, interesting information that can be shared during EFL lesson. In this sense, the experience gained from intercultural encounters serves as a source of reference, a rich material that can be passed on to learners and a bank of ideas (guidelines, scenarios, and inspiration) on how to organise intercultural training. The samples below illustrate the point.

T22: *As a teacher of English, I realized the cultural differences in our community and families when compared to world children. If I will work for international young learners one day, I will also focus on my students' cultural backgrounds and then focus on effective teaching.*

P1.18: *Not only as a learner, but also as a future teacher of English I learnt a lot from this encounter. Firstly, I will be able to present Scottish culture and traditions to my pupils from my own experience. Secondly, I can prepare them to their own encounter with a foreigner, because they have to be conscious of different habits, behaviors and moods. Finally, I learnt how important is cultural heritage. Scots pay a lot of attention to their poets and writers like Walter Scot, Robert Burns, and J. K. Rowling. They are proud of their identity and monuments such as National Library of Scotland, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Universities, Edinburgh Castle, etc. I think that every teacher should convey information concerning cultural legacy, traditions and identity.*

T14: *As a teacher of English I have a lot of stories to tell my students. I can tell them what should they do when they go to the hospital, restaurant, bus station, airport or shopping mall. So as I said that all of the Work and Travel experience is memorable for me.*

T18: *As an English teacher I learned so much information from her and she learned too. All she said has an effect on me and I understood that all native speakers speak fluently and clearly. She learned Turkish culture from me. And lastly she said to me: – "your culture is not different than mine."*

Another possible teaching outcome resulting from intercultural encounters relates to noticing the importance of communication and communicative skills. Quite a lot of the students admitted that they would devote more time to teaching speaking. This includes both fostering skills and traits that would enhance communication (e.g., confidence building) and training students for communication (creating speaking opportunities, building strategic competence, developing conversational skills, responding appropriately to the situation). The subjects participating in the study believe that exposing students to various activities would prepare these students for communication and coping with cultural differences. At the same time, the respondents stress the need to reflect upon and discuss possible communication problems so as to minimise communication failure.

T17: *As an English teacher I think speaking is the most important skill to communicate with other people around the world. Speaking is effected by cultures and so different accents appear.*

P1.8: *As a future teacher of English I was inspired by this conversation with Bulgarian girls and I know I should encourage my future learners more to learn the language for themselves, according to their needs and expectations. I will try to make them feel confident with their language learning abilities and not to be afraid of speaking, even though they won't be at the high level of proficiency.*

P1.17: *I learned that while teaching elementary or intermediate students, I should be putting emphasis on practical use of English. It is more significant than vocabulary which will never be used by students. Of course it is important to teach new words as well, but my point is that themes like "extinct species of animals" are not as needed as talking about daily situations. As a teacher I will focus particularly on my students' needs.*

T21: *As an English Language teacher, that experience is a golden key to shape my future plans how teach effectively. I agree that teaching grammar or new words is important but the same importance should be given to the pragmatic side of the language, I mean listening and speaking should be taken into consideration.*

P2.76: *What is more, in my opinion, it is vital to be aware of the differences and similarities that are between cultures so as to avoid problems and making mistakes. Cultural awareness seems to have a big impact on how we are perceived by other people, especially by foreigners, and helps us to be more confident in contacts with others.*

The incident that I described made me think about my own knowledge of the cultural differences. I came to conclusion that although I learned about them, I have never experienced such a "clash" of cultures before. This incident helped me to notice that while interacting with someone who is of a different culture, it is important to keep in mind the similarities and differences that are between these cultures. Also, we should be aware of our own behavioural rules, as without the knowledge of our own culture we will never be able to notice the cultural differences. What is more, thanks to that incident, I started to pay more attention to developing cultural awareness in my students. I try to emphasise that there are certain issues in behaviour, language or customs of British people that are different from Polish ones and that such knowledge is essential when one wants to communicate success-fully with a foreigner. Personally, I now pay more attention to what I say and do so as not to break the rules and remain culturally correct.

Both the incidents described above motivated me to reflection on my teaching as well as learning English. They helped me to see the weak and strong points of these processes and to develop my self-knowledge. When reflecting on them, I could think about my behaviour and see what was good and what was wrong about it. Thanks to them I am more aware of what I do and I am certainly better prepared for such situations if they happen in the future.

Finally, the respondents recognised the need to slightly reorganise their teaching practice and concentrate on shaping the attitudes of their learners that would best facilitate intercultural communication. In par-ticular, this refers to developing tolerance and overcoming prejudices. They also pointed out that clarifying misunderstandings and analysing examples of communication failure may help learners to avoid such situations in the future.

P1.28: *A vast preparation from culture and differences. So as whenever any of my students goes abroad he or she will not suffer a severe cultural shock, and hopefully will continue to root out prejudices and walls between cultures.*

P1.36: *It is so important to be aware of similarities as well as differences when it comes to people from other countries. "Different" doesn't equal "worse." Some Poles are still intolerant racists, and our task is to shape the next generation in proper direction. Direction which will not know such words as "intolerance" and "racism," direction in which people will understand differences and accept them.*

P1.38: *I will also inform them that they have to be tolerant and conform to some customs while being in England and that they cannot believe in stereotypes to avoid prejudice.*

T13: C*ultures don't make any difference while communicating. Because we are all humans and we should understand and respect each other in every way.*

To sum up, narratives recounting intercultural experiences provide a rich source of data that can be used for reflection on what happened and what actions need to be taken in future. One more thing requires further comment. Apparently, it seems that the students' comments are contradictory (see: **T13**: C*ultures don't make any difference while communicating* vs. **T17**: *Speaking is effected by cultures*). However, this should be interpreted from different angles, namely: general (global) and specific (individual). In other words, culture in general determines communication. Yet the culture of an individual (i.e., his/her attitude and perception) may minimise the potentially negative impact of it.

4.5 Structural analysis

Structural analysis encompasses some processes that accompany verbalisation of events. Pavlenko (2011: 238) enumerates the following processes that are worth examining:
– segmentation or decomposition;
– selection of particular components;
– event structuring, that is, allocation of topic and focus, perspective-taking according to spatial and temporal reference frames;
– ordering of words and grammatical constituents for verbal representation.

As far as segmentation is concerned, all three groups of respondents introduced paragraphing. Lack of paragraphs or other forms of structuring the texts (i.e., answering questions instead of writing the narrative) constitute single instances, and this tendency is observable in the three groups.

When it comes to event structuring, approximately one third of the narratives produced by Turkish students and Polish P1 students were given a topic (36% for Turkish group and 26% for Polish P1 students). In the case of Polish P2 students the percentage is slightly higher and amounts to 46% (almost half of the subjects). As the topic nomination was optional, the numbers are relatively high, which may indicate the subjects' involvement into the process of narrative production and the way they make sense of the event itself.

There is a large discrepancy in terms of the length of particular parts (some narratives are elaborate, detailed, and personal, whereas the oth-

ers capture the most essential things). The majority of them follow the pattern: description of the situation (background), analysis (with interpretation), and conclusions. For some of the respondents the encounter meant a series of meetings (including first few encounters with the representatives of other cultures). Instead of event description, the research subjects provided some reflections upon the sequence of meetings. Other respondents concentrated solely on a single situation and produced very detailed commentaries. Some of the narratives are dialogic and include emoticons, proverbs or fragments of conversations. This indicates the interactive character of the narratives and the subjective or "the insider perspective" in the way they are analysed. The percentage of dialogues varies across the groups and it amounts to 26% for Polish P1 group; 42% for the Polish P2 group and 36% for the Turkish students.

Other narratives are purely descriptive, providing an account of what was experienced. Those narratives are characterised by certain level of objectivity and distancing ("the observer perspective"). The final part (conclusions) includes both general remarks or reflections as well as applications or references to one's individual life.

The depth of analysis also differs across the groups. Some of the narratives focus on a multidimensional evaluation of the event, whereas others concentrate on one dimension of the event only. Polish P2 students display a tendency to include some references or literary sources as a support to their comments. Polish P1 students and Turkish students provide some retrospective comments, for example:

T42: *Now I wonder that if I didn't go to that seminar, what kind of job I would choose?*

Polish P2 students and Turkish students include some direct appeal to the reader that may have the function of invitation for intercultural encounters (e.g., *you should try that on your own*).

Many of the narratives include quotes, proverbs, and sayings. The percentage distribution is as follows: 50% for the Polish P1 group, 62% for the Polish P2 students, and 28% for the Turkish students. This reveals the personal character of the narratives and adds individuality to the description of the events. As far as wording is concerned, the students were to observe the word limit, but some of them slightly exceeded it.

Chapter 5

Questionnaires and scales – Data presentation and analysis

The aim of this chapter is to present and briefly discuss the data obtained by means of research tools that were implemented during the research. The chapter will contain both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.

5.1 Questionnaire – Background (biographical) information

As far as the age of the respondents is concerned, it varies, depending on the group. The Polish P1 students attend BA programme, and the average age of these students is 19–20 (76%). The Polish P2 students are on the MA programme, and the average age in this group is 22–23 (82%). The Turkish group is the most diverse in terms of age, with the average age of the respondents being 20–22 (74% of the respondents). Yet their age ranges from 19–29; 8% of the subjects refrain from giving their age.

The second piece of personal information that the students are required to provide concerns their gender. The general tendency observable in all three groups relates to female prevalence. Women constitute 72%, 76%, and 68% of all respondents, respectively. The percentage distribution of males in the three groups is 28%, 22%, and 32%, respectively. Detailed information is displayed in Table 8.

Taking the nationality of the respondents into account, both Polish groups and the Turkish group are homogenous rather than heterogenous. In the case of Polish groups, Polish nationality constitutes 80% and 90% of all the subjects respectively. Occasionally, some subjects mentioned

Table 8. Gender distribution in the research groups

Gender	Polish Group P1	Polish Group P2	Turkish Group T
Female	36 (72%)	38 (76%)	34 (68%)
Male	14 (28%)	11 (22%)	16 (32%)
No answer	0	1 (2%)	0

other nationalities, namely: Polish-German (2%) in the Polish Group P1 and Silesian (2%) in Polish Group P2. Speaking about the Turkish group, the vast majority of the respondents, that is, 86%, are of Turkish origin, which again makes the group largely homogenous. However, single instances concern people who are Kurdish (4%), Arabic-Kurdish (2%), Moroccan (2%), Swiss (2%), and Russian (2%). In all three groups, there are respondents who do not provide their nationality. The percentage distribution of such subjects is highest in the Polish Group P1 – 18% and lowest in the Turkish Group – 2%. In the case of Polish Group P2 it amounts to 8%.

The next two questions addressed the respondents' command of languages (question 4) and their language learning histories (question 5). When asked about languages spoken, all of the respondents unanimously claimed that they know English, which is not surprising. One fourth of the Polish respondents from both groups (i.e., P1 and P2) report that they know German, which may be explained by the close proximity of Germany as well as socio-historical contexts of the region in which the study was conducted (the Upper Silesia area). In the case of Turkish students, German is also the second most popular language, yet with a lower percentage distribution (i.e., 14%).

Other languages enumerated by Polish students in the P1 and P2 groups include the following: French, Russian, Spanish, and Italian. The choice is probably determined by geographical context and educational policy (these are the languages most likely to be offered at Polish schools). In contrast, Turkish students report knowledge of the following languages: French, Kurdish, and Arabic. This may be explained by geographical and socio-educational factors.

Worth mentioning is the fact that some of the students in the Polish P1 group (10%) and Turkish group (22%) provide only the number of the languages without identifying them. This might indicate a student's misunderstanding of the question. In the Polish P2 group, this case is very infrequent.

Another fact observed concerns some atypical languages named by the subjects, for example, Norwegian in the Polish P2 group, and Polish

in the Turkish group. This reflects individual experiences (interest in Poland and its language as a result of participation in the Erasmus programme by Turkish students) as well as life histories of individuals participating in the research (Norwegian mentioned by a Polish respondent because of a long stay in Norway). Detailed information is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Languages spoken by the respondents

Languages spoken by the respondents	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
English	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)
German	12 (24%)	13 (26%)	7 (14%)
French	2 (4%)	7 (14%)	3 (6%)
Russian	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	0
Spanish	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	0
Silesian	0	2 (4%)	0
Italian	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	0
Kurdish	0	0	2 (4%)
Arabic	0	0	2 (4%)
Norvegian	0	1	0
Polish	mother tongue	mother tongue	1
Turkish	0	0	mother tongue
Greek	1	0	0
Czech	0	0	1
5 languages (without enumeration)	0	0	1 (2%)
4 languages (without enumeration)	0	0	1 (2%)
3 languages (without enumeration)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	10 (20%)
2 languages (without enumeration)	8 (16%)	1 (2%)	11 (22%)

Question number 5 relates to the context and experience of language learning, and so provides additional information to the previous question. Not surprisingly, almost all of the respondents in the three groups

report formal exposure to languages which have been learnt as a part of school and university studies (90%, 94%, and 96%, respectively). However, these responses also show some noticeable differences concerning additional exposure (after school language learning) between the two Polish groups and the Turkish one. According to the data displayed in Table 10, quite a large number of respondents from the Polish P1 and P2 groups (68% and 78% respectively) have additional exposure to languages after school, for example during private tuition or extra afternoon courses.

In contrast, this is relatively infrequent in the case of Turkish students, as only 20% of them admit to participate in such language learning activities. Between a quarter and a third of the Polish students in both groups have learnt English while staying abroad (28% and 32% respectively). In the case of Turkish students this percentage is lower (18%). Also one third of the Polish P1 and P2 students (i.e., 32% and 34% respectively) list other ways in which they got exposed to foreign language learning and improved their language skills, namely self-studying and learning by playing computer games or watching television. Turkish students also provide additional ways of learning a foreign language, yet their ideas are not numerous when compared with the Polish students, and they usually involve learning languages by social interaction (for example: interacting or communicating in English in their own social environment or abroad).

Table 10. Language learning experience

Question 5 Where and how did you learn these languages?	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
a) as a part of school / university studies	45 (90%)	47 (94%)	48 (96%)
b) after school (e.g., private tuition/ extra afternoon courses)	34 (68%)	39 (78%)	10 (20%)
c) while staying abroad	14 (28%)	16 (32%)	9 (18%)
d) other	16 (32%)	17 (34%)	6 (12%)

The aim of the next few questions is to examine the respondents' openness towards others and their eagerness to communicate as well as to seek practice opportunities with others. The subjects are asked about the number of friends from abroad they keep in regular contact with, their travelling experiences and the type of intercultural contacts they

have had. The goal of these questions is to provide broader characteristics of the respondents in terms of the frequency and depth of exposure to intercultural contacts.

When asked about a number of friends, the respondents in the three groups claim to have a group of friends ranging from 2 up to 7 people. It may mean that the subjects prefer to maintain regular contacts with a limited number of people rather than to have numerous friends from abroad. Some of the respondents, especially in the Turkish group, provide very detailed responses. Apart from enumerating the number of friends, they also indicate the circumstances in which they met them. Worth noticing is the fact that some of the subjects in the three groups (16%, 24%, and 10% respectively) confess to not having any friends from abroad.

The question concerning the frequency of professional contacts with representatives of other cultures (question 6, Table 11) displayed some similarities between the three groups of respondents. Similar percentages of the subjects in the three groups state that they have very rare professional contacts with others (46%, 54%, 50% for Polish P1, Polish P2, and Turkish groups respectively). This tendency may be ascribed to the relatively young age of the respondents and their limited (or nonexistent) professional experience. In addition to this, the three groups exhibit even further similarities as the percentage distribution of the answers indicating very frequent professional contacts is almost equal (around 16%). In the case of the Polish P2 group it is slightly lower and amounts to 10%. Approximately one third of both Polish groups (i.e., 32% of the Polish P1 and 30% of the Polish P2 students) claim to experience frequent professional contacts with others. In contrast to this, the percentage of Turkish students reporting to often meet people for professional reasons is considerably lower and amounts to 16%.

Table 11. Professional contacts with people from other countries – data presentation

Question 6. How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your professional life?	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
very often (it is part of my studies/work)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)
often	16 (32%)	15 (30%)	8 (16%)
rarely	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	25 (50%)
never	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	9 (18%)

The aim of question 7 is to verify how mobile the students are, and consequently to examine the likelihood of potential encounters with foreigners. Data presented in Table 12 shows that Polish students display a greater tendency to travel and go abroad, as nearly half of the respondents have been abroad three to five times in the last five years (48%, 44% respectively). It also turns out that Polish respondents prefer short visits lasting up to a one month (48%, 52% for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups respectively). In contrast, the majority of Turkish respondents, that is, 70%, claim not to have participated in any visit abroad during the last five years. However when it comes to less frequent visits (once or twice during the last five years), the three groups exhibit certain similarities as the percentage distribution is nearly the same, namely 22–24%.

Table 12. The frequency of students' visits abroad during the last five years

Question 7. How often have you been abroad in the last 5 years?	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
a) 0	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	35 (70%)
b) 1–2 times	12 (24%)	11 (22%)	11 (22%)
c) 3–5 times	24 (48%)	22 (44%)	1 (2%)
d) 6–10 times	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	1 (2%)
e) more than 10 times	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	0
No answer	0	0	2 (4%)

Question number 9 asks about the number of countries visited recently, and thus it is related to the succeeding questions, which concern the names of particular countries the respondents have been to. Again, the aim of these questions is to characterise the nature of intercultural encounters. The initial assumption is that the frequency of visits to other countries and the variety of contacts with foreigners would increase individuals' tolerance, including the tolerance of ambiguity and acceptance of otherness. In addition, it may contribute to enriching individuals' perspectives and experiences. This, in turn, leads to a broadening of their horizons. The data included in Table 13 indicates considerable differences between the two Polish groups and the Turkish one. In details, it is clear that Polish students report visiting numerous countries as approximately one third of the respondents in both groups claim to have travelled to two, three, or even four or six countries (32%, 34% respectively). In contrast, the majority of the Turkish students (62%) say they have not visited any country recently, which

supports the conclusion that they are more likely to meet foreigners in their own country.

Table 13. The amount of countries visited

Question 9. How many different countries have you visited already?	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
a) 0	3 (6%)	0	31 (62%)
b) 1	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%0
c) 2–3	9 (18%)	10 (20%)	2 (4%)
d) 4–6	14 (28%)	17 (34%)	1 (2%)
e) more than 7	16 (32%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)
No answer	0	1 (2%)	6 (12%)

Data obtained by question 10 is congruent with the previous comments that the Turkish respondents are not particularly mobile as 64% refrain from giving any examples of the countries they have visited. In contrast, the amount of Polish students refraining from giving any answer to this question is insignificant (Polish P2 group) or relatively low (6% – Polish P1 group). Worth noting is the fact the percentage of the Polish students visiting Turkey and Turkish students visiting Poland is similar, nearly 10%. This indicates comparable mutual interest of the Polish and Turkish respondents in each others' culture and tradition.

When it comes to the most frequently visited countries, the majority of Polish students named countries neighbouring Poland, that is, Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (around 60%), but also some other European countries, such as France, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Austria (nearly 30% for each of the examples provided). In the case of Turkish students, their list includes such examples of the countries as Italy, Germany, Spain, and Austria. Yet the percentage distribution is much lower, namely around 10% for each of the country enumerated.

As far as visiting English speaking countries is concerned, 36% of Polish P1 students and 48% of Polish P2 students travelled to the UK. Surprisingly, Great Britain was not reported as having been visited by Turkish students at all. However, the percentage distribution of Turkish students claiming to visit the USA is comparable to Polish P2 students (around 6%). In the case of Polish P1 students the percentage is twice as many, which means that 12% of the students aged 19–21 visited the USA.

If we compare answers obtained from Turkish respondents in questions 9 and 10, we may risk the statement that in general the majority of Turkish group have limited experience in travelling to other countries. However, there is a group of the respondents (one third) who claim to

be mobile and interested in regular visits to other countries and active participation in various international exchanges. Some examples concern participants of the Erasmus programmes who visited 11 countries including: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Italy, Spain, and France.

When asked to list the countries visited, Polish P1 students named 48 countries, Polish P2 students 35 countries, and Turkish students 17 countries. At the same time 64% of Turkish respondents refrain from giving any examples of countries they have visited. In general, the Turkish students exhibit lower degree of mobility either to neighbouring countries or to English speaking ones. They claim to experience intercultural contacts in their own native country. The frequency of visits varies; some countries are places of regular visits and some others are not. However, it needs to be noted that it is not only the frequency of contact that matters. Sampasivan and Clément (2014: 35) highlight the fact that the perceived importance of contact or the value and personal significance of the contact play a determining role on individual's self-involvement. If students are characterised by a strong international posture, they will perceive contact experiences as important, and they will benefit from it no matter how rich the contact is.

In general, the list of countries visited by Polish and Turkish subjects contains a variety of places including both European countries as well as some exotic countries. To a certain extent the types of the countries visited might reflect the popularity (so-called holiday destinations, e.g., Croatia, Egypt, Italy, Greece) and the geographical vicinity of the home countries of the respondents, for example: Iraq, Georgia or Syria in the case of Turkish students and Slovakia, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Hungary, and Romania in the case of Polish students. Yet, to a certain extent, it also reflects students' individual interests, cognitive needs, and their eagerness to travel. This may explain quite a number of distant and exotic countries, such as Thailand, Singapore, and Jordan. This in part applies to the Polish students.

The question inquiring about additional intercultural experiences was mostly left unanswered by the respondents from the three groups. It seems that professional visits are infrequent for the subjects participating in the study (6% for P1 students; 2% for Polish P2 students and 2% for Turkish students respectively). This may mean that the respondents either do not have any additional experiences or they are not willing to express them. This tendency is characteristic for the three groups and might be ascribed to the age of the respondents and their occupational responsibilities. The percentage of programmes and exchanges as a basis for travel is also similar in the three groups and is around 10% in the

Polish P2 group and the Turkish one. It is slightly higher in the P1 group (14%), with people aged 19–21. Another similarity noticeable among the three groups concerns personal experiences of the respondents in terms of meeting or staying within the community of foreigners. The percentage distribution is relatively low, and it amounts to 6–8% respectively in the case of the Polish P1 group and the Turkish one. In contrast, in the Polish P2 group the percentage distribution is higher and constitutes 20%. This denotes more frequent contacts of the Polish P2 students with foreigners.

5.2 Intercultural profile – Data analysis

The second section of this chapter deals with the specific questions concerning intercultural encounters and factors that may exert some impact on them. Answering the questions will help to describe intercultural profiles of the subjects participating in the research.

The first question relates to the completion of the following sentence head: *Meeting a foreigner is like…* (Table 14). The analysis of the responses indicates some similarities and differences between the subjects.

Table 14. Meeting a foreigner is like…

Meeting a foreigner is like…		
Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
no answer – 15	something difficult, a chance or challenge, a game, an adventure – 14	meeting, discovering or finding something – 19
something difficult, a chance or challenge, a game, an adventure – 12	meeting, discovering or finding something – 10	something unexpected (unpredictability, surprise or unknown is emphasised here); intercultural encounter as a problem-solving activity – 10
experience – 7	no answer – 8	activity that requires effort – 7
meeting, discovering or finding something – 6	a new experience – 5	something difficult, a chance or challenge, a game – 5
fun – 5	something unexpected (unpredictability, surprise or unknown is emphasised here); intercultural encounter as a problem-solving activity – 4	person or object – 4

For the clarity of the data presentation, the most common metaphors in the three groups will be discussed. As far as the Polish P1 group is concerned, the most numerous category concerns those students who do not provide any completion to the sentence head. This tendency might indicate two things, namely, lack of any associations or unwillingness to provide an answer.

The second category of the most frequent responses associates meeting a foreigner with an opportunity, a chance, a challenge or an adventure. As a justification of their answers, the respondents stress the learning opportunities that such an encounter gives. They also indicate various domains which have improved as a result of such an encounter, for example, language skills, increase of general knowledge or self-knowledge or broadening their horizons. The following comments best illustrate the point:

(1) *Meeting a foreigner is like…*
    a. *… having a chance to improve ourselves because it gives me a chance to learn a lot and give new things to think about and adapt to my behavior and way of thinking.*
    b. *… an opportunity because you might discover new things.*[1]

The third most frequent set of metaphors presents meeting a foreigner as an experience (in other words something memorable, real); a situation/process that offers personal, hands-on impressions. Justifications are numerous and include language contact, meeting new people, and trying out new things. However, worth noting are the adjectives used by the subjects to describe the experience. Sometimes it is "new" experience, sometimes "best" or "great." This might mean that the subjects sometimes value the novel character of intercultural encounter but on another occasion they appreciate the emotions that it evokes.

For Polish P2 students (i.e., students aged 22–25) meeting a foreigner is most often perceived as a challenge or an adventure, something that combines the features of novelty, excitement, and personal examination of one's individual character. An encounter with a foreigner is an experience of something previously unknown or of something that cannot be fully predicted. But for quite a number of Polish P2 students, meeting a foreigner is also an attempt to overcome their personal barriers, among which language barrier is the most frequent. And finally, meeting a foreigner is an occasion to increase self-knowledge and to test one's individual assumptions.

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[1] For the purposes of the research, none of the subjects' responses in examples 1–5 were corrected or modified, and they may therefore contain some mistakes.

Another frequent set of metaphors concerns the very act of facing, meeting or discovering another culture by having a direct contact with it. An intercultural encounter is perceived as a crossroad at which one meets another culture. It may be also understood as meeting another culture **in** person by having direct contact with him/her. Yet many Polish P2 students refrain from giving any answers (the third most numerous category).

A relatively large number of Polish students compare meeting a foreigner to a new experience because, as one of the respondents said, *it is something different, something strange.* The subjects' completions of the head denote the uniqueness, novelty, and exceptional character of the intercultural encounter. Closely related, yet stressing a bit different aspect, is the category of metaphors that may be characterised as something unexpected, surprising, and unknown. The following examples will illustrate the point:

(2) *Meeting a foreigner is like…*
    a. *… Spanish inquisition because nobody expects it.*
    b. *… eating candy because you don't know exactly which taste you can taste under the surface of paper (stereotypes).*

This category of metaphors emphasises unpredictability, surprise or facing the unknown. The subjects are aware of the fact that intercultural encounters run according to different scripts. The subjects also seem to realise that complexity of factors, both overt and hidden, that may have an impact on the process of communication with foreigners. Some of the Polish respondents perceive meeting a foreigner as a process or a gradual, long-lasting activity, which sometimes requires efforts and certain skills (e.g., paying attention to details). The subjects' comments enclosed below show the point.

(3) *Meeting a foreigner is like…*
    a. *… gardening because it is very rewarding but it involves a lot of effort.*
    b. *… traversing a forest because you communicate with many diverse people.*
    c. *… tasting a good wine because in order to define the whole taste bouquet you need to keep tasting it and paying attention to details.*

For a few of the respondents meeting a foreigner is compared to having a test in language skills. There are some idiosyncratic comments, which might reflect the individual character of those who uttered them.

(4) *Meeting a foreigner is like…*
    a. *… sunset because it is nothing special.*
    b. *… fun because I can talk with them in a foreign language.*

Worth noting is the fact that Polish P2 students (aged 22–25) have got different, sometimes contradictory approaches towards speaking a foreign language during the encounter. Sometimes language is a barrier that prevents contact with others, sometimes language is a manifestation of a different culture (a factor that conspicuously indicates another culture). And in some other cases (not very frequent ones), an intercultural encounter is fun because it offers a possibility of using another language, thus breaking the monotony of everyday L1 use. The subjects definitely display a variety in their approaches and ways of defining foreign language and its role in intercultural encounters. The metaphors offered are surprising, however sometimes internally inconsistent.

As far as the Turkish group is concerned, meeting a foreigner is most frequently compared to finding or discovering a new land (38%). The metaphor implies learning or finding out about something previously unknown: broadening one's horizons. It also implies some positive outcomes: excitement, self-fulfilment, satisfaction of one's own curiosity.

The second, most frequent set of metaphors in the Turkish group depicts intercultural encounter as a problem-solving activity or a challenge one has to cope with (20%). The very situation of meeting a foreigner is compared to *a puzzle*, *a door that one opens*, *a new computer* or *a mobile phone*. The examples imply complexity, novelty, uniqueness or unpredictability that a person has to deal with at first, before s/he is ready to handle the situation.

The third category of metaphors compares meeting a foreigner to an activity that requires time, personal involvement, effort and energy (14%). Some of the examples concern the following: *eating a meal*, *applying for a job*, *reading a book* or *trying sport*. The metaphors imply certain risk, unpredictability, but also some benefits, such as experiencing adventure, learning something new, also about oneself, overcoming personal barriers or dealing with a great opportunity.

The next group of metaphors describes meeting a foreigner to *a challenge*, *something difficult but exciting* (10%), *a chance* or *a game*. The examples provided indicate a high degree of unpredictability, risk, and tension resulting from dealing with something unknown and uncertain. The benefits that the Turkish students enumerated concern a variety of gains that such encounters carry, for example learning something

about the other culture, but also increasing self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Another set of the metaphors generated by the Turkish students compares the situation of meeting a foreigner to a person (e.g., *friend*, *brother*, *famous person*) or a living creature (e.g., *bird)* (8%). The examples in this category of metaphors imply interaction, communication, fascination with another person/object. This is the case of metaphors personifying the situation of intercultural encounters. Another implication concerns freedom, especially freedom to travel, to go to new places. This is the case of *a bird* metaphor.

The second question deals with defining intercultural encounters. The subjects were requested to generate the completion to the following sentence head: *Intercultural encounter is like… .*

The similarities between the three groups concern the fact that the students report the same ideas, namely they treat intercultural competence as a feature of character or an ability, or they refrain from providing any answer. Yet the frequency and the priority of importance differ among the students.

Polish P1 and P2 students, similarly to the Turkish students (see percentage distribution) also perceive intercultural competence as an ability to communicate successfully and interact effectively, which is worth noticing. Yet in the case of the Polish P2 group it is the second most frequent answer, and for Polish P1 students the third most common answer in the ranking. The first, most commonly reported answer relates to the description of the functions and importance of intercultural competence (i.e., what intercultural competence does or how it is) rather than its definition (what it is). Consequently, the most frequent category of answers in both P1 and P2 groups includes some conditions why intercultural competence is essential and indispensable for life and interactions.

The second most popular answer in the case of the Polish P2 group defines intercultural competence as an ability (it is the third most popular answer in the Polish P1 group), whereas the third most popular answer defines it as knowledge. There is also the comment that intercultural competence is a positive, valuable experience, the act of doing something; an opportunity, a chance in the case of the Polish P1 group and the Turkish group. Such definitions are not provided by Polish P2 students.

In addition, Polish students in both groups display a tendency to present intercultural competence as a feature necessary for a particular person. However, the second most frequent answer differs between the two Polish groups. The younger group of respondents (the Polish P1

students) refrains from giving any definition of intercultural competence. Surprisingly, this is the only group with a high frequency of this evasive answer. This might indicate the fact that the students are not familiar with the concept or their knowledge and experience in this area are limited. Probably, this also explains why Polish P1 students do not even try to define the concept or give the "I don't know" answer. In the Turkish group, the number of the students who fail to provide any answer to that question is relatively small (it was the third most frequent response); in the Polish P2 group it was rather insignificant (fourth place).

When requested to define intercultural competence, Turkish students most often compared it to the ability to interact and communicate successfully with others (28%). This seems promising as the very word "ability" implies that it is a process that requires time and training. Some people can be born with the ability but in order to flourish or to be observable, the ability needs to be developed gradually (as in the case of artistic skills, for example singing or playing an instrument). However, the additional comments, concerning the factors determining intercultural competence as included in the quotation (i.e., emotional competence and intercultural sensitivity) are not common to the students from the other groups. The sample of the student's answer presented below best illustrates the point:

(5) *Intercultural competence is…*
     T: *… the ability for successful communication with people of other cultures. This ability can exist from the young age, or be developed and improved thanks to willpower and competence. The bases for a successful intercultural communication are emotional competence, together with intercultural sensitivity.*

Another quite frequent category of sentence completions provided (26%) describes intercultural competence as a feature, a concept or something that is so natural and essential that it requires no further elaboration and comments. The responses in this category emphasise the necessity and importance of intercultural competence rather than define it. Worth noting is the fact that a similar number of Turkish respondents (26%) refrain from providing any answer.

The third category presents intercultural competence as a positive experience, a chance that every person has. This set of metaphors implies interaction with others and opportunities caused by the very fact of meeting foreigners. The metaphors generated by the Turkish students in this category suggest a slight extension of the term, as they

defined not the concept of intercultural competence itself, but rather the consequences intercultural competence has on the interaction, or the impact it exerts on the act of communication and the feelings of the interlocutors.

Some infrequent responses by the Turkish students associate intercultural competence with factual knowledge and social awareness. The former example suggests familiarity with basic pieces of information and facts, which may seem a bit narrow if we take Byram's definition of intercultural competence into account. At the same time, the latter implies awareness of and sensitivity to social context, which again may be insufficient as awareness without knowledge does not guarantee successful intercultural communication. In consequence, it may lead to noticing that something is wrong or inappropriate. However, factual knowledge itself provides some resources and repertoires of coping strategies. Thus without it, generating some solutions on how to handle intercultural communication may not be possible.

The comments connected with intercultural competence that are unique for particular groups concern the following:
– intercultural competence as fun in the Polish P1 group;
– intercultural competence as a skill in the Polish P2 group;
– intercultural competence as an awareness in the Turkish group.

Yet no matter how interesting some of these individual associations are, their percentage distribution is too low to draw any far-fetched conclusions. And as such they need to be treated as idiosyncratic examples observable in particular groups rather than durable tendencies that can be generalised for a wider population. Further details are included in Table 15.

The students participating in the research were asked which of the potential communication barriers might affect the conversation with foreigners. They were supposed to select up to three answers. The data clearly shows some similarities between the students in terms of percentages and the choice of the most frequent answers. Language is perceived as the biggest potential communication barrier by the students in all three groups. The second obstacle that is most likely to cause communication problems is considered to be stereotypes in the case of the two Polish groups and hasty judgements (the barrier mentioned by the Turkish students). Both stereotypes and hasty judgements stem from similar causes and refer to mistaken and distorted perceptions. The mechanisms involved in their production are slightly different as stereotypes are determined by some firm, ungrounded beliefs, brought to the process of communication, whereas hasty judgements are related to initial, superficial, and created on-the-spot impressions.

Table 15. Intercultural encounter is… – data presentation

Intercultural encounter is…		
Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
something essential, indispensable for life and interaction – a feature; something necessary for a person. Instead of definition – the features, conditions for effective communication.	something essential, indispensable for life and interaction – a feature; something necessary for a person. Instead of definition – the features, conditions for effective communication.	the ability
no answer	the ability	something essential, indispensable for life and interaction – a feature; something necessary for a person. Instead of definition – the features, conditions for effective communication.
the ability	knowledge	no answer
positive, valuable experience, the act of doing something; opportunity, chance.	no answer	positive, valuable experienc, the act of doing something; opportunity, chance.
the act of communication	skills	knowledge
the way	no idea	awareness

As regards the third factor that might influence communication with foreigners, some observable differences among the subjects concern the following:
– hasty judgements – this barrier is indicated by Polish P1 students (BA students);
– the topic of the conversation is mentioned by Polish P2 students (MA students). For Polish BA students this topic was ranked in the fourth place;
– gestures are pointed to by the Turkish students. Surprisingly, gestures are not perceived as an influential barrier in communication with foreigners by the Polish students in either P1 or P2 groups.

Worth noting is the fact that some contextual factors, such as place, time, status of your interlocutor, and style, are not selected by the sub-

jects as potential communication barriers in any of the three groups. Detailed presentation of the data is enclosed in Table 16.

Table 16. Barriers that might affect the conversation with the foreigners

Respondents/ barriers	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
Language	**35 (70%)**	**36 (72%)**	**33 (66%)**
Stereotypes	**30 (60%)**	**32 (64%)**	13 (26%)
Assumptions	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	12 (24%)
Hasty judgments	**29 (58%)**	**23 (46%)**	15 (30%)
Place	7 (14%)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)
Time	7 (14%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)
Gestures	7 (14%)	10 (20%)	**21 (42%)**
Status of your interlocutor	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)
Topic	20 (40%)	**20 (40%)**	15 (30%)
Style	4 (8%)	9 (18 %)	16 (32%)
No answer			3 (6%)

Question number 4 asks about the role of non-verbal code in intercultural communication. Eye contact, facial expression and kinesics (body language and movement) are all selected by the subjects in the three groups as exerting the largest impact on intercultural communication. Noteworthy is the fact that the percentage distribution of particular answers differs among the respondents. In detail, the order of frequency is presented below:
– eye contact, facial expressions and kinesics – the ranking by the Polish P1 group;
– kinesics and facial expressions (the same distribution), eye contact and proxemics – the ranking by the Polish P2 group;
– eye contact and kinesics (the same distribution), facial expression and bodymindfulness – the ranking by the Turkish students.
   Further details are displayed in Table 17.
   All the subjects, irrespective of their nationality, recognise the importance of non-verbal communication and the impact it may exert on intercultural dialogue. The sample below best illustrates the point.

(6) T: *I think culturally there is no difference between Turkey and Syria except foods and some of the gestures i.e. when want to say beautiful*

for something we combine our fingers; but when Syrians combine their fingers it means: wait.

Table 17. Non-verbal communication

Respondents/ non-verbal communication	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
Proxemics (space)	12 (24%)	15 (30%)	9 (18%)
Eye contact	**41 (82%)**	**32 (64%)**	**37 (74%)**
Facial expressions	**37 (74%)**	**39 (78%)**	**35 (70%)**
Chronemics (time)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
Kinesics (body language and movement)	**33 (66%)**	**39 (78%)**	**37 (74%)**
Silence	11 (22%)	6 (12%)	3 (6%)
Bodymindfulness (proprioception, i.e., body feeling; our sense of being in a body)	9 (18%)	8 (16%)	14 (28%)

Question number 5 is to encourage students to express their ideas about the factors that might influence intercultural competence development. As such, the question was intended to provide a link between some general questions concerning intercultural competence and more personal questions, including personal reflection and judgement. The question generated quite varied responses in all of the three groups; however, some of the subjects left the question unanswered. Yet not all of the students followed the guidelines included in the question. As a result, they listed fewer factors than the required five. Additionally, some of the Turkish respondents quoted some academic sources, instead of providing their own answers. However, the data gathered allow us to depict some tendencies.

The groups of the students vary in how they respond to the question and what factors they enumerate. Polish P1 group provided as many as 36 entries, indicating various types of factors or features of character that may be essential in communication with foreigners. The most frequent answer concerns language. A similar number of respondents refrain from giving any answer to this question ('no answer').

As far as Polish P2 students are concerned, they enumerated 26 different categories that may be important for intercultural competence. Yet 'no answer' was the most frequent (i.e., 19 entries) in this group of respondents. It is too early to draw any far-reaching conclusions why this question remained unanswered. This might indicate either the stu-

dents' unwillingness to disclose, their reluctance to complete open-end-ed question, or some other factors.

The Turkish students enumerated 33 categories. However, the tendency observed in this group was to quote someone else's categories (e.g., Bennetts' 2011) instead of generating their own responses. 'No answer' was not as numerous as in the case of the two Polish groups.

Examining the content of the responses gives further information. Although the question was open-ended, with the intention of provoking the students to elicit their own suggestions, the respondents generated similar categories, yet with different degrees of frequency.

Polish P1 students cited language or did not provide any answer (the most frequent response). Tolerance of other cultures was the second most important factor (second place), followed by cultural knowledge and open-mindedness. Fourth and fifth places were taken by lack of stereotypes and prejudices and openness to new acquaintances, respectively.

The Polish P2 group tended to refrain from giving any answer (the most popular response). Additionally, the students enumerated the following: cultural knowledge, language, general knowledge, and open-mindedness.

And finally, the Turkish students pointed at the following factors that, in their opinions, affect intercultural competence: language, gestures (body language), and empathy, as well as cultural knowledge, facial expressions, and lack of stereotypes and prejudices. A detailed presentation of the data is displayed in Table 18.

It seems that the three groups value the command of a foreign language and cultural knowledge as conditions indispensable for success in intercultural competence. Another similarity observed concerns some personal/individual predispositions that the subjects pointed to, namely: open-mindedness (the two Polish groups), empathy (the Turkish group) or lack of stereotypes (the Polish P1 group and the Turkish group).

Surprisingly, communication skills, defined as the ability to interact, were not perceived as crucial in either of the groups (sixth place in the Turkish group, seventh place in the Polish P1 group, occasional mention in the Polish P2 group).

As far as some differences are concerned, there are some features reflecting the characteristics of particular groups, namely:
– Polish P1 students stress the importance of certain personal features or an appropriate attitude which might affect intercultural competence, such as tolerance of other cultures and openness to new acquaintances, which consequently may determine an individual's willingness to communicate;

– in contrast, Polish P2 students focus more on certain cognitive preparation, such as general knowledge of a foreign language, which is defined by the subjects as "having something to say/talk about." This would allow a person to understand interlocutors and also maintain the conversation;

– finally, the Turkish group emphasised the very act of communication. Apart from the knowledge of a foreign language, they pointed to the importance of body language, gestures, and facial expressions as crucial for handling intercultural dialogue.

Table 18 presents the list, extended to seven places. The purpose of including two more factors is to provide a wider perspective on the data supplied by the respondents.

Table 18. Factors influencing intercultural competence – data presentation

Factors that influence intercultural competence / ranking	Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
1	language 18 no answer 18	no answer 19	language 18
2	tolerance of other cultures – 12	cultural knowledge – 14	gestures mimics/ body language – 17 empathy – 17
3	cultural knowledge – 11 open-mindedness – 11	language – 13	cultural knowledge – 14
4	no stereotypes/ no prejudices – 6	general knowledge – 9	facial expressions – 13
5	openess to new acquitance 5	open-mindedness – 8	no prejudices/ no stereotypes – 8
6	general knowledge – 4	tolerance – 6	communication skills – 7
7	communication skills – 3	empathy – 4 body language – 4	self-confidence – 6

The subjects were also asked to enumerate their features of character that may exert either a positive or a negative impact on intercultural encounters. The purpose of this question was to trigger students' self-reflection about themselves as possible participants of intercultural encounters, their strengths, and weaknesses.

In the first part of the question, the respondents were to analyse their own strengths which would facilitate intercultural communication. The questions generated many various responses on the part of the subjects. Yet this question was also one of those in which the rate of not answering was the highest, especially in the two Polish groups (Polish P1 and P2 groups). Not surprisingly, the respondents in the three groups state that language skills or the command of language is one of their strengths for maintaining intercultural communication. Generally speaking, the features enumerated by the respondents in the three groups revolve around inborn predispositions, certain personal characteristics, such as curiosity, openness, talkativeness, and willingness to communicate and make contact with others.

Another group of factors concerns the affective or attitudinal dimension, such as positive attitude (Polish P2 group and the Turkish group) and empathy. And finally, the respondents point to the factors that can be learned or gradually developed in the process of formal training as well as personal/individual experience, that is, knowledge about foreign cultures (groups Polish P1 and Polish P2) or body language, including facial expressions (Turkish group).

In general, the respondents in the three groups point out that the intercultural encounter serves as a learning opportunity which brings about a change of perspective or broadens one's knowledge. Consequently, they admit the need to be flexible, cooperative, and willing to learn from others (see Table 19 for additional information).

Table 19. Strengths – data presentation

Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
no answer	no answer	language/fluency
open-mindendess	language	effective non-verbal communciation
language	open-mindedness	empathy
willingness to communicate/to make contacts with others	knowledge about foreign cultures and tolerance	sociability
knowledge about foreign cultures	curiosity	tolerance
tolerance/talkativeness	being open	curiosity and positive attitude
extroversion	friendly/positive attitude	no answer

This question also revealed some group specific characteristics, which is worth presenting briefly. In the two Polish groups, the respondents mentioned the fact of being multilingual as a feature that promotes intercultural communication. Other features that are enumerated by the Polish respondents only concern a sense of humour, perspective-taking, and self-confidence.

In contrast, features mentioned by the Turkish students only involve self-awareness and cultural identity, understood as having enough knowledge about one's own culture (L1 culture). Detailed information is included in Table 19.

Another part of this question asked respondents to enumerate weaknesses that they perceive as negatively influencing the process of intercultural communication. Table 20 displays the subjects' most frequent replies to this question.

Table 20. Weaknesses – factors that may inhibit intercultural communication – data presentation

Polish group P1 age: 19–21	Polish group P2 age: 22–25	Turkish group T age: 22–25
no answer	no answer	language problems
language problems	shyness	poor knowledge of body language
shyness	language problems lack or poor cultural knowledge	stereotypes/prejudices
poor communication/interaction skills	anxiety/inhibition	shyness
poor or no cultural knowledge	stress	sensitivity (T: *Sometimes I am too sensitive about my culture*)
sterotypes/prejudices	lack of confidence	poor or no cultural knowledge
stress	stereotypes	poor communication/interaction skills

According to the data, the majority of the students did not provide any answer (similarly to the first part of this question). In general, the respondents in the three groups point to similar factors that may hinder intercultural communication. The differences relate to the frequency of occurrence. Occasionally, the enumerated factors vary and they show the idiosyncratic character of the groups. What is striking is that language appears in both categories, namely, as a strength, something that facilitates intercultural communication and as a factor that hinders it.

The tendency is common to all of the three groups, yet in the case of Turkish students, language is the most frequently mentioned as a feature. When language is treated as a weakness, the students list the following problematic areas that negatively affect intercultural communication:

– Polish P1 students – poor language skills (fluency) or uncertainty of language skills, lack of proper vocabulary, difficulty in language production (inappropriate choice of words, difficulty in conveying what one wants to convey), difficulty with understanding interlocutors' English accent; the respondents' own intonation/pronunciation problems; comprehension (difficulty to understand others);

– Polish P2 students' language – insufficient knowledge of informal language, low ability to modify or switch language register appropriately, problems with understanding various accents;

– Turkish students – pronunciation, vocabulary (idioms, proverbs, difficulty in selecting appropriate vocabulary or understanding it), lack of knowledge about gestures or body language, low comprehension particularly of slang or informal language.

Another category of problems mentioned by the three groups relates to poor cultural knowledge which largely influences intercultural communication in terms of what to say and how to interpret the message. Next, the students cite stereotypes as an obstacle that may hinder intercultural communication. Among the weaknesses perceived by the students, we can also find some individual features, such as anxiety, stress, nervousness, shyness, and lack of confidence. According to the respondents, these features may indirectly influence intercultural communication.

Among those features that are characteristic for a particular group of the respondents we can observe the following tendencies:

– Polish P1 students pointed to their age as a feature that negatively affects intercultural communication (P1: *I'm often too young for foreigners*). There were also comments concerning ignorance, arrogance or presuppositions;

– Polish P2 students note their lack of experience in meeting foreigners, inhibitions, and a tendency to avoid such contacts (lack of risk-taking strategy). Furthermore, they mention difficulty in understanding other cultures (some cultures and their habits are unknown, unclear or suspicious to the respondents). The group of Polish P2 students is the only group that focuses on some objective (so-called general) factors, such as money or homophobia rather than subjective (i.e., those enumerated from the individual's perspective);

– the Turkish group mentioned silence. They also enumerated some problems connected with affective domain, that is, difficulty in han-

dling emotions (both positive and negative), low self-awareness, low self-confidence, nervousness, stress, and high emotionality (in particular being quick-tempered).

The Turkish group of students requires further comments as there are certain interesting, group-specific tendencies regarding the students' perception of problems they experience in intercultural encounters. Some tendencies include the following:

The Turkish respondents provided quite a number of weaknesses related to their culture. They said that there are some conventions or cultural norms ("cultural habits" as they called them) which may negatively affect interaction with foreigners because they tend to be misinterpreted by interlocutors. One of the examples concerns "excitement" mentioned by some Turkish respondents as a negative feature. According to the Turkish respondents, Turks are usually very excited and open towards foreigners. They manifest their positive attitude both verbally (by the language that they use) and non-verbally (their reactions, distancing, etc.). This, in turn, might be a bit confusing for Europeans or other nationalities because they are not accustomed to such behaviour. The very comment is also surprising as excitement usually has positive connotation. However, the choice of this particular word may be ascribed to the respondents' level of language proficiency.

The students' comments are sometimes very personal. Some of the respondents ascribe problems with intercultural communication to some personal factors and individual features of character, which they disclose (e.g., shyness, nervousness). The students are quite willing to not only list them but also to provide elaborate explanations. In some other cases, the respondents claim to experience problems in intercultural encounters due to more general factors, which are determined by culture and social order (i.e., religion, symbols, and certain social norms). The respondents admit that they face difficulties in interpreting other symbols, gestures appropriately because of different cultural scripts.

Certain features (e.g., language, kinesics, body language or some personal features like self-confidence) could be found in both categories of strengths and weaknesses at the same time. They were perceived as both something positive or negative depending on who expressed their opinions.

5.3 The analysis of Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)

The next step of the research concerns the analysis of the data coming from Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI). This instrument was slightly modified and adapted to the context of the study. The aim of it was to examine the subjects' beliefs in the four subsequent categories: Emotional Resilience, Flexibility and Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy. The data obtained by means of this instrument is supposed to shed some light on the subjects' predispositions and attitudes that may later influence their behaviour during intercultural encounters.

Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory is based of the Likert scale. The respondents are to comment upon the statements by choosing a number from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For the purposes of this work, the analysis of the data will be limited to discussion of mean values only.

5.3.1 Emotional Resilience. As far as Emotional Resilience is concerned, all the three groups are characterised by moderate resilience as the mean values are grouped around three (the middle response). Three things need to be commented upon.

Firstly, the students' reactions in case of their misbehaviour or committing faux pas (statement 17) as the values are the highest for all three groups in this category. This may mean that the students recognise their inappropriate behaviours and think of how to compensate them.

Secondly, another high value obtained in all three groups of students relates to the amount of effort put into interaction with people from different cultures (statement 29). High values indicate strong subjects' commitment and involvement into interaction with representatives of other cultures.

Thirdly, the susceptibility to embarrassment when interacting with people from different cultures constitutes the lowest value for all three groups (statement 30). This indicates the fact that the students are not likely to get embarrassed. It can be generalised from the data that the students are context-sensitive; they modify and adjust their reactions and behaviours if they are not appropriate. At the same time, the students are not afraid of feeling embarrassed and of losing their faces.

When it comes to statistical analysis, the following tendencies can be noted:
– for Polish P1 and Turkish groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the highest as it is close to 1 (the Pearson's *r* value is 0.9486).

This indicates a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.8998;

– For Polish P2 and Turkish groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is also high (the value of r is 0.9263, which indicates a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.858;

– for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups, Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the lowest out of the three groups, yet still the correlation is strong positive (the value of r is 0.8782. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.7712).

Table 21. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Emotional Resilience – data presentation

Cross-cultural adaptability inventory (CCAI): Emotional Resilience	Mean value Polish P1 students	Mean value Polish P2 students	Mean value Turkish students
5. When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this.	3.20	3.16	3.66
7. When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask all persons involved to explain their positions.	3.10	2.84	3.14
10. In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words.	3.20	3.60	3.76
17. If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting him.	4.10	3.98	4.44
18. When there are colleagues in my work area who constitute an ethnic minority, I try to involve them in the majority group.	3.50	3.76	3.70
26. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	3.44	3.14	3.60
29. I really put my best effort into trying to interact well with people from different cultures	4.08	3.90	4.40
30. I get embarrassed easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	2.66	2.62	2.58

Note: III. Respond to the following statements by ticking the number on the scale, where **1** – strongly disagree; **2** – disagree; **3** – uncertain; **4** – agree; **5** – strongly agree.

Data obtained by means of statistical analysis may suggest that Emotional Resilience is dependent on some individual factors, maturity and age of respondents. That is why, the correlation is the strongest in case of Polish P1 group and the Turkish one, and the lowest in case of the two Polish groups (P1 and P2).

Data gained from the category of Emotional Resilience are congruent with results obtained from other research instruments implemented in the course of the research. The students show high involvement in intercultural encounters (particularly Polish P1 students and Turkish students). Intercultural encounters generate a lot of emotions in the respondents, they involve students both on cognitive and affective levels. No wonder that the students can handle them only to a certain (moderate) extent.

Generally speaking, the students will require training in some aspects of intercultural behaviour. The statements about emotional resilience and mean values are included in Table 21.

5.3.2 Flexibility and Openness. It may be assumed that there is a correlation between the amount of languages known, flexibility and openness as well as successful intercultural communication. As literature review shows, people knowing more languages usually report lower levels of communicative anxiety in their various languages, including their L1 (Deweale and Wei 2013: 232). The knowledge of multiple languages and high command of the language spoken correspond to high levels of open-mindedness, which is linked with tolerance of ambiguity (Deweale and Wei 2013: 232). In addition, people knowing more languages tend to be characterised by higher levels of cognitive empathy (Deweale and Wei 2013: 232).

As far as Flexibility and Openness category is concerned, research results show that the students in all three groups tend to be flexible and willing to meet representatives of other cultures. This tendency is particularly observable in reference to some general statements about intercultural communication. Surprisingly, respondents in all three groups display certain similarities. However, when exposed to some specific situations or examples (e.g., workplace contacts, eating habits), their opinions slightly vary. Differences concern some single instances which will be discussed. The analysis of data allows us to notice the following tendencies:

– the students in all three groups perceive meeting a person from a different cultural background as an opportunity to learn something new (statement 24). In general, the respondents also claim that they enjoy meeting foreigners. The mean values in Polish P1 group and the

Turkish group are above 4 (4.22 and 4.44, respectively). Polish P2 students expressed moderate enjoyment of meeting the Other because the mean value in this group is slightly lower (3.9);

– the subjects of the research (all three groups) display a relatively low degree of flexibility and openness to new experiences (statements 1, 4, 15, respectively). The mean values for these statements circulate around 2. The possible interpretation is that the students may have problems with adjusting themselves to new (different) situations. Similarly, they may find it difficult to try out something new or to adopt their behaviours to other social and cultural norms;

– the group of Polish P1 students seems the most inconsistent in their answers when compared with the other two groups. On the one hand, the students are characterised by a high level of linguistic flexibility (they declare a relatively high readiness to switch to other languages they are familiar with). This tendency is not reflected in two other groups, namely, Polish P2 group and the Turkish one (here the mean value for linguistic flexibility is the lowest). But on the other hand, the general flexibility of Polish P1 students to adjust their behaviour to the others is rather low;

– Polish P1 students show quite high willingness to interact with the foreigners to learn about their culture. This tendency is not verified for the other two groups, that is, the Turkish students and P2 students, where the mean values tend to be lower (the lowest value is obtained by Polish P2 students). The possible interpretation can be connected with the age of respondents and their experience (the older the students, the less spontaneous and less willing to search for some speaking opportunities they are);

– for Polish P1 group and the Turkish group – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the highest (the value of r is 0.8844, which indicates a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.7822);

– for Polish P2 group and the Turkish group – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is also high (the value of r is 0.8671. This is a strong positive correlation, with the value of $r2$ 0.7519);

– for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the lowest, yet it is still strong positive correlation (the value of r is 0.8257 and the value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.6818).

Similarly to the results from the category of Emotional Resilience, Flexibility and Openness may be also determined by individual factors, maturity and age of respondents. That is why, the correlation is the strongest in the case of Polish P1 group and the Turkish one, and the

lowest in case of the two Polish groups (P1 and P2). More information about the category of Flexibility and Openness is included in Table 22.

Table 22. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Flexibility and Openess – data presentation

Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Flexibility and Openness	Mean value Polish P1 students	Mean value Polish P2 students	Mean value Turkish students
1. In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients that I don't know.	2.62	2.64	2.28
4. I find it difficult to adapt to people of diverse origins.	2.22	2.62	2.54
12. When the behaviour of people from other cultures alienates me, I avoid making contact with them.	3.48	3.28	3.20
13. I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.	4.08	3.84	3.28
15. When colleagues from other cultures in my university group come to work later and/or take longer breaks, I adopt their work habits.	3.00	2.56	2.80
16. I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.	4.54	3.44	3.92
19. I can learn a lot from people of a different cultural background.	4.12	4.46	4.22
24. I enjoy interaction with people who have cultural or language differences.	4.22	3.90	4.44

5.3.3 Perceptual Acuity. Perceptual Acuity is defined as attentiveness to interpersonal relations and to verbal/non-verbal behaviour (Kelley and Meyers 1992; Kelley and Meyers 2007; Wright 2012). It is also related to the awareness of communication dynamics (i.e., sensitivity to contextual cues, awareness of how context affects communication) and empathy (i.e., recognition of people's emotion and their appropriate interpretation) (Kelley and Meyers 1992; Kelley and Meyers 2007; Wright 2012). Perceptual acuity is to a certain extent dependent on individuals' noticing and observational skills. Noticing is essential for registration of some events and is said to contribute to raising individual's awareness. Looking at the data, the following tendencies can be observed:

– The three groups of respondents display certain similarities. However, the difference lies in the intensity of particular types of behaviour reported by the students.
– Polish P1 students show a moderate level of perceptual acuity, meaning that they are, to a certain degree, observant and able to notice some conversational signals. But still this ability needs to be improved. The highest values for Polish P1 students are achieved in two areas, namely, noticing that others do not feel comfortable in their presence and the role of body language in supporting the verbal messages conveyed in the conversation.
– In the case of Polish P2 students the highest values relate to non-verbal communication as an additional way to convey meaning (statement 9) and acuity (i.e., noticing, displaying openness to absorb as much information as possible) (statement 2).
– Acuity is also the highest for the group of Turkish students (statements 2 and 6, respectively). For them, acuity is important during conversation as it helps to figure out the rules within the social group.
– The students in all three groups pay attention to non-verbal communication. The mean values in this category circulate around 4. In addition, they do not ignore gestures and non-verbal expression even when they do not understand them (statement 8). The students seem to have low understanding of the body language and occasional problems with appropriate interpretation of non-verbal cues (the lowest values in all the three groups). This very skill needs to be developed.
   Looking at the statistical values, the following tendencies can be observed:
– for Polish P1 and Turkish groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the highest (the value of r is 0.9249, which indicates a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.8554);
– for Polish P1 an Polish P2 groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is also quite high (the value of r is 0.8852. This is again a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.7836);
– in the case of Polish P2 group and the Turkish group – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation, although high, is the lowest out the three groups (the value of r is 0.8059. This is a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.6495).
   The statistical measures may indicate that Perceptual Acuity is dependent mostly dependent on experience, including intercultural encounters and language learning experience as well as the length and type of training. This would justify the strong positive correlation be-

tween Polish P1 and Turkish groups, and account for the lowest correlation between Polish P2 and Turkish groups.

Further details are provided in Table 23.

Table 23. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Perceptual Acuity – data presentation

Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Perceptual Acuity	Mean value Polish P1 students	Mean value Polish P2 students	Mean value Turkish students
2. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.80	4.04	4.26
3. When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.	4.16	3.96	4.12
6. When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.	3.98	3.90	4.22
8. When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.	2.56	2.90	2.06
9. When talking to other people I always watch their body language.	4.22	4.26	4.06
11. When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling.	3.40	3.10	3.70
25. I know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.78	3.42	3.70

5.3.4 Personal Autonomy. The last category of Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory concerns Personal Autonomy. Conceptually speaking, personal autonomy denotes individual's ability to formulate independent judgements and undertake the appropriate action. The tendencies noticed are as follows:
– the values in the category of personal autonomy are similar for all three groups. The students recognise the value and importance of cultural understanding. They also show a high degree of tolerance and empathy as they claim not to ignore the opinions of people from different cultures;
– in case of doubt or lack of knowledge, the students are likely to follow the rules of their own culture. This tendency is moderate (the mean values circulate around three), however comparable in all three groups;

– there are some differences between the two Polish groups and the Turkish one. Turkish students are more convinced that a poor communicator within his/her own culture will be also a poor communicator across cultures or sub-cultures, whereas the Polish students do not share that opinion. Here the values are lower than in the case of the Turkish group (3.5 and 3.7 for Polish students as contrasted with 4.08 for the Turkish group);

– another important difference worth commenting upon concerns the opinions the students have about their own L1 culture (statement 27). Here the Turkish students significantly differ in believing that their culture is better than other cultures (the mean value is much higher than in case of Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups, where this tendency is relatively low). Certain recognition and pride that the Turkish students display about their own native culture correspond with the themes of their narratives. The context of the Turkish own L1 culture with the emphasis of its uniqueness appears quite frequently in the students' pieces of work.

As far as statistical analysis is concerned, the tendencies observed are the following:

– for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is the highest (the value of r is 0.9535. This indicates a strong positive correlation. The value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.9092);

– for Polish P1 and Turkish groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is also high (the value of r is 0.8442. This is a strong positive correlation with the value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.7127);

– for Polish P2 and Turkish groups – Pearson Product-Moments Correlation is moderate (the value of r is 0.7332. This is a moderate positive correlation and the value of $r2$, the coefficient of determination, is 0.5376).

Data obtained by means of statistical analysis indicates the fact that Personal Autonomy is determined by L1 culture and some contextual factors. That is why, the correlation between the two Polish groups is strongly positive. At the same time, the correlation is moderate between Polish P2 and Turkish groups. Table 24 presents detailed information.

Table 24. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Personal Autonomy – data presentation

Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI): Personal Autonomy	Mean value Polish P1 students	Mean value Polish P2 students	Mean value Turkish students
14. I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures.	3.26	3.54	3.70
20. Cultural understanding is more important than professional knowledge when dealing with groups or individuals from another background.	3.86	3.66	3.92
21.Your culture is the measure for understanding another culture or subculture.	3.28	3.78	3.32
22. A poor communicator within his/her own culture will be a poor communicator across cultures or subcultures.	3.50	3.70	4.08
23. Some barriers to effective cross-cultural communication or negotiation may be caused by issues beyond culture.	3.82	3.84	3.90
27. I think my culture is better than other cultures.	2.00	1.88	3.18
31. I would ignore the opinions of people from different cultures.	1.80	2.14	1.50

Summing up, the gathered data allows us to notice some general tendencies and formulate final conclusions. They would be presented and discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This chapter presents the answer to the research questions and the final evaluation of the research.

6.1 Answers to the research objectives

The following subchapter discusses the outcomes of the study.

6.1.1 Differences between the groups of Polish P1, Polish P2, and the Turkish subjects. The first research objective deals with the description of the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The data indicates that the three groups participating in the research differ in terms of foreign language proficiency as well as cultural and linguistic home backgrounds. These differences, to a large extent, determine the respondents' perception (i.e., what they focus on during the intercultural encounter and what they select for the process of writing) and their narrative production (i.e., how they verbalise their experiences and narrate them). Realising that enables us to observe the role of various factors (i.e., contextual, cultural, and linguistic) in shaping intercultural competence. It also indicates certain limitations of the study which must be taken into account when approaching the data.

As said earlier, Polish P1 students, Polish P2 students, and the Turkish students vary in their language learning experience as well as the type and frequency of intercultural encounters. However, ascribing differences only to the nationality of the respondents (i.e., Polish vs. Turkish) would occur simplistic and one-sided (not reflecting the real nature of the problem). Indeed, sometimes the differences stem from

geographical location and culture-specific issues (e.g., nationality as well as home background, including L1 background and culture). Such differences determine:

– the context of the intercultural encounters (direct contact with foreigners mostly in home country contexts was common for Turkish students, whereas meeting foreigners abroad – for both Polish P1 and P2 students);
– the character of the contacts (i.e., face-to-face encounters vs. technology-based interactions). Another tendency observed refers to the nationality of the interlocutors. Turkish students reported frequent, mostly face-to-face contacts with the Americans. Polish students (both P1 and P2) showed preference for both direct and technology supported encounters. Polish students admitted frequent contacts with British people rather than the Americans;
– the perception of culture, self-perception of one's own identity (emic perspective of culture for the Turkish students; etic perspective of culture for the Polish students); their attitudes towards the Other as exemplified by the following comment of Polish students: "every culture has its own climate" and Turkish students: "your culture is not different than mine."

Statistical analysis carried out by means of LIWC and content analysis of narratives support the tendencies enumerated above. Some further differences can be observed in reference to certainty and tentativeness. The Polish respondents (both P1 and P2 students) are characterised by high scores in certainty and tentativeness as contrasted with the Turkish students. Consequently, it seems that Polish students are more confident in the way they describe their intercultural encounters. They also modify their language which manifests itself in the way they verbalise their ideas and formulate their opinions. High scores in the tentative category may also indicate the fact that Polish students show the tendency to refrain from definite statements and firm opinions. They seem likely to withhold their hasty judgements.

In contrast, the Turkish students significantly outperform both Polish groups in the category described as inclusive processes. The Turkish score is 7.25 as contrasted with 5.37 and 5.23 for Polish P1 and Polish P2 groups, respectively. This may denote the Turkish students' tendency to focus on social processes, interaction, and assimilation with foreigners.

Differences seem to be also determined by the age of respondents as well as their general world knowledge and experience. Those differences exert some impact on the frequency of intercultural encounters as well as the quality and the type of the difficulties experienced.

As far as age related differences are concerned, BA students expressed slightly higher interest in various kinds of students programmes and exchanges as opposed to the MA subjects (the percentage of Polish P1 students claiming to participate in the students' exchanges is higher than the percentage of Polish P2 students, i.e., 14% to 10%). However, this tendency requires further research and observation, as at this moment it might reflect particular group characteristics (and their individual mobility preference) rather than the general tendency of the whole population.

Noteworthy is the fact that communication problems resulting from lack of socio-pragmatic and conversational skills are experienced by the students irrespective of their nationality. Looking at the nature of the communication process, we can observe certain similarities between Polish P1 group and the Turkish one as opposed to the Polish P2 group. This may support the data concerning the factors such as age, experience, knowledge that play the role in the process of intercultural communication.

Finally, it must be realised that sometimes differences are dependent on the individual characteristics of the respondents and reflect their personal features of character. This is noticeable in narrative production, in particular in the way the respondents describe their experiences and structure their narratives. In addition, metaphors generated by the respondents are novel, original, and idiosyncratic. They are also culture- or group-specific. For example, the Polish respondents provided the metaphors associating intercultural encounters with something normal, typical or something that needs to be taken for granted without questioning (e.g., the sunset *because it is nothing special*). Such metaphors are not present in the Turkish data. In contrast, Turkish students compared intercultural encounters to a person or object, which is not present in the metaphors generated by the Polish groups. Turkish students occasionally compare meeting a foreigner to personal or family experiences. Such metaphors are not present in either of the Polish groups.

The variety of the responses within particular groups indicates their heterogeneity and individual character of the subjects. The following examples provide more information about the originality of the students' responses:

Polish P1 group:

(1) *Meeting a foreigner is like…*
    a. *flying in clouds because it is weird.*
    b. *ice cream because at first atmosphere is cold but then you find it delicious.*

c. *taking a chocolate out of a box of chocolates because you never know what will you get.*
d. *meeting foreigner because it is not a big deal.*

– Polish P2 group:

(2) *Meeting a foreigner is like...*
a. *Spanish inquisition because nobody expects it.*
b. *eating pizza because different things influence each other.*
c. *gardening because it is very rewarding but it involves a lot of effort.*
d. *traversing a forest because you communicate with many diverse people.*

– Turkish group:

(3) *Meeting a foreigner is like...*
a. *being born because everything is new/ brother... because ...he behaves friendly.*
b. *having a new computer (a mobile phone) because ...at first you get confused then learn how to react to it.*
c. *winning or losing a game... because... it cannot be predictable whether you will be liked or not by the person.*
d. *meeting a famous person because ...I get excited to know him/her closely.*

Polish students compare meeting a foreigner to an adventure and a challenge. These associations are inseparably connected with emotions, unpredictability, risk, and attraction. Meeting a foreigner is also described as discovery and exploration, which covers the idea of learning on one's own (the metaphors of discovering, finding something out). These two relate to the second most frequent category of responses in both Polish groups. Worth noticing is the fact that quite a number of respondents refrain from providing any answer in both Polish groups as if unwilling or unready to supply any associations.

Similarly, the metaphors offered by the Turkish students present intercultural encounters as a process of meeting, discovering or finding. These metaphors appear more frequently in the group of Turkish students than in both Polish groups. Other metaphors provided by the Turkish students indicate novelty, unpredictability, facing the unknown or the process (activity, task) that requires effort and engagement.

Concluding from the answers of the three groups of respondents, the verbal association task highlighted some differences and similarities

between the two Polish groups and the Turkish group. Although some of the metaphors evoke similar associations (e.g., meeting as an experience of something new, a process, discovery or exploration), their intensity varies, with the Turkish students generating more limited number of metaphors, yet with higher frequency. Surprisingly, the number of Turkish respondents who gave no answer is low, which again makes the group different from the two Polish groups. Polish students (both P1 and P2) are more flexible, in the sense of providing more categories of the associations. By doing this, the respondents stress different and sometimes slightly contradictory issues, for example, meeting a foreigner is compared both to something normal and to a stress-evoking situation (Polish P1 group). Another example concerns a comparison to fun and a language test (both examples appeared in the Polish P2 group).

6.1.2 The students' perception and self-assessment of the sociocultural competence. The starting point of the research was the students' self-assessment of their own sociocultural competence. The concept of intercultural encounter seemed challenging for all the three groups. The two Polish groups (Polish P1 and P2 students) displayed the tendency to present the features or conditions necessary for effective communication instead of providing the definition of what intercultural competence was. The comments such as: "intercultural competence is extremely important these days" or "intercultural competence is significant to fully comprehend the moves and customs of others," were quite frequent when having to define the concept.

As far as the Turkish students are concerned, they tended either to rely on theoretical knowledge gained during their training or to extend the concept to the consequences it may have had on interaction. In other words, Turkish students concentrated on what intercultural competence brought rather than what it was. It was easier for those students to quote others rather than to provide their own personal comments. Hardly anyone listed provided any subcomponents or "savoirs" which characterise an interculturally competent person.

Another tendency observed in the three groups relates to narrowing the term of intercultural competence just to factual knowledge ("having information about other cultures") or social awareness (i.e., the impact of social context). Worth noting is the fact that almost one third of respondents refrained from giving any answer. Evasive answers in either of the three groups, yet with varying degree of intensity, indicate certain unwillingness or difficulty in defining the term. It seems that defining the concept of intercultural competence posed a problem to the students irrespective of their age and nationality.

6.1.3 Culturally determined aspects of language use. The respondents were also requested to enumerate factors that may have some impact on intercultural communication. Polish P1 students listed language or they refrained from providing the answer (the most frequent response). Tolerance of other cultures was the second most important factor (the second place), followed by cultural knowledge and open-mindedness. Fourth and fifth places were taken by lack of stereotypes and prejudices, and openness to new acquaintances.

The group of Polish P2 students listed the following: cultural knowledge, language, general knowledge, and open-mindedness. However, withdrawing from an answer was the most popular reaction in Polish P2 group (the first place). In this sense, the group bears some similarities to the previous group of Polish P1 students.

As far as the Turkish students are concerned, their ranking of the most important factors for intercultural competence includes the following: language, gestures (body language) and empathy, cultural knowledge, facial expressions, lack of stereotypes and prejudices. What differentiates this group from both Polish groups is that the Turkish students listed some features (i.e., empathy, body language, facial expressions), which were not regarded as significant in the rankings of the two Polish groups.

Generally speaking, the students of the three groups often reported the need to display a number of skills when interacting with the Other, namely: linguistic skills, communicative competence and actional competence (or, in other words, pragmatic competence). Polish P1 group (Polish BA students) and the Turkish respondents stressed the relevance of knowing a foreign language, which was understood by them as having a high level of language proficiency, good command of that language, and the ability to use appropriate words to convey meaning. Cultural knowledge was also present in the respondents' rankings. In addition, the students recognised the importance of some personal features (empathy or open-mindedness) as well as appropriate attitudes (lack of prejudices).

After the study, the students in the three groups admitted that they raised their awareness about various linguistic and behavioural aspects that are determined by culture. The students participating in the research mentioned one more benefit; the research had positive impact on the subjects' motivation to extend their cultural knowledge. This referred to broadening general knowledge or probing into specific areas that constituted part of intercultural encounters (deeper exploration into the causes of miscommunication and explanation of the successful and unsuccessful behaviour).

6.1.4 Communication and miscommunication. The unique character of the intercultural encounter is connected with rapid on-the-spot reactions, both verbal and non-verbal to a context-specific situation. Successful communication (including skills, process involved and necessary conditions) was the most frequent theme raised by the students in their narratives and questionnaires. This tendency was particularly frequent for Polish BA (Polish P1) and Turkish respondents. When having to maintain communication, the students fear of inadequate language skills which may negatively affect their comprehension and language production. They also have to compete with the affective factors, such as fright, personal barriers (e.g., shyness) and communication apprehension resulting from limited experience of contacts with the representatives of other cultures. Definitely, intercultural encounters involve the students on both affective and cognitive levels. Consequently, the potential success (or the self-perceived individual success of such conversations) has some powerful and long-lasting consequences. This, in turn, exerts impact on students' behaviour, motivation, and feelings.

The conclusion drawn on the basis of data analysis is that low level of proficiency and limited experience with intercultural encounters make students concentrate on controlling the very act of communication and maintaining conversations with foreigners. Similarly, the more language proficient the learner, the more culture-oriented the topics. In other words, if a learner has a good command of a language (including both comprehension and production), s/he will pay more attention to issues such as culture, social relationship, cultural and language awareness. If his/her language skills are not sufficient, the learner is going to focus on how to struggle in communicating the message.

6.1.5 Cultural sensitivity and cultural knowledge. Another frequent theme appearing in the students' narratives concerns cultural knowledge. This includes culture-dependent factors that influence communication. Bennett (2011) divides the components of intercultural knowledge in his model into three categories: cognitive (including cultural self-awareness, culture-general knowledge, culture-specific knowledge, and interaction analysis), affective (curiosity, cognitive flexibility, motivation, and open-mindedness) and behavioural skills (relationship building skills, behavioural skills of listening and problem solving, empathy, information gathering skills). According to the responses provided by the students, it can be assumed that the three groups value cognitive skills, in particular culture-specific knowledge and culture-general knowledge as the scores are quite high in all the three groups. In addition, the Turkish students and Polish P2 students (yet to a lower degree) also emphasised

the importance of cross-cultural self-awareness. Indeed, the Turkish students often expressed their pride of their L1 culture in their narratives, they appreciated the fact of having the opportunity to introduce the foreigners to their home culture. In contrast, the themes that emerged in the Polish P2 students' narratives focus either on the role of culture-general knowledge in facilitating successful communication or its development as a result of intercultural contacts.

When it comes to the category of affective features, all the three groups stressed the significance of open-mindedness, cognitive flexibility, and curiosity. However, the values slightly vary; the highest are noted in the Polish P1 group, then followed by the Polish P2 group and finally, the Turkish group. Cognitive flexibility is often defined by the respondents as an ability to see alternative solutions and switch between them quickly.

As far as behavioural skills are concerned, all the three groups valued empathy, relationship building skills, and information gathering skills. Worth mentioning is the fact that empathy was most frequently considered by the Turkish students. The values for empathy were slightly lower for both Polish P1 and P2 groups.

6.1.6 Intercultural encounters and affect. Data gathered support the fact that intercultural encounters are emotion-generation situations. Emotions are present before, during, and after the interaction with the representatives of other cultures. Emotions motivated the behaviour of the respondents and were also caused by particular actions-reactions. The analysis of the research data allows us to notice the following:

– Polish P1 students display the tendency to describe and reflect upon their first intercultural experiences, which may justify their positive emotions.
– Turkish students tend to present intercultural encounters which were taking place in their home country. One of the most common themes in their narratives concerns sharing or showing their national Turkish heritage to others, which may explain their positive emotions.
– Polish P2 students are more precise in their verbalisations of emotions thanks to their maturity, better language competence, learning experience, and more varied intercultural experiences. This manifests itself in the way they describe their learning experiences, and also in the skill of producing narratives. Consequently, when expressing themselves in their narratives, Polish P2 students are quite objective and precise. They do not seem to be driven by emotions, especially by initial or ungrounded enthusiasm. They are able to explain their position and elaborate at length on the situation experienced.

Discussing the affective processes in detail, positive emotions prevail over the negative emotions in all three groups. Yet, if we compare the proportion of positive and negative emotions in these groups, we would notice that dispersion is the largest in Polish P1 group and the Turkish group. At the same time, the dispersion between positive and negative emotions is the lowest in Polish P2 group. This means that Polish P2 students report more emotions and they express more varied emotions. For example, Polish P2 students express anxiety and anger (the two highest values). The respondents from the other two groups (Polish P1 group and the Turkish group) report anxiety (the highest value). Other negative emotions reach insignificant values for Polish P1 group and the Turkish group.

Another tendency observed is that Polish P1 students and the Turkish students display more positive attitudes in their narratives as compared with Polish P2 students. The values for positive emotions in these two groups are significantly higher than the value of Polish P2 group. We may risk the statement that Polish P1 students and the Turkish students show an optimistic bias to the way they perceive and describe their encounters (the dispersion is more widespread). In contrast, Polish P2 students are more objective in sense that the values for positive and negative emotions are more grouped together. Worth noticing is also the fact that there might be a correlation between the level of language proficiency as well as the quality and precision in reporting the emotions experienced by the students. This may justify why Polish P2 group provided more thorough and varied descriptions of their emotions.

For Polish P1 students and Turkish students, intercultural encounters are often treated as a test of their speaking and interpersonal skills, as well as the occasion (often the first one) to initiate and maintain conversation with foreigners. That explains why, according to the statistical analysis, anxiety is the most frequently reported negative emotion in these two groups. In the case of Polish P2 group anger is the most often mentioned negative emotion. However, the difference between anger (the second most frequent emotion) and anxiety is insignificant for Polish P2 students.

Emotions vary depending on who the interlocutor is (e.g., native speaker vs. non-native speaker). Encounters with native speakers of English evoked more diverse feelings, ranging from excitement at one extreme to irritation, shame and fear on the other, in contrast to the encounters with non-native speakers.

Another difference concerns intensity and types of emotions mentioned. Encounters with native speakers, often described as a surprise or shock, were accompanied by a wide range of negative feelings. Positive

feelings were not that frequent. Similarly, encounters with foreigners brought mixed emotions of both positive or negative character. The number of positive feelings slightly outnumbered the negative feelings.

Some differences may be ascribed to the source as well as the cause–reason relationship of emotions. Emotions experienced during the encounters with native speakers stem from two things: the self-perception and self-evaluations of one's individual behaviour. That might be the reason explaining quite numerous amount of negative, self-debilitating, and self-related feelings (e.g., shame, disappointment, extreme sadness). These emotions were connected with the evaluation of individual's role and his/her performance during the meeting. Another category concerns emotions generated as a response (a reaction) in the process of communication with foreigners. Encounters with native speakers of English often evoked surprise. This indicates the clash between individual's expectations and performance, that is, between how the respondents feel they are prepared for encounters and how they act in a particular situation. This may also be explained by uncertainty, limited schemata of cultural knowledge, gaps in language and inadequate conversational/situational routines that may hinder successful communication with native speakers of English.

In contrast, encounters with foreigners were mostly connected with the situation-related feelings, or emotions generated in the course of action-reaction situation. The tendency observed is that the respondents did not focus so much on themselves as communicators. Instead, they seemed to treat themselves as an integral part of communicative event and evaluated the whole situation.

At some point, the data gathered seems somewhat inconsistent. The statistical analysis classifies the respondents' narratives as formal pieces of writing. However, the content analysis indicates the examples of highly personal language used to describe emotions (e.g., *totally shocked*, *extremely stressed and disappointed*, *I was devastated and petrified*, *I was baffled*, *very stressed*, *highly disappointed*). The possible explanation is that all the forms of guided reflection, narrative writing being one of them, help individuals to cope with their emotions, reflect on the nature of emotions and their functions. Thanks to it, the students arrive at deeper understanding of their emotions, and finally, they are able to verbalise them adequately. In a sense, the structure of narratives provides the framework that allows the respondents to structure their personal experiences and feelings.

Similarly, certain values obtained through statistical analysis do not correlate with the outcomes of topical analysis. For example, Polish P2 students gained the lowest value for the level of insights. Yet, their nar-

ratives exhibit a relatively high degree of introspection, reflection and description of cognitive processes. This calls for further inquiry and triangulation of the data collection methods.

6.1.7 Narrativisation and reflection. Narrating critical incidents promotes reflective judgement which is dependent on the personal, evaluative, and justificatory types of analysis (Tripp 1993: 27). The narratives collected in the course of the research share the features of narrative presented in Chapter 2 (Subchapter 2.3.1). However, the narratives vary in the depth and density of the presented events as well as the structure.

The respondents differ in their approach to the topic of the narrative task. For some of them an encounter meant a series of meetings (a chain of encounters including first few meetings with others). As a result, they provided their retrospective reflection upon the series of meetings. Other students concentrated solely on a single situation which they described thoroughly. Another aspect that differentiates the respondents' narratives relates to the form (some pieces of work are dialogic, whereas others are purely descriptive, containing some observations and remarks) and the depth of the analysis (some are elaborate and evaluate the situation from different angles, whereas others capture the most essential things and present one dimension of the event only).

Analysing the structure of the students' narratives, the majority of them follow the pattern: description of the situation (background), analysis, and conclusions. The final part (conclusions) includes both general remarks or reflections, as well applications or references to one's life. Almost all of the narratives in the three groups are divided into paragraphs. Lack of paragraph division is noted in single cases. The subjects were provided with certain frame (questions guiding the process of reflection), however, there are certain individual variations about how the respondents treated those questions. As a result, the narratives produced range from personal and creative expression of thoughts and feelings to those which offer quite strict answers to the questions suggested.

Another difference concerns the themes of the narratives and the issues that the respondents reflect upon. According to the data obtained in the research, the student's level of language proficiency may determine the topic of the narrative as well as the storyline. Polish P2 students (who seem the most proficient of all the three groups taking part in the research) often raised the themes of language itself, linguistic peculiarities, nuances or mechanisms they were not aware of before. Similarly, they frequently described how intercultural encounters raised their language awareness. They also reflected and commented upon the use of language, in particular: its pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic

aspects. Polish P1 students, whose language proficiency was a bit lower, displayed the tendency to concentrate on the very act of communication, relationship building and information sharing with foreigners. They described their positive experiences. At the same time, the Turkish students tended to focus on the content of the conversations or non-linguistic aspects that played the role and facilitated understanding (for example: non-verbal communication, relationship building, attitudes, features/predispositions essential to develop intercultural competence, cultural aspects). The conclusion that can be drawn from the narrative analysis is that the more language proficient the learner, the more language sensitive and language focused they were in their narratives.

The statistical analysis of linguistic processes indicates that Polish P2 students get the highest rates in the overall word count, which seems to reflect their good command of English (Polish P2 students' level of proficiency is the highest one of the three groups of the students participating in the research). However, what also needs to be stressed is that the difference between the Polish P2 students and the Polish P1 students in terms of linguistic processes is not big. This signals high level of proficiency of the other group (Polish P1 students). The Turkish students obtained the lowest scores in the majority of categories concerning the linguistic processes.

6.1.8 Perspective-taking. The value of intercultural encounters lies in their potential to allow the respondents to see things from a different perspective and gain awareness of various processes and phenomena. Allen (2003: 84) talks about freeing an individual from the confines of the ethnocentric viewpoints and promoting a pluralistic perspective, whereas Bennett (2007: 49) associates intercultural learning with stepping into and imaginatively participating in the other's world view. Awareness is the first step in intercultural learning continuum, essential for the remaining steps, that is, understanding, acceptance and respect, appreciation and valuing being the remaining steps (Allen 2003: 102).

The opportunity of seeing things differently was frequently mentioned by the all of the respondents participating in the research. However, the three groups differ in their approach and understanding of the perspective taking. Polish students (in both P1 and P2 groups) discussed the issue from the personal, subjective point of view. When asked to comment upon intercultural competence, they enumerated some individual features of character that may have impact on the development of intercultural competence. The responses given by them often reflect their own perception and way of thinking. Contrary to that, Turkish respondents presented both some personal opinions and

general comments (facts or quotes). Some of the Turkish students shared their knowledge and enumerated some general factors that may affect intercultural competence. The samples of the Turkish students illustrate this point.

T24: *Age: older people and younger people can think differently, so it affects the communication.*

Gender: communication between members of different cultures is affected by how different societies view the roles of men and women.

Personality: how a person communicates with others from other cultures depends on their own unique personality.

Cultural differences: the cultural differences affect the communication between the people from different countries. Social class: the level of society people have is important for intercultural competency.

T15: […] *Sensitivity and self-consciousness are very important factors for successful communication.*

Respect is the other important factor for ethnical, religious, political differences […].

The character of intercultural encounters (their context and the feedback obtained afterwards) contributes to learning, in particular raising individual's self-knowledge and language awareness. Intercultural encounters are context-dependent; they engage students socially, affectively, and cognitively; the experience is usually meaningful for a particular person. In addition, the feedback the individual gets on his/her behaviour, including language behaviour, is immediate, individualized, significant, and memorable.

Differences observed in three groups concern types and degree of explicitness of language awareness processes. In detail, Polish groups (i.e., P1 and P2 groups) were more direct in verbalising their comments and reflections about language awareness. In other words, Polish students talked analytically about language and language patterns more frequently than the Turkish students who did not report overtly upon the language and its mechanisms. The Polish students provided some examples of miscommunication that resulted from the inappropriate language use. They searched for possible explanation of mistakes and were more likely to notice some differences between languages, in particular L1 and L2.

In the case of Turkish students, spotting the differences in language use was not that frequent. If we take into account five features of LA methodology (cf. Borg 1994: 62), the narratives of Polish P2 students and Polish P1 students (to a slightly lesser degree) contained all of the

features, namely: description, exploration, languaging (i.e., talking analytically to each other), engagement and reflection. Consequently, the comments they verbalised fall into three categories that constitute language awareness (for details, see: Donmall 1985), namely: affective (including attention, curiosity, and forming attitudes), cognitive (sensitivity to linguistic patterns and mechanisms) and social (using language as communicators, language performance).

In contrast, the Turkish students displayed strong tendencies in the social domain and slightly weaker tendencies in the affective and cognitive ones. Their narratives focused on descriptions of how language was used. The frequency of exploration, discovery, and languaging was lower than in the two Polish groups.

Taking research data into account, language awareness may be correlated with:

1. Individual's language proficiency (the more proficient the learner, the more language aware s/he is). Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) claim that level of language proficiency may have impact on observational and noticing skills, sensitivity and awareness, metalinguistic skills, and the level and flexibility of verbalisation. The research data confirm these claims. Higher language proficiency also makes respondents focus on how language is used in social contexts and how culture-dependent factors determine language performance. It can be noted from the data that students with lower level of proficiency and more limited experience in intercultural encounters tend to concentrate on the very act of communicating and maintaining conversations with the foreigner.
2. Transfer of training or learning experiences (i.e., the type of training received as well as the overall focus of the training).
3. The level of reflectivity (some people tend to focus on how language is used, notice some linguistic mechanisms, and reflect upon them more often than others). The respondents may vary in their perception of linguistic mechanisms and sensitivity to how language is used.
4. Some individual predispositions.

However, further research is needed in this aspect because of the complexity of the factors that play the role in intercultural communication.

6.1.9 The students' intercultural experiences and adaptability. According to Crone (2008: 395), the depth of exposure to other cultures (measured by the number of countries visited) increases cultural intelligence (CQ). What also matters is the length and the reason of the stay. The study conducted by Crone shows that those participants who had visited more countries for employment and education had higher levels of Cultural

Intelligence, particularly in relation to cognitive and behavioural dimensions of CQ. However, motivational CQ was higher in individuals who had visited more countries for vacation and other purposes. In this study, the students, irrespective of their age (either younger BA students or a bit older, MA students) and nationality (both Turkish and Polish respondents), report relatively limited additional intercultural experiences. The most common reasons of their visits concern vacation and other personal purposes. Yet, at this FL moment, the research data do not allow us to draw any conclusions about the students' cultural intelligence. However, this is one of the ideas for the research continuation and extension.

Similarly, it is too early to pose any final conclusions about the students' level of openness and adaptability to other cultures. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was implemented as an additional tool to identify the degree of the subjects' adaptability as well as to determine some similarities and differences among the groups. The inventory includes four categories, namely: Emotional Resilience, Flexibility and Openness, Perceptual Acuity, and Personal Autonomy. The research also intended to find out some factors that may have impact on the degree of individual's adaptability. Data obtained by means of statistical analysis indicates the following tendencies:

– Emotional Resilience as well as Flexibility and Openness seem to be dependent on individual factors, maturity, and age. Consequently, there is the highest correlation between Polish P1 students and Turkish students. At the same time, the correlation is the lowest between Polish P1 group and Polish P2 participants.

– Perceptual Acuity is influenced by experience and training. Experience is here understood as both experience with intercultural encounters as well as language learning experience. Here the correlation is the highest for Polish P1 and Turkish groups, while it is the lowest for Polish P2 and Turkish groups.

– Personal Autonomy turns out to be largely determined by L1 culture and some contextual factors. In consequence, there is the strong positive correlation between the two Polish groups. Yet the correlation between Polish P2 and Turkish groups is moderate.

However, the author of this book is aware of the limitations of this tool. Therefore, it would be justified to implement some other tools that would allow one to examine the students' profile in terms of their openness and adaptability towards intercultural encounters.

6.1.10 Learning outcomes: Me as a FL teacher vs. me as a language learner.
One of the benefits of this research relates to the impact of intercultural

encounters on the respondents' perception of self as an FL learner and self as an FL teacher.

As far as the learners' perspective is concerned, the students in all three groups enumerated quite a lot of different examples of how intercultural encounters affected them as language learners, namely:

– their perception of the function of intercultural encounter – intercultural encounters as a learning opportunity, an occasion to interact with others (a practice opportunity), and a test of the students' knowledge and skills;
– factors that exert influence on intercultural communication, especially the importance of linguistic and non-linguistic elements that need to be mastered in order to handle intercultural communication successfully (e.g., speaking and communication, cultural knowledge);
– their attitude towards the Other and towards ambiguity (realising prejudices, examining and changing stereotypes and beliefs, awareness of the stages of acculturation);
– self-knowledge in terms of personal characteristics (gaining self-confidence, developing self-awareness) and individual behaviour. This relates to how one needs to behave in the future or what aspects of individual behaviour require change or modification (e.g., overcoming affective factors, predominantly stress, fear; developing greater tolerance to one's own mistakes, not paying attention to mistakes);
– motivation and direction for language improvement and self-improvement. Interesting is the fact that the entries dealt with both reflection-on-action (i.e., the evaluation of the situation) and reflection-for-action (i.e., the lesson learnt from the intercultural encounter and some implications for future learning). The samples below best illustrate the point:

P1.7: *it* [intercultural encounter] *made me believe in myself and led to greater interest in English.*

P1.50: […] *I am proud of myself and can say that my perception and the way I understand English is completely different and much better.*

P1.10: *I shouldn't be pessimistic about my abilities. I should believe in myself and even though I make mistakes I can do certain things.*

P2.45: *Before this event, I was self-conscious and I was afraid of speaking English.* […] *I realised that I had neglected my speaking and communication skills.*

Apart from some general examples observed in Polish and Turkish groups, there are some group-specific tendencies. As far as Polish stu-

dents are concerned, they pointed to the following outcomes of the intercultural encounters:
– intercultural encounters raised the students' need to familiarise themselves with inhibition lowering strategies;
– intercultural encounters made students persist in their effort to maintain communication despite some problems. In a way, memories of intercultural encounters serve as a self- motivating, reassuring, and comforting strategy for the students. According to them, they may positively influence their future behaviour. The excerpt below best illustrates this point:

P1.21: *Sometimes it is worth risking and we should never believe in stereotypes and be afraid of going abroad and meeting new people.*

– the students claim to have developed communicative awareness, in particular the awareness of barriers that may block communication. They appreciated the mastery of communicative skills;

P1.41: *The first two hours were the worst. It is difficult to describe the first two hours because there was no communication at all. Thus, she started to use the simplest words and I did the same […]. As a result we started to communicate and I started to feel English. I uncovered that it is not easy to talk and simultaneously think in a foreign language.*

P2.35: *I was especially happy because thanks to my English skills, the meeting was possible and there were no communication problems.*

– meeting foreigners raised students' awareness of the cultural differences. This resulted in greater sensitivity to cultural issues as well as the awareness of the impact of culture on people's behaviour;
– intercultural encounters triggered students' reflection about L1 and L2 differences and L1 and L2 culture. Polish students often reported that they gained some knowledge and better understanding of their own culture;
– the students admitted that they learnt new skills, for example, the skill of self-observation, the skill of noticing contextual cues, especially in order to minimise or avoid stress-evoking situations; they claim to become more sensitive and to broaden their horizons;
– the respondents admit that intercultural encounters enhanced their self-confidence and self-satisfaction thanks to some positive experience ("the devil is not as black as it is painted," as one of the students commented);
– the respondents report the change of perception while learning English (it refers to their initial conceptions of L2 culture which were

modified in the process of individual's contact with this culture). They say to change thinking about the others (meaning: foreigners, native and non-native speakers of English). One of the benefits of intercultural encounters is the realisation of certain gaps and inconsistencies in their previous knowledge. As a result of "face-to-face meetings," it turned out that in some cases the previously acquired knowledge or opinions were not true;

– the experience of intercultural encounters served as a turning point and it helped the students to reshape and redirect their future learning. The students realised that there was still a lot of things to improve in their L2 language and culture development. Some of the respondents of the research noticed the need to be inquisitive and curious towards other culture in order to extend one's knowledge and develop appropriate attitudes.

At the same time, when asked about how intercultural encounters influenced them as language learners, the Turkish students pointed to some general benefits, namely:

– intercultural encounters as situations promoting the whole development, language development being one of them. This can be exemplified by the following comment:

T: *we can develop and progress our mind.*

– intercultural encounters as an opportunity to develop language fluency;

T: *ease of communication in language.*

– intercultural encounters as opportunities to reach a consensus (compromise), find similarities among the differences;

T: *building a nonviolent society by validating the narratives of culturally different individuals and communities (establishing relationship).*

T: *provides opportunities for and establish patterns of cross-cultural communication among culturally diverse individuals and groups of people.*

As far as the teacher perspective is concerned, the students' comments to a certain extent reflect the issues mentioned earlier (in "Me as a learner" section). Generally speaking, intercultural encounters made students think about what is important in teaching a foreign language and what needs to be covered during English courses. Sometimes, intercultural encounters triggered students' reflection about the type of the teacher they would like to become or the type of the features (skills) they would like to develop in themselves.

Personal experiences of the students made them decide what to focus on during one's own teaching. That is why, speaking and communication skills are the most frequent. The respondents raised their awareness

of the importance of communicative component that needs to be emphasised in teaching a foreign language. The subjects also realised the necessity of teaching various communication and conversational strategies, particularly strategies that would enable the learners to facilitate their language choice depending on the situation.

The participants of the research also recognise the need to introduce cultural (intercultural component) into their teaching. At the same time, they assume their lacks in cultural knowledge and appreciate the fact of extending their cultural knowledge as a result of intercultural encounters. This shows that the students think about teaching but, simultaneously, they see the constant need of learning and improving their knowledge as FL learners.

The respondents treated narratives as a useful resource (an information bank) and a tool for reflection. These two examples were frequently mentioned to explain how narratives may contribute to foreign language teacher development. As the narratives often concern the first encounters with native speakers, mostly in the English speaking context, the verbal description reflects intensive personal impressions, great involvement, as well as a certain distance on the part of the interlocutors. The narratives start with a detail or a specific situation, which is later followed by some personal comments and retrospective evaluation. In this sense, the narratives can be a valuable resource for teachers by providing them with examples of situations/stories that can be either incorporated into foreign language lessons or that can motivate their own professional development.

Worth noting is the fact that the analysis of the narratives indicates the students' difficulties in examining the benefits of intercultural encounters from the teacher's perspective. It may be explained by the fact that the transformation from a language learner to a language teacher is a demanding process that requires both time and experience. It was easier for the students in all the three groups to narrate the past (i.e., their experience as learners) rather than anticipate the future.

All the three groups are congruent in claiming that intercultural encounters positively affected their attitudes about the communication process in general, learning opportunities and the role of various personal and contextual factors in the process of interaction with the foreigners. However, some benefits are group-specific, namely:
– Polish P1 group was language- and communication-oriented;
– Polish P2 group was self-oriented and culture-specific knowledge-oriented;
– the Turkish students were culture- and stereotypes-focused. They also concentrated on the process of relationship building.

A further step in the research of that type should be the examination of how regular intercultural encounters influence attitude formation and personal identity development.

6.2 Evaluation of the research project

The study showed that disclosing their own stories allows students to become more self-aware. The students also reported gaining a new perspective on a language learning process and understanding other language learners better. The respondents admitted that they developed empathy towards others and sensitivity towards their needs.

The objectives planned for the research were partially achieved (for details, see: Chapter 3). According to Boeckmann et al. (2011: 26), to prepare students for intercultural communication, we need to develop some skills, that is, "skills of investigation and language use, skills in self-directed (language) learning, and skills in interacting, networking and discussion." For Chen (2002), it is essential to train metaskills in analysing miscommunication and its negative consequences. In this sense, the research turned out to be successful, because it managed to promote students' reflection about their personal encounters, strategies implemented and factors that facilitated/hindered their cross-cultural communication.

Evaluating the research, it may be said that the choice of research procedures proved out to be useful. All the students eagerly participated in group discussions about their intercultural experiences. Taking active part in intercultural dialogue, followed by reporting and sharing ideas among other students gave the respondents a chance to observe the mechanisms of language use in various settings as experienced by different people. Thus, it indirectly favoured the attitude of openness and critical inquiry in the students. It seems that talking about intercultural encounters definitely helped students to select the encounters that were exceptional and significant in terms of what happened (actions) and who was involved (participants). Narrative writing, preceded by group sharing also trained student's skills of observation, discernment, analysis, and reflection. Narratives facilitated the process of restructuring individual experiences and coping with future possible problems (i.e., miscommunication). Consequently, the tasks the students were involved in also prepared them for functioning in plurilingual settings, learning from various encounters and the critical evaluation of the future encounters they would face. One of the students summarises this point in the following way:

T24: *Life contains many situations and frequent events that can change our life or makes us become a different person, sometimes for the good, but as well as the bad. Everyone is exposed to many events in their life that can affect their behaviour, thinking and personality. Jack told me, "life is a puzzle, sometimes it makes us laugh, sometimes it makes us cry. We need to pick out the right pieces to make it right, even though sometimes we pick out the wrong ones." We can learn from these events to avoid future mistakes because we do learn from the choices we make. We should know how to deal with different cultures. I have been through an event that influenced me.*

6.3 Implications for further research

The value of the research lies in drawing students' attention to culture-related issues. In addition, it aroused students' curiosity and involved them in cooperative experience sharing and learning. However, the issue was not fully exploited. As a continuation and extension for the research, the following aspects require further inquiry:
– the strategic behaviour of the participants of intercultural encounters. This would involve the analysis of the strategies implemented during intercultural encounters and the examination of the outcomes;
– the examination of how the foreign language learner can become a competent "negotiator of sociocultural meaning" (it includes, among others, the development and the use of strategies of interpretation and interaction in the foreign language);
– the analysis of cultural representations ("cultural scripts"), including how they are conveyed and corroborated in interactive relations with foreigners. Further inquiry should be also given to the examination of the cultural dissonance arising from the pluralistic interpretations and its impact on the intercultural interaction, especially in the long-term perspective;
– the impact of intercultural encounters on preparing and training students for the role of cultural mediators;
– examples of successful intercultural encounters and different scenarios.
The success of the study also depends on some personal and highly individual features, for instance, readiness for self-disclosure understood as revealing emotions and maturity for verbalisation of the experiences. Still the issues requiring further inquiry concern the following:

– How many problems were reported by the students?
– To what extent are the selected problems personally significant (meaningful) or the ones that the students were ready to report (i.e., to share with others)?
– How many problems that language student teachers experienced are still unsolved?
– To what extent does language proficiency limit students' spontaneity to narrate their experiences?
– What is the impact of cultural context on the student's verbalisation of experiences and narrative production? On the one hand, literature review (cf. Hufeisen and Neuner 2004: 68–70) identifies some language levels at which cultural differences and different communicative preferences are apparent, such as: development of argument, directness vs. indirectness, dealing with topics, etc.

On the other hand, the analysis of the narratives shows that the students participating in the study exhibit unsatisfactory level of pragmatic and pragmalinguistic competences, which manifests itself in two different ways. Firstly, quite a number of narratives describing intercultural encounters revolve around the issues of miscommunication and misuse of the language (this applies particularly to Polish P2 group, but not only). Secondly, the analysis of narratives indicates relatively low frequency of certain features which constitute pragmatic competence (i.e., paralinguistic/non-linguistic elements). This calls for further research that would highlight those differences in detail and suggest some training in the area of pragmatic competence.

Summing up, intercultural training, as a longitudinal and dynamic process, is dependent on a number of factors that can be boiled down to three categories:
– person-related factors which encompass certain individual predispositions (e.g., sensitivity, openness towards others, and readiness to learn and develop understanding of others; for details, see: Bennett 2009; Mihułka 2013). This category also includes observational, interpretive, and reflective skills that enable an individual to benefit from hands-on intercultural experiences;
– experience-related factors, including the frequency, breadth, depth, and volitional character of intercultural encounters, as well as the very quality of the contact (Crone 2008; Mihułka 2013);
– training-related factors which cover the content of training and training procedures (Gudykunst et al. 1996). Both aspects are essential because, according to Byram and Zarate (1995: 18), focusing on one of them only is not sufficient to eliminate/minimise negative attitudes to otherness based on rejection and conflict of values.

As far as approaches to training are concerned, they concentrate on the process and the learners' involvement, and can be further divided into didactic (the emphasis is put on the cognitive understanding of another culture, its people and customs as a prerequisite for effective interaction) and experiential approaches to training (based on the assumptions that people learn best from their experiences). In experiential approach, trainees react cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally to the situations. After this, the trainees discuss the experiences with the trainer and draw conclusions (Gudykunst et al. 1996: 65–66).

At the same time, approaches to the content of training include the following subcategories: culture-general (developing cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity that would increase one's self-knowledge and prepare a person for interaction in any culture) vs. culture-specific (based on gaining information about a given culture and guidelines for interaction with members of that culture) approaches to training (Gudykunst et al. 1996: 65–66).

This study followed the scheme that consisted of a formal training, which preceded the narrative production task. The training included a number of activities that focused on students' cognitive understanding (knowledge-transmission activities, quizzes, The Iceberg Model presentation, etc.) and tasks involved students' experientially (the students had to react cognitively, emotionally, and behaviourally, e.g., the D-I-E technique, the FORM, writing a life-story of a person). The choice of the activities seemed appropriate. The students were involved in tasks completion and willing to share the results with others. Their verbal and non-verbal reactions indicated their curiosity and engagement. When exposed to some of the tasks (e.g., the FORM, the D-I-E technique), the respondents had a chance to experience a range of emotions. Initial surprise and disbelief was gradually replaced by fascination and enthusiasm, and finally boredom, irritation, resignation (or discouragement). In the follow-up sessions, the students admitted that they reminded themselves of how it was to meet a perfect stranger. When it comes to cognitive activities, the students were provided with tasks that developed their knowledge in intercultural communication. In addition, the students became aware of their knowledge (including cultural knowledge) as well as their own attitudes and feelings towards the others. The research also includes narrative production, in which the respondents were supposed to describe critical incidents of memorable intercultural encounters. This technique belongs to the category of experiential culture-specific techniques.

The research project does not exploit the issue of intercultural training and education. At the same time, the author of this book does realise the fact that the implementation of some other experiential

culture-specific techniques, such as: communication workshops, culture-general assimilators and self-assessments, culture-specific simulations and culture-specific role-plays may give different insights into the problem under study. Similarly, the extension of the study by some systematic examination into the issue of intercultural styles, pragmatic comprehension and communicative effect may bring additional results. This definitely depicts some directions for the future research.

Appendix

1. Research scenario for intercultural encounters

Objectives:

– to raise students' awareness about intercultural issues and culture-bound behaviour
– to increase students' self- knowledge, their cultural sensitivity and knowledge about cultural differences
– to promote students' reflection about strategies implemented during intercultural encounters
– to trigger students' reflection about factors that play crucial role in effective cross-cultural and intercultural communication
– to identify elements of intercultural encounters (i.e., rules, patterns of behaviour, problems) that are context-dependent and those that are context-free

Participants:

– Polish Students of English Philology (pursuing BA programme), aged 19–21; future teachers of English
– Polish Students of English Philology (pursuing MA programme), aged 22–25; future teachers of English
– Turkish Students of English Philology, aged 22–25; future teachers of English

Duration: October 2012 – May 2013

Procedure:

STEP 1
The students participate in a lesson/ short lecture about cultural or intercultural awareness, which is followed by a discussion. They are exposed to the Iceberg Model of Culture, which might serve as a thought-provoking material and a stimulus for discussion as well as ideas sharing (see app. 1).
(This step is optional, however it would be good to direct students' attention to cultural issues.)

STEP 2
The students complete a questionnaire concerning intercultural encounters. Time: ca. 30–45 min. (see app. 2).

STEP 3
The students are requested to write a narrative describing their encounters with foreigners. Details for this task are provided below (the task itself is also included in app. 3).

2. Iceberg Theory of Culture (Supplementary materials implemented during the research – Theoretical training, Step 1)
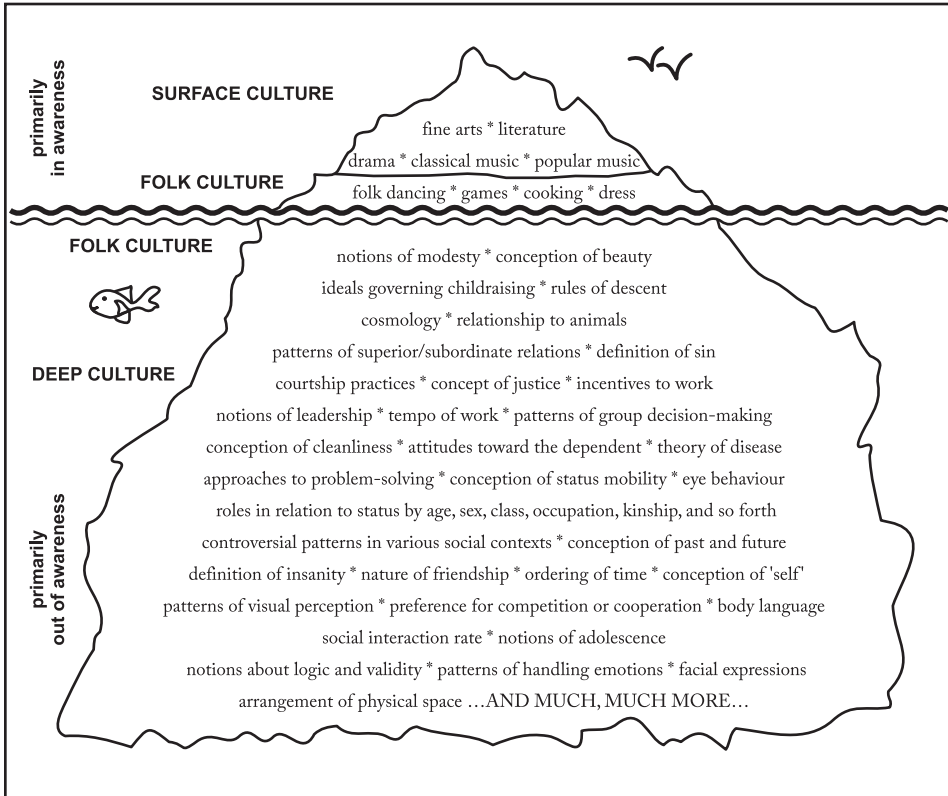
(Source: Jerome H. Hanley. 1999. Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg: Five Stages Toward Cultural Competence. *Reaching Today's Youth*, vol. 3, issue 2. 9–12

2a. The Iceberg Theory of Culture – Modified version – Theoretical training, Step 1)

SURFACE CULTURE

Fine Arts
Music
Literature
Drama   Dance
Games
Primarily in awareness

FOLK CULTURE
Cooking   Dress

FOLK CULTURE

Modesty   Beauty
Childrearing   Inheritance
Cosmology Authority Courtship
Sin Justice   Time   Language
Social interaction   Emotions   Work Leadership

Primarily out of

awareness

DEEP
CULTURE

Decision Making Disease Cleanliness

Problem Solving
Non-verbal Communication   Eye contact

Relationship to Nature   Roles related to age, sex, class, occupation

Kinship Friendship   Individualism/Collectivism

Relationship to Animals   Patterns of Group Decision-Making

Approaches to Problem Solving   Conception of Status Mobility

Conception of Past and Future   Roles in Relation to Age, Sex, Class, Occupation, Kinship, etc.

Definition of Insanity   Conversational Patterns in Various Social Contexts   Ordering of Time

Preference for Competition or Cooperation   Body Language   Social Interaction Rate

Notions of Adolescence   Notions about Logic and Validity

Facial Expressions   Arrangements of Physical Space   AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

**Just as nine-tenths of the iceberg is out of sight and below the water line,
so is nine-tenths of culture out of conscious awareness. The out-of-awareness
part of culture has been termed deep-culture.**

Appendix

3. The Form technique (Supplementary materials implemented during the research – Theoretical training)

THE FORM

1. NAME _____
FAMILY?
BIRTH
2. YEARS _____
3. SEX   YES _____
         NO _____
4. STATUS
_____
5. DEGREES
CHECKONEO,V,X
PHD
PDQ
MA
MA
PM

6. FAVORITE COLOR
_____
WHY? _____
7. LANGUAGE
YES ___ NO ____
8. IRENGLISH
WHATKIND
KOJAK
REGAN
EDITH
9. FAVORITEDISEASE

(Source: workshop materials, Warsaw 2007)

4. Culture Quiz

Aims:
– building students' knowledge about the behaviour typical for representatives of other cultures;
– practising the use of the modal verb "should/ shouldn't."

Complete the quiz with "should" or "shouldn't" and circle the correct answers.
1. .... you talk about business at a meal in China?
a) Yes, you should.   b) No, you shouldn't.

2. .... you wear a suit and tie to meet a new client in Saudi Arabia?
a) No, you shouldn't.   b) Yes, you should.

3. .... you give a Russian six flowers?
a) Yes, it's lucky.   b) No, it's unlucky.

4. Someone gives you a present in Japan? .... you open it:
a) immediately?   b) later?

5. In Germany you .... use your boss's first name because it is not polite.
a) True.   b) False.

6. .... you use your right or left hand to accept a present in Muslim countries?
a) Right.   b) Left.

7. When you are invited for dinner at a friend's house in the UK, you .... arrive more than 15 minutes late.
a) True.   b) False.

8. 'You .... have a meeting in room 4 because it is unlucky.' This statement is true in which country?
a) Mexico   b) China   c) Poland

Key: 1b; 2b; 3b; 4b; 5a; 6b; 7a; 8b.
(Source: Maistre, Lewis, 2002: 65)

5. Questionnaire: Intercultural Encounters (Supplementary materials implemented during the research – Data collection procedure, Step 2)

QUESTIONNAIRE: INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Instructions:
Undoubtedly, you will have experienced many situations where you have had contact with people from other cultures, for example at your workplace, in your country, or in other countries. You are kindly requested to respond to particular situations. Please tick those statements that are valid for you and that best describe your experiences. Thank you in advance for your sincere answers.

I. Biographical information

1. Age: Gender: Female / Male

2. Nationality:

3. How many friends from abroad do you have? (give the number)...........................

4. How many languages do you speak well? (enumerate them) ....

5. Where and how did you learn these languages? (tick as many as applicable)
   a) as a part of school/ university studies
   b) after school (e.g. private tuition/ extra afternoon courses)
   c) while staying abroad
   d) other ....

6. How often have you dealt with people from other countries in your professional life?
   a) very often (it is part of my studies/ work)   b) often   c) rarely   d) never

7. How often have you been abroad in the last 5 years?
   a) 0   b) 1–2 times   c) 3–5 times   d) 6–10 times   e) more than 10 times

8. How long did your longest stay abroad last?
   a) one or two days   b) 2 days–1 week   c) 1 week–1 month   d) 1–5 months
   e) more than half a year

9. How many different countries have you visited already?
   a) 0   b) 1   c) 2–3   d) 4–6   e) more than 7

10. Which countries have you been to? (enumerate them)

11. Additional intercultural experiences:

II. Intercultural profile

You will find below some statements that are related to meeting foreigners. Maybe these statements concern situations that you have not yet experienced. Please try to imagine such a situation and tick those situations that correspond best to your possible reaction.

1. Meeting a foreigner is like .... because ....

2. Intercultural competence is ....…................

3. Which of the potential communication barriers might affect the conversation with foreigners (tick up to 3 answers) time.
........Language ....Stereotypes ....Assumptions ....Hasty judgments ....Place
........Time ....Gestures ....Status of your interlocutor ....Topic ....Style

4. Which nonverbal codes play the crucial role in conversation with the foreigners (tick up to 3 answers).
........Proxemics (space)
........Eye contact
........Facial expressions
........Chronemics (time)
........Kinesics (body language and movement)
........Silence
........Bodymindfulness (proprioception, i.e., body feeling; our sense of being in a body)

5. What do you think is important for intercultural competency? Enumerate some factors (give up to 5 examples).

6 Analyse what you think are your strengths and weaknesses when comes to intercultural competence (enumerate 3 positive and 3 negative features)
          strengths   weaknesses

III. Respond to the following statements by ticking the number on the scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

1. In restaurants I often eat dishes with ingredients that I don't know.
          1   2   3   4   5
2. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
          1   2   3   4   5
3. When other people don't feel comfortable in my presence, I notice it.
          1   2   3   4   5
4. I find it difficult to adapt to people from diverse origins.
          1   2   3   4   5
5. When other people behave in a way that I don't understand, I ask them why they are doing this.
          1   2   3   4   5
6. When I am a newcomer in a group with people from a different country, I try to find out the rules in this group by observing their behaviour.
          1   2   3   4   5
7. When a conversation with people from different countries fails, I ask all persons involved to explain their positions.
          1   2   3   4   5
8. When conversation partners use gestures and expressions that are unknown to me, I ignore them.
          1   2   3   4   5
9. When talking to other people I always watch their body language.
          1   2   3   4   5

10. In conversations with speakers of other languages I avoid unclear or ambiguous words.
     1   2   3   4   5

11. When I observe people in other countries, I often guess how they are feeling.
     1   2   3   4   5

12. When the behaviour of people from other cultures alienates me, I avoid making contact with them.
     1   2   3   4   5

13. I don't have problems in suddenly changing to one of my other languages during a conversation.
     1   2   3   4   5

14. I always follow the rules of my own culture if I am not sure of how to behave properly when dealing with people from other cultures.
     1   2   3   4   5

15. When colleagues from other cultures in my university group come to work later and/or take longer breaks, I adopt their work habits.
     1   2   3   4   5

16. I often seek contact with other people in order to learn as much as possible about their culture.
     1   2   3   4   5

17. If I have behaved inappropriately towards a colleague from another culture, I think of how to compensate for it without further hurting him.
     1   2   3   4   5

18. When there are colleagues in my work area who constitute an ethnic minority, I try to involve them in the majority group.
     1   2   3   4   5

19. I can learn a lot from people of a different cultural background
     1   2   3   4   5

20. Cultural understanding is more important than professional knowledge when dealing with groups or individuals from another background.
     1   2   3   4   5

21. Your culture is the measure for understanding another culture or subculture.
     1   2   3   4   5

22. A poor communicator within his/her own culture will be a poor communicator across cultures or sub-cultures.
     1   2   3   4   5

23. Some barriers to effective cross-cultural communication or negotiation may be caused by issues beyond culture.
     1   2   3   4   5

24. I enjoy interaction with people who have cultural or language differences.
     1   2   3   4   5

25. I know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
     1   2   3   4   5

26. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
     1   2   3   4   5

27. I think my culture is better than other cultures.
     1   2   3   4   5

28. I really put my best effort into trying to interact well with people from different cultures
    1 2 3 4 5
29. I get embarrassed easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
    1 2 3 4 5
30. I would ignore the opinions of people from different cultures.
    1 2 3 4 5

6. Narrative task (Supplementary materials implemented during the research – Data collection procedure, Step 3)

Narrative about intercultural encounters

Think about and provide a description of the most memorable encounter with a foreigner that you have experienced (it may refer to meeting a native speaker of English or a representative of any other culture, here in Poland or abroad). The questions below will help you in completing the task:

– Why is this encounter/situation memorable (significant) to you?
– What happened? Where and When? Who took part?
– How did you react at the time of the event? How did you feel?
– What is your interpretation of this event? What do you think about it now?
– What did you learn from it as a learner?
– What did you learn from this situation as teacher of English?

(Word limit: 300–350)

Form: an essay submitted in paper

7. LIWC2007 Output Variable Information – detailed data presentation: Polish P1 group, Polish P2 group, Turkish group

Category	Abbrev	Examples	Words in category	Validity (judges)	Alpha: Binary/raw	Polish P1 group	Polish P2 group	Turkish group
		Linguistic Processes						
Word count	wc					25085.0	25941.0	18095.0
Words/sentence	wps					20.05	22.23	19.13
Dictionary words	dic					88.43	89.39	87.77
Words>6 letters	sixltr					21.77	22.83	20.39
Total function words	funct		464		.97/.40	58.97	58.01	58.05
Total pronouns	pronoun	I, them, itself	116		.91/.38	16.72	15.45	18.95
Personal pronouns	ppron	I, them, her	70		.88/.20	11.19	9.52	13.67
1st pers singular	i	I, me, mine	12	.52	.62/.44	6.53	5.89	6.25
1st pers plural	we	we, us, our	12		.66/.47	1.49	1.35	2.79
2nd person	you	you, your, thou	20		.73/.34	0.16	0.25	0.57
3rd pers singular	shehe	she, her, him	17		.75/.52	1.81	1.09	2.60
3rd pers plural	they	they, their, they'd	10		.50/.36	1.20	0.94	1.46
Impersonal pronouns	ipron	it, it's, those	46		.78/.46	5.53	5.93	5.28
Articles	article	a, an, the	3		.14/.14	5.94	7.09	5.31
[Common verbs][a]	verb	walk, went, see	383		.97/.42	13.24	12.65	14.01

Auxiliary verbs	auxverb	am, will, have	144		.91/.23	8.23	7.41	7.19
Past tense [a]	past	went, ran, had	145	.79	.94/.75	6.02	5.62	7.01
Present tense [a]	present	is, does, hear	169		.91/.74	4.84	4.96	4.95
Future tense [a]	future	will, gonna	48		.75/.02	0.90	0.79	067
Adverbs	adverb	very, really, quickly	69		.84/.48	4.64	4.79	4.59
Prepositions	prep	to, with, above	60		.88/.35	14.14	13.90	13.10
Conjunctions	conj	and, but, whereas	28		.70/.21	7.08	6.82	7.59
Negations	negate	no, not, never	57		.80/.28	1.52	1.64	0.94
Quantifiers	quant	few, many, much	89		.88/.12	3.52	3.35	2.75
Numbers	number	second, thousand	34		.87/.61	1.04	1.07	1.28
Swear words	swear	damn, piss, fuck	53		.65/.48	0.00	0.00	0.01
Psychological Processes								
Social processes [b]	social	mate, talk, they, child	455		.97/.59	11.58	9.93	15.85
Family	family	daughter, husband, aunt	64	.87	.81/.65	0.41	0.20	0.39
Friends	friend	buddy, friend, neighbor	37	.70	.53/.12	0.24	0.34	0.41
Humans	human	adult, baby, boy	61		.86/.26	1.05	0.97	1.19
Affective processes	affect	happy, cried, abandon	915		.97/.36	4.97	4.60	4.04
Positive emotion	posemo	love, nice, sweet	406	.41	.97/.40	3.30	2.87	3.09
Negative emotion	negemo	hurt, ugly, nasty	499	.31	.97/.61	1.63	1.67	0.93
Anxiety	anx	worried, fearful, nervous	91	.38	.89/.33	0.53	0.46	0.30

Anger	anger	hate, kill, annoyed	184	.22	.92/.55	0.29	0.48	0.12
Sadness	sad	crying, grief, sad	101	.07	.91/.45	0.18	0.13	0.11
Cognitive processes	cogmech	cause, know, ought	730		.97/.37	19.43	19.18	19.03
Insight	insight	think, know, consider	195		.94/.51	4.03	3.75	4.01
Causation	cause	because, effect, hence	108	.44	.88/.26	1.94	1.86	1.82
Discrepancy	discrep	should, would, could	76	.21	.80/.28	1.55	1.35	1.61
Tentative	tentat	maybe, perhaps, guess	155		.87/.13	2.74	2.93	1.92
Certainty	certain	always, never	83		.85/.29	1.56	1.55	0.82
Inhibition	inhib	block, constrain, stop	111		.91/.20	0.37	0.35	0.23
Inclusive	incl	and, with, include	18		.66/.32	5.37	5.23	7.25
Exclusive	excl	but, without, exclude	17		.67/.47	2.53	2.80	1.93
Perceptual processes[c]	percept	observing, heard, feeling	273		.96/.43	2.25	1.93	2.75
See	see	view, saw, seen	72		.90/.43	0.39	0.37	0.57
Hear	hear	listen, hearing	51		.89/.37	1.20	0.96	1.46
Feel	feel	feels, touch	75	.53	.88/.26	0.35	0.38	0.42
Biological processes	bio	eat, blood, pain	567		.95/.53	0.76	0.75	1.44
Body	body	cheek, hands, spit	180		.93/.45	0.23	0.19	0.36
Health	health	clinic, flu, pill	236		.85/.38	0.30	0.24	0.36
Sexual	sexual	horny, love, incest	96		.69/.34	0.02	0.02	0.04
Ingestion	ingest	dish, eat, pizza	111		.86/.68	0.21	0.31	0.66

Relativity	relativ	area, bend, exit, stop	638	.98/.51	11.50	12.16	12.10
Motion	motion	arrive, car, go	168	.96/.41	1.46	1.42	1.67
Space	space	down, in, thin	220	.96/.44	4.98	5.26	4.59
Time	time	end, until, season	239	.94/.58	4.98	5.21	5.80
Personal Concerns							
Work	work	job, majors, xerox	327	.91/.69	3.34	2.61	2.75
Achievement	achieve	earn, hero, win	186	.93/.37	2.10	1.71	1.80
Leisure	leisure	cook, chat, movie	229	.88/.50	0.88	0.79	1.07
Home	home	apartment, kitchen, family	93	.81/.57	0.35	0.19	0.57
Money	money	audit, cash, owe	173	.90/.53	0.45	0.69	0.24
Religion	relig	altar, church, mosque	159	.91/.53	0.09	0.20	0.30
Death	death	bury, coffin, kill	62	.86/.40	0.02	0.03	0.03
Spoken categories							
Assent	assent	agree, OK, yes	30	.59/.41	0.01	0.05	0.05
Nonfluencies	nonflu	er, hm, umm	8	.28/.23	0.09	0.12	0.17
Fillers	filler	blah, Imean, youknow	9	.63/.18	0.13	0.08	0.22
Period					5.37	4.98	6.99
Comma					3.89	4.10	4.27
Colon					0.09	0.33	0.32
Semicolon					0.02	0.04	0.08

Quotation mark	0.06	0.10	0.24
Exclamation	0.05	0.05	0.04
Dash	0.62	0.40	0.18
Quote	0.00	0.02	0.07
Apostroph	0.59	0.46	0.19
Parenthesis	0.11	0.11	0.14
Other punctuation marks	0.09	0.25	0.13
All Punctuation	11.00	10.95	12.79

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Grażyna Kiliańska-Przybyło

Anatomia spotkań interkulturowych
Socjolingwistyczne studium porównawcze

Streszczenie

Książka zatytułowana *Anatomia spotkań interkulturowych. Socjolingwistyczne studium porównawcze* poświęcona została analizie spotkań interkulturowych (sytuacji, podczas których stykamy się z przedstawicielami innych kultur). W dobie globalizacji, zacierania się granic i wysokiej mobilności ludzi spotkanie z Obcym jest koniecznością i wyzwaniem (Bauman 2000; Heyworth et al. 2003; Dervin 2007a, 2007b; Kapuściński 2004). Spotkania interkulturowe są jednakże istotne także z innych względów. Stanowią lustro odbijające zachowanie innych osób, przez co pozwalają zrozumieć siebie samych i kulturę własnego kraju. Nieprzewidywalność oraz indywidualny charakter takich spotkań jest z kolei silnym czynnikiem sprzyjającym refleksji nad tym, co istotne w komunikacji interpersonalnej i interkulturowej.

Część teoretyczna książki przedstawia charakterystykę spotkań interkulturowych oraz opisuje różne wymiary, m.in. językowy, afektywny czy komunikacyjny. W rozdziale tym omówiono również pojęcie kompetencji interkulturowej, jako kluczowej w kontakcie z przedstawicielami innych kultur, oraz zawarto opis barier, które utrudniają lub uniemożliwiają komunikację z Innym. Ze względu na fakt, iż badanie w dużej mierze opiera się na narracjach osobistych jego uczestników, część teoretyczna przedstawia najważniejsze założenia nurtu narracyjnego, skupiając się na cechach tzw. *homo narrans* (człowieka opowiadającego historie).

Część empiryczna opisuje badanie przeprowadzone wśród trzech grup studentów (dwóch polskich – studenci studiów licencjackich i magisterskich filologii angielskiej Uniwerstytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach oraz grupy studentów tureckich filologii angielskiej na Uniwersytecie Çukurova w Adanie; każda z grup liczyła 50 osób). Badanie składało się z kilku etapów. Studenci najpierw uczestniczyli w krótkim treningu interkulturowym, a następnie poproszeni zostali o opisanie znaczącego w ich opinii spotkania z przedstawicielami innych kultur (narracja osobista opisująca zdarzenie krytyczne). Dodatkowo w badaniu zastosowano kwestionariusz oraz skalę wrażliwości interkulturowej.

Wyniki badania wskazują, iż umiejętność radzenia sobie ze spotkaniami interkulturowymi, a co za tym idzie, kompetencją interkulturową, zależy od czynników indywidualnych, stopnia znajomości języka obcego oraz kontekstu socjokulturowego, z którego wywodzą się uczestnicy. Ten ostatni wpływa na charakter i rodzaj kontaktów z przedstawicielami innych kultur, sposób prowadzenia komunikacji czy podejście do

kultury kraju języka ojczystego. Samo spotkanie interkulturowe traktowane było przez jego uczestników jako:
– okazja do komunikowania się w języku docelowym (rozwijanie umiejętności komunikacji interpersonalnej) i jednocześnie sprawdzian własnych umiejętności;
– źródło wiedzy, informacji i ciekawostek z zakresu wiedzy ogólnej na temat kultur innych krajów; źródło nabycia lub poszerzenia wiedzy ogólnej;
– czynnik zwiększający świadomość językową (zwłaszcza na temat kontekstu i użycia języka w sytuacjach uwarunkowanych kulturowo);
– katalizator przyspieszający autorefleksję, a tym samym zwiększający wiedzę uczestników o samych sobie;
– możliwość uświadomienia sobie i weryfikacji stereotypów oraz własnych opinii na temat przedstawicieli różnych kultur.

Grażyna Kiliańska-Przybyło

Anatomie der interkulturellen Treffen
Eine vergleichende soziolinguistische Studie

Zusammenfassung

Das Buch unter dem Titel „Anatomie der interkulturellen Treffen. Eine vergleichende soziolinguistische Studie" befasst sich mit der Analyse interkultureller Treffen (Situationen, wo wir mit den Vertretern von anderen Kulturen konfrontiert werden). Im Zeitalter der Globalisierung, des Verwischens von Grenzen und einer hohen Mobilität der Menschen wird das Treffen mit einem Fremden zur Notwendigkeit und Herausforderung (Bauman 2000; Heyworth et al. 2003; Dervin 2007a, 2007b; Kapuściński 2004). Interkulturelle Treffen sind jedoch aus mehreren anderen Gründen wichtig und nämlich: Sie spiegeln das Verhalten von anderen Menschen wider, wodurch wir uns selbst und die Kultur unseres eigenen Landes verstehen können. Durch die Unvorhersehbarkeit und den individuellen Charakter von solchen Treffen wird wiederum die Reflexion über wichtige Elemente in der interpersonalen und interkulturellen Kommunikation begünstigt.

Im theoretischen Teil des Buches wird die Charakteristik der interkulturellen Treffen dargestellt und ihre verschiedenen Dimensionen, u.a.: auf sprachlichem, affektivem und kommunikativem Gebiet, beschrieben. In diesem Kapitel wurde auch der Begriff „Interkulturelle Kompetenz" als Schlüsselkompetenz beim Kontakt mit den Vertretern von anderen Kulturen besprochen und Hindernisse, die die Kommunikation mit den Fremden schwer oder unmöglich machen, beschrieben. In Anbetracht der Tatsache, dass die Prüfung überwiegend auf den persönlich von Prüfungsteilnehmern erzählten Geschichten beruht, wurden im theoretischen Teil die wichtigsten Voraussetzungen der Erzähltendenz dargestellt, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf die Merkmale vom so genannten „homo narrans" (der Mensch als Geschichtenerzähler) gelegt wird.

Der empirische Teil beschreibt die Prüfung, die unter 3 Gruppen von Studenten durchgeführt wurde (d.h.: unter 2 polnischen Gruppen von Studierenden – Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge für Englische Philologie an der Schlesischen Universität – sowie unter einer Gruppe von türkischen Studierenden der Englischen Philologie an der Universität Çukurova in Adana; jede Gruppe zählte 50 Personen). Die Prüfung bestand aus mehreren Etappen. Zuerst nahmen die Studenten an einem kurzen interkulturellen Training teil, danach wurden sie darum gebeten, das – nach ihrer Ansicht – bedeutende Treffen mit den Vertretern von anderen Kulturen zu beschreiben (eine persönliche Erzählung, die einen kritischen Vorgang beschreibt). Zusätzlich wurde für die Prüfung der Fragebogen und die Skala der interkulturellen Sensibilität verwendet.

Die Prüfergebnisse deuten darauf hin, dass die Fähigkeit zum beidseitig zufriedenstellenden Umgang mit Menschen unterschiedlicher kultureller Orientierung und – was damit verbunden ist – interkulturelle Kompetenz von individuellen Faktoren, Fremdsprachenkompetenzen und vom soziokulturellen Raum, aus dem die Prüfungsteilnehmer stammen, abhängig sind. Der soziokulturelle Kontext erwies sich als wesentlich, weil er den Charakter und die Art der Kontakte mit Repräsentanten anderer Kulturen, die Art der Kommunikation, den Ansatz für die Kultur des Muttersprachlandes beeinflusst hat. Das interkulturelle Treffen war für die Teilnehmer:

– eine gute Gelegenheit, sich in der Zielsprache (Weiterentwicklung der interpersonellen Kommunikation) zu verständigen und gleichzeitig eigene Kenntnisse zu prüfen,

– eine Quelle von Wissen, Informationen und Neuigkeiten im Bereich des allgemeines Wissens über Kulturen von anderen Ländern; eine gute Gelegenheit, allgemeines Wissen zu erwerben oder zu erweitern und

– ein Faktor zur Erhöhung des sprachlichen Bewusstseins (insbesondere in Bezug auf den Kontext und den Gebrauch der Sprache in den kulturell bedingten Situationen),

– ein Katalysator zur Förderung der Autoreflexion und somit zur Erhöhung des Wissens von Teilnehmern über sich selbst,

– eine Möglichkeit der Bewusstmachung sowie Beurteilung und Prüfung von Stereotypen und eigenen Meinungen über die Repräsentanten von anderen Kulturen.

About this book