

Paula Budzyńska

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń  
paulabudzynska@doktorant.umk.pl

## The view(s) on intercultural competence at a European and a national level – a case study

**Abstract.** Owing to the growing importance of the notion of “intercultural competence”<sup>1</sup> (hereafter “IC”), especially in the field of foreign language education, the present paper aims at analysing the view(s) on this concept at both a European and a national level. The research at the former level will be based on the content analysis of the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001). Particular emphasis will be put on the features of IC and its interrelations with other language-related competences and categories, such as knowledge, or skills. Subsequently, the outcomes of the performed analysis will be compared with the view(s) on IC included in a selected English language textbook (hereafter “ELT”) for early school education in Poland. The research not only illustrates the complexity of IC, but it also highlights its elements at each level. Finally, possible solutions aimed at providing greater coherence between the two perspectives can be offered.

**Keywords:** early school education; English language textbooks; European level; foreign language education; intercultural competence; national level; the *CEFR*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Owing to terminological ambiguity and the fact that certain researchers, such as Parmenter (2003), Fantini (2005), or Reid (2012) refer in their studies related to the *CEFR* to “intercultural communicative competence”, whereas others, including Beacco (2010), or Huber (2012), to “intercultural competence”, in the present paper, the term “intercultural competence” will be used as an umbrella term that covers both of these concepts.

## Introduction

One of the issues concerning intercultural studies is terminological ambiguity, since certain terms, for example “interculturality” or “intercultural competence” are still mostly vague due to several definitions/models offered by scholars over the last three decades. To illustrate this point, it is worth mentioning that IC has been the subject of studies conducted by such scholars as Bennett (1986/1993), Byram (1997), Chamberlain (2000), Wiseman (2002), Gudykunst (2003), Risager (2007), Deardoff (2009), Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), Weber (2012), and Dai and Chen (2014), to name but several. In addition, experts working for such institutions as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE), the European Centre for Modern Languages, and the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Fondazione Cariplo, including Lázár (2003), Parmenter (2003), Fantini (2005), Boecker and Ulama (2008), Beacco (2011), and Huber and Reynolds (2014), have analysed IC in their publications.

Furthermore, as Parmenter (2003, p. 20) argues, in the twenty-first century, foreign language education in Europe has been dominated by “intercultural aspects”. Consequently, the notion of IC has been described in the documentation concerning teaching/learning foreign languages at the European level, with the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) as the main reference document in this respect. Hence, this present paper aims at analysing the views on IC that the *CEFR* encompasses, and then examines them at the national level. To be exact, the ways in which the *CEFR*’s official recommendations are interpreted in an ELT for early school education in Poland are described. Not only does the research diagnose the manner in which European guidelines are interpreted at a national level, but also suggests potential measures that could ensure more compliance between the two perspectives.

### **The view on IC in the *CEFR* (Council of Europe 2001) – a European level**

The following section is devoted to analysing the view on IC in the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001). It consists of three parts: a description of the already conducted studies into the matter in question, the methodology of the research carried out by the author of this paper, and the presentation of the outcomes.

## **Studies into the view on IC in the *CEFR***

In the recent years, studies into the description of IC in the *CEFR* have been carried out, among others, by Beacco (2010, 2011) and Reid (2012). The former author advances that in order to point out the “descriptors of cultural and intercultural competences (as the ability to understand and interpret one’s own social environment or societies of which one has little or no knowledge)”, one should scrutinise the information on existential competence included in the document with the support of “the available frameworks of reference for cultural/intercultural competences”, such as the models created by Bennet (1986/1993), Byram (1997) and the CARAP (2011, p. 4). As Beacco underscores, these models are organised around specific categories or levels (2011, p. 4). Furthermore, the author emphasises a close relation between IC and plurilingual competence (2010, p. 8) as well as between IC and existential competence (2011, p. 11) in the *CEFR*.

In contrast, what Reid (2012) points out is, for example, that “[t]he *CEFR* includes intercultural aspects to all the related components (knowledge, existential competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence)” (2012, p. 144). Furthermore, the scholar puts forward that “the *CEFR* does not specify [intercultural communicative competences] individually for each level of proficiency” (2012, p. 147). Instead, it offers only the overall view on competences and “the intercultural communicative competences [...] contained within” them (2012, p. 148). In 2015, Reid and Kovacikova provide a similar argument – that the *CEFR* offers only a “general instruction” on developing IC, and to the valid documents at the national level, including the Slovak *Core curriculum*, it contributes even less (2015, p. 940). Thus, in order to make the analysis of the view on IC as objective as possible, the author of the present paper decided to focus only on these excerpts of the *CEFR* referring directly to interculturality.

## **Methodology**

The analysis of the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001) performed in the course of this study is based on the principles of semantic content analysis, which aims at studying “the thematic content of text” (Brown and Rodgers, 2002, p. 55) and has been used, for instance, by Diaz, Alarcon and Ortiz (2015), who, in turn, followed such scholars as Brown and Rodgers (2002, 2003), Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003), and Corbetta (2007) (Diaz, Alarcon, & Ortiz, 2015, p. 174–175). However, the method has been modified

in order to meet the objective of this paper. Hence, to scrutinise the view on IC in the *CEFR*, the following steps need to be taken:

Step 1: Search the analysed text with regard to the occurrence of the word “intercultural”.

Step 2: Ensure that the context in which the given word occurs is meaningful.

Step 3: Indicate phrases including the given word and categorize them into cognitive, pragmatic and affective.

The selection of these particular categories can be justified by the fact that even though the very terms utilised by the authors of the models of IC may differ to some extent, a significant number of them, including those developed by Byram (1997), Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), Wiseman (2002), Fantini and Tirmizi (2006), Deardoff (2009), and Huber and Reynolds (2014), distinguish three main components of IC, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes. According to Huber (2012, p. 34), these elements refer to the cognitive, pragmatic, and affective dimensions of IC respectively. Furthermore, as Boecker and Ulama (2008, p. 4) put forward, the “prevalent definitions of intercultural competence in western research (...) in general refer to intercultural competence as consisting of a combination of affective, behavioural and cognitive factors”. Therefore, as the authors claim, this definition can be applied to both theoretical and empirical studies (2008, p. 4). For the aforementioned reasons, these very dimensions constitute the main categories in the model.

Step 4: Analyse the information on IC linked with the distinguished phrases. Pay attention to such issues as the elements of IC, or relations between IC and other language-related competences.

Step 5: Having carried out the analysis in accordance with these steps, answer the question – what is the view on IC in the examined document?

### **The outcomes of the analysis of the *CEFR* (Council of Europe, 2001)**

The description of the study presented below is organised around particular steps of the methodology demonstrated above.

Step 1: Having scrutinised the text of the *CEFR*, it can be noticed that the word “intercultural” appears in it 27 times.

Step 2: After checking the context in which the word in question occurs, three instances are to be excluded from the analysis as they appear in titles in References.

Step 3: In cognitive terms, it can be stated that the remaining 24 appearances of the word “intercultural” form 12 types, owing to their repetitiveness. Three of them, namely “intercultural competence” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 23, 104); “intercultural component” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 148), and “interculturality” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43), can be regarded as belonging to the superordinate category as a result of their most general character. The others can be divided into the aforementioned categories in the following manner:

Table 1. Dimensions of IC present in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001)

Cognitive dimension	Pragmatic dimension	Affective dimension
Intercultural misunderstanding (p. 105, 161)	Intercultural communication (p. 11) Intercultural skills (p. 104, 121, 148, 158, 161) Intercultural interaction (p. 168) Intercultural discussion (p. 173) Intercultural relations (p. 173, 176)	Intercultural approach (p. 1) Intercultural experiences (p. 5) Intercultural awareness (p. 51, 103 x 4, 160)

Step 4: In order to present the view on IC in the *CEFR*, it is worth providing some information surrounding the phrases indicated in Table 1. With regard to “intercultural misunderstanding”, it is crucial to mention that the manner of handling it is regarded as a part of intercultural skills and know-how (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 105). Furthermore, the attitude towards solving problems of this type is one of the affective factors influencing the learner’s characteristics (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 161).

When the information on intercultural communication included in the *CEFR* is to be analysed, it can be observed that it is closely related to general competences and the knowledge of “religious beliefs, taboos, [or] assumed common history”, among others (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 11). What the authors also emphasise is that this knowledge can be located at two levels; a more specific and a general one (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 11).

The most frequent phrase within the pragmatic dimension of IC is “intercultural skills”; an umbrella term for such abilities as “the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other”, “cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 104–105), or “the ability to cope with what is implicit in the discourse

of native speakers” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 161). It can be observed that developing intercultural skills mainly concerns understanding the relations between one’s own and the target culture, as well as the conditions for effective communication between people from divergent backgrounds. According to the authors, all these skills are essential for developing IC at the proper level Council of Europe (2001, p. 104). Moreover, in the document, special attention is paid to the relation between the development of intercultural skills and sociocultural knowledge. What is highlighted is that European culture is not as homogeneous as it appears to be and, hence, the manner of presenting the target culture is to be thoroughly examined (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 148). Aside from that, intercultural abilities defined as “mediating between the two cultures” are indispensable in the process of accomplishing a task, along with certain “general competences”, “sociocultural knowledge”, or skills, including learning and practical ones (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 158). Intercultural abilities defined as “mediating between the two cultures” are indispensable in the process of accomplishing a task, along with certain “general competences”, “sociocultural knowledge”, or skills, including learning and practical ones (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 158).

The remaining elements belonging to the pragmatic dimension of IC seem to be worth mentioning as well. Intercultural interaction is closely related to plurilingual and pluricultural competence as it is this competence that enables taking part in this type of interaction (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). As the authors claim, it is essential for people to use their knowledge of languages and other cultures in such encounters (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). Significantly, in the *CEFR*, the aforementioned competence is perceived as “a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). By contrast, intercultural discussion and relations are presented in the school context. The former is feasible thanks to “contact with the other languages in the curriculum and taking media-related texts as its main focus” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 173), whereas creating the latter can be a result of international student exchanges (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 173). In addition, as the *CEFR* states, it is possible to solve potential problems concerning intercultural relations thanks to applying even minor “cross-curricular modules” in foreign languages in the curricula (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 175–176). Apart from that, in the document, intercultural relations are linked with existential competences due to their “culture-related” character (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 12).

The last distinguished group of phrases encompasses the intercultural approach, experiences, and awareness. The first concept is related to the

manner of developing learners' personality and "sense of identity" thanks to providing them with opportunities for encountering "otherness in language and culture" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). What the authors also highlight is that this is only one factor influencing learners' overall development (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1). Noticeably, the intercultural approach is inextricably bound up with intercultural experiences.

Finally, considerable attention in the document is paid to the increase of intercultural awareness. The authors advance that this can result from developing both "linguistic and cultural competences" in the native and a foreign language that impact each other (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43). It can also contribute to the increase of intercultural skills, know-how and plurilingual competence (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43), which, in turn, facilitates the development of the learner's "more complex personality" as well as further language learning abilities (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43). In addition, it makes them more willing to gain "new cultural experiences", it supports their acquiring "general, non-language-specific competences", and it helps them to complete tasks, while lowering their cognitive effort concurrently (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43, 148, 160). As the authors claim, a high level of intercultural awareness helps learners to "bridge [...] differences in values and beliefs, politeness conventions", or "social expectations" too (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 51). What needs to be underlined is again the link between the components of IC put forward by the authors of the *CEFR*, according to whom, intercultural awareness comprises "[k]nowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation [...] between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community' " (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 103).

At step 5, on the basis of the performed analysis, it is feasible to answer the question posed above. Initially, it can be remarked that in comparison with other competences, quite limited space in the document has been devoted to IC. In these excerpts in which it is described, the authors seem to have put considerable emphasis on its pragmatic and affective dimensions, particularly intercultural skills and awareness. By contrast, the cognitive dimension of IC appears to have been rather neglected.

Nevertheless, the provided information on this concept indicates its complex nature. Not only is this complexity reflected in the fact that IC has three aforementioned dimensions, but also because each of them includes a few elements. Importantly, all of them are essential for the proper development of this competence. Moreover, it can be observed that the elements of the distinguished categories are linked, not only within the same category, which can be illustrated, among others, with intercultural

experiences and approach, but also between them. The latter connection is transparent, for example, in the case of intercultural misunderstanding and intercultural skills, intercultural skills and intercultural awareness, or intercultural awareness and both linguistic and cultural competences.

### **The view on IC in a selected ELT for early school education in Poland – a national level**

Having presented the view on IC in the *CEFR*, it is worth studying the manner in which the indicated assumptions have been interpreted at a national level. In the present paper, the investigation is based on the examination of one of ELTs utilised at the level of early school education in Poland. Significantly, the content of the ELTs in use in this country is (at least theoretically) correlated with the *CEFR*, as the *Core Curriculum* (2017) refers to the former directly as the source of guidelines included in the very document (2017, p. 9).

### **Studies into IC in ELTs at the level of early school education**

Although certain scholars, including Komorowska (e.g. 2008), Iluk (e.g. 2012), or Stec (e.g. 2016), have published studies into teaching foreign languages at the level of primary school that referred to, for instance, methodology, official recommendations, foreign language lessons, or designing syllabi, they have not scrutinised specifically the view on IC in ELTs. One of the papers concerning the influence of textbooks on the development of young learners' intercultural awareness has been published by Kovacikova and Reid (2017). Yet, the main aim of the work was to evaluate selected ELTs used in Slovakian primary schools, and choose the one that seemed to be the most closely adjusted to the pupils' learning conditions and needs. The question on the relation between the examined textbooks and the increase of children's intercultural awareness was only one of the posed research questions. Hence, the space for more research into this matter is obvious and inviting.

## **Methodology**

The analysis of a selected ELT is to be performed on the basis of the model developed for studying the *CEFR* that has been presented above. What needs to be underlined is that introducing certain changes to the procedure is indispensable owing to the fact that in textbooks, it is not feasible to find theoretical assumptions regarding IC. Therefore, searching for phrases, such as “intercultural approach”, or “intercultural communication” seems pointless. Nevertheless, the content of an ELT can be examined with regard to three already indicated dimensions of IC, namely (1) cognitive, (2) pragmatic, and (3) affective, referring to (1) knowledge and understanding, (2) skills and actions, and (3) attitudes and awareness respectively. On the grounds of the issues linked with IC extracted from the *CEFR* and demonstrated in Table 1, including “intercultural interaction”, “intercultural skills”, or “intercultural awareness”, to mention but a few, as well as their characteristics already delineated in this paper, it is possible to identify particular elements in the content of a selected ELT that reflect in practice theoretical statements on IC made at European level and classify them into one of the above-mentioned dimensions of the concept in question. Furthermore, adopting such method enables both pointing out potential divergences between the two studied levels and putting forward solutions aiming at making them more coherent.

Aside from that, taking into account the aforementioned statement made by Huber and Reynolds, who highlighted a close relation between IC and intercultural education, it appears to be worth considering whether certain concepts that intercultural education encompasses, namely “culture; diversity, otherness, difference; multiculturalism, pluriculturalism, interculturalism; stereotype; majority and minority cultures; exclusion vs inclusion; interim worlds; culture and language” (Huber, 2012, p. 22–30) are reflected in the examined ELT as well. Significantly, as shown above in the description of the view(s) on IC in the *CEFR*, these concepts are highlighted in the document too (see, e.g. Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 1, 12, 103). Thus, it can be argued that such references could increase the value of the analysed textbook with respect to developing pupils’ IC.

What appears to be justified in order to present the outcomes of the analysis of a selected ELT in possibly most transparent manner is also posing specific research questions. Therefore, on the basis of the conducted study into the notion of IC in the *CEFR*, theoretical background (including publications by Huber and Reynolds), and secondary sources (e.g. Lange

2011), the following set of evaluation questions has been created by the author of this paper:

- I. The manner of presenting other cultures:
  1. In what way(s) are other cultures presented in the textbook? Are the pupils given the opportunity to build a positive attitude towards other cultures? (a)
  2. Are the pupils given the opportunity to compare their local culture with other cultures? (c)
- II. Learners and activities:
  3. Are the pupils given the opportunity to increase their knowledge of foreign countries/cultures? Is this knowledge limited to traditions and celebrations? (c)
  4. Are the pupils given the opportunity to learn how to react in intercultural situations? (p)
  5. Are the pupils given the opportunity to act out intercultural situations? (p)

What needs to be emphasised is that the demonstrated set of questions refers to the dimensions of IC utilised for both analyses performed in the course of this study: (c) – cognitive; (a) – affective, and (p) – pragmatic.

### **The outcomes of the analysis of a selected ELT for early school education in Poland**

It needs to be emphasised that owing to the intended pilot nature of the research and space limitations imposed on this paper, the analysis of only one ELT utilised at the level of early school education in Poland will be presented below. Still, the following analysis aims at visualising the methodology and demonstrating the manner of interpreting at a national level the statements on IC included in the *CEFR*, which facilitates the formulation of at least preliminary conclusions and of solutions to potential problems related to divergences between the two levels.

The scrutinised textbook, that is *Young Treetops 3<sup>2</sup>* by Sarah M. Howell and Lisa Kester-Dodgson, is targeted at third-grade pupils of primary schools. The selection of this position was predetermined by the fact that

---

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noticing that despite the educational reform in Poland in 2017, in the school year 2017/2018, so at the time, when the present paper was written, ELTs for third-grade pupils were the same as before the reform. Hence, the analysis of the selected ELT is justified.

it was published by a well-known publishing house and, theoretically, should meet high standards. Moreover, it is one of the most recent titles on the market of ELTs for early school education in Poland – published in 2016. Another reason was the fact that it is dedicated to third-grade pupils. Thus, its content is expected to be more rounded and worth being subjected to the analysis. Finally, on the rear cover of *Young Treetops 3*, information can be found that this position enables pupils to learn about the life of their peers living in English-speaking countries.

The outcomes of the performed analysis are presented in the following Table:

Table 2. The outcomes of the analysis

Cognitive dimension (knowledge, understanding)	Pragmatic dimension (skills, actions)	Affective dimension (attitudes, awareness)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- increasing pupils' intercultural knowledge; presenting, e.g.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schools in Britain (p. 42)</li> <li>• meals in Britain (p. 44)</li> <li>• Harry's daily routine (p. 56)</li> <li>• the names of countries, such as India, Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Spain, Poland, Ukraine, China, Egypt, France (p. 4–5)</li> <li>• Christmas traditions (p. 80)</li> <li>• St. Valentine's Day (p. 81)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduction (p. 5)</li> <li>- asking and answering questions about the basic personal information (p. 6–7)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comparing daily routines: Josh's typical day + the task for describing one's day</li> <li>- children from various countries present their activities/hobbies (e.g. p. 8, 20, 26, 56, 61)</li> <li>- pictures showing pupils of various origins (e.g. 5,6,7, 13)</li> <li>- a positive image of foreign cultures: celebrities from abroad described as "a brilliant tennis player" (p. 32); "my favourite singer" (p. 32); "he is gorgeous" (p. 32); "he's got lots of medals" (p. 32); "she is a super teacher" (p. 38)</li> <li>- children from various countries talk to each other (p. 6)</li> <li>- children from various countries are working together during the lesson (p. 7)</li> <li>- children from various countries play together in a performance (p. 13)</li> <li>- children from various countries cooperate in order to complete tasks (p. 17, 25, 29, 73, 77)</li> <li>- blog entries about the best friends (p. 14)</li> <li>- children from various countries spend their free time together (p. 25)</li> </ul>

Carrying out the analysis of *Young Treetops 3* in accordance with the applied methodology allows answering the posed research questions, which is demonstrated below.

I. The manner of presenting other cultures:

1. In what way(s) are other cultures presented in the textbook? Are the pupils given the opportunity to build a positive attitude towards other cultures?

Noticeably, in the analysed textbook, the foreign culture is depicted in a favourable way. In the pictures, children from other countries are smiling and cooperating with the Polish pupils. Furthermore, the authors appear to highlight the fact that children abroad have similar experiences to their peers in Poland. Owing to the fact that the textbook provides a favourable depiction of foreign cultures, pupils are also given certain opportunities to build a positive attitude towards them. For instance, there are texts about foreign celebrities or sportsmen described in superlatives.

2. Are the pupils given the opportunity to compare their local culture with other cultures?

It needs to be emphasised that no activities in the examined ELT include instructions giving the pupils a direct opportunity to compare their local culture with foreign ones. Yet, certain activities could certainly be extended by teachers, and thus, pupils could do this. While working with *Young Treetops*, pupils could compare their national culture specifically with the British, for instance in the topics devoted to castles, schools, meals, hobbies/interests, or typical day activities (pp. 18–20, 42–44).

II. Learners and activities:

3. Are the pupils given the opportunity to increase their knowledge of foreign countries/cultures? Is this knowledge limited to traditions and celebrations?

While analysing *Young Treetops 3*, it can be noticed that pupils using this textbook are given several opportunities to increase their knowledge of foreign countries/cultures, not only in terms of holidays and traditions. It is worth underlining that the textbook comprises activities aiming at developing children's knowledge not only of Great Britain, but also of other countries in the world. Looking at Table 2, it can be remarked that children can learn, for example, about famous people from abroad, including sports persons (p. 36), the location of particular countries on the map, and cultural matters, such as meals or schools (pp. 42–44).

4. Are the pupils given the opportunity to learn how to react in intercultural situations?

As demonstrated in Table 2, *Young Treetops* provides pupils with a few opportunities to learn how to react in intercultural situations, such as when meeting a child from another country. For instance, children can learn to introduce themselves and answer basic questions. Although the interactions presented in the textbook are rather general and could be perceived as ordinary chit chat with Polish peers, their intercultural character is underscored by the images of children from Poland and abroad that illustrate the presented dialogues.

5. Are the pupils given the opportunity to act out intercultural situations?

Noticeably, this question is strictly bound to the previous one. Owing to the fact that the authors of *Young Treetops* paid attention to giving pupils the opportunity to learn how to react in intercultural situations, such activities are followed by more practical ones in which children are expected to act out the given dialogues with their colleagues. Thanks to this, it is indeed more probable that during international encounters, they will be able to interact properly.

## Conclusion

Starting with the rather general remarks on IC comprised in the *CEFR*, it can be noticed that this document puts particular emphasis on the pragmatic dimension of the idea in question. By contrast, the analysis of *Young Treetops 3* has revealed that at a national level, these are mainly the affective and cognitive aspects of IC that are highlighted. It can be justified to certain extent by the fact that according to the Polish *Core Curriculum* and a few widely recognized curricula for teaching English, one of the most essential purposes of foreign language education at the level of early school education in Poland is developing both children's awareness of and positive attitude towards foreign cultures and languages (e.g., MEN, 2017, p. 38; Bogucka, 2017, p. 6, 14; Kęłowska, 2017, p. 6; Studzińska et al., 2017, p. 5). Nevertheless, what it results in is the apparent negligence of the pragmatic dimension of IC in the examined ELT and, hence, its divergence from the *CEFR*.

Due to the fact that new ELTs for the third-graders have not yet been published since the last educational reform in Poland<sup>3</sup>, it is timely to formulate a few recommendations that will enable the creation of textbooks more compliant with the *CEFR* and that give pupils more possibilities of developing their IC. As indicated above, the pragmatic dimension of IC is particularly overlooked in the examined ELT. Therefore, it would be beneficial to add some activities in which children practice making small talk not limited only to introductions, or to asking and answering the most basic questions. Furthermore, activities aiming at overcoming stereotypes (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 105) or enabling pupils to learn the manners of overcoming intercultural misunderstandings (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 105) could be of great value. Aside from that, even though the cognitive dimension of IC is seemingly well developed, the emphasis is rather put on familiarizing pupils with everyday living conditions and festivals. They could benefit more if activities connected with interpersonal relations (Council of Europe, 2001: 102) between children of various origins, their values and body language as well as social conventions in other countries (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 103) were added to the textbook.

It needs to be borne in mind that the present paper focuses on analysing the view(s) on IC at a European and a national level, and on suggesting potential improvements. Yet it does not concern the methodology of teaching English and hence, no specific examples of activities are provided above. Arguably, the authors of ELTs should take into consideration also the most recent publication by the Council of Europe, that is the *CEFR Companion Volume* (2017), in order to make the approach towards IC included in textbooks more compliant with the view at the European level.

## References

- Beacco, J. C. (2011). *The cultural and intercultural dimensions of language teaching: current practice and prospects*, Seminar on curriculum convergences for plurilingual and intercultural education, Strasbourg, 29–30 November 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/lang>.
- Beacco, J. C. (et al.) (2010). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

---

<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing this paper (Spring 2018), the list of ELTs approved by the Polish Ministry of Education ([https://podreczniki.men.gov.pl/wykaz\\_dopuszczone\\_lista5.php](https://podreczniki.men.gov.pl/wykaz_dopuszczone_lista5.php)) did not include textbooks targeted at the third-grade pupils.

- Bennett, M. (1986). "A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(2), 179–95.
- Bennett, M. (1993). "Towards a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity." In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the Intercultural Experience* (pp. 21–71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Boecker, M., & Ulama, L. (2008). *Intercultural Competence – The key competence in the 21st century?* Retrieved from <https://www.ngobg.info/bg/documents/49/726bertelsmanninterculturalcompetences.pdf>.
- Bogucka, M. (2017). *Program nauczania języka angielskiego dla klas I–III zgodny z podstawą programową z 14 lutego 2017*. Warszawa: Pearson Longman.
- Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Chamberlain, J. R. (2000). An Introduction to Intercultural Communication. In D. Utley (Ed.), *The Culture Pack* (pp. 7–9). York: York Associates.
- Corbetta, P. (2007). *Metodología y Técnicas de Investigación Social*. Madrid: McGraw Hill.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Retrieved from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf).
- Council of Europe. (2017). *The CEFR Companion Volume*. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learningteaching/168074a4e2>.
- Dai, X., & Chen, G. (Eds.). (2014). *Intercultural Communication Competence: Conceptualization and its Development in Cultural Contexts and Interactions*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Diaz, C., & Alarcón, P., & Ortiz, M. (2015). "A Case Study on EFL Teachers' Beliefs About the Teaching and Learning of English in Public Education." *Porta Linguarum*, 23, 171–186.
- Deardorff, D. K. (Ed.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Fantini, A. (2005). *About Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Construct*. Retrieved from <http://federazioneil.org/documents/AppendixE.pdf>.
- Gudykunst, B. (Ed.). (2003). *Cross-cultural and intercultural communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Howell, S. M., & Kester-Dodgson, L. (2016). *Young Treetops 3*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huber, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Intercultural competence for all*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Huber, J., & Reynolds, C. (Eds.). (2014). *Developing intercultural competence through education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Iluk, J. (2012). „Zasady nauczania dzieci języków obcych metodą narracyjną.” In K. Grzywka (Ed.), *Kultura – Literatura – Język. Pogranicza komparatystyki*.

- Tom poświęcony Lechowi Kolago* (pp. 1601–1611). Warszawa: Instytut Germanistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Kęłbowska, M. (2017). *Program nauczania języka angielskiego. Kurs dla uczniów klas 1–3 szkoły podstawowej zgodny z nową podstawą programową obowiązującą od 2017 roku*. Warszawa: Express Publishing & Egis.
- Komorowska, H. (2008). Controversies in Teaching English to Young Learners. The Polish Solution. In M. Dooly & D. Eastment (Eds.), *How We're Going About It. Teachers' Voices in Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning Languages* (pp. 251–261). Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Lange, K. (2011). *Perspectives on Intercultural Competence A Textbook Analysis and an Empirical Study of Teachers' and Students' Attitudes*. (MA thesis). Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin. Retrieved from [http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/docs/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUDOCSS\\_derivate\\_000000001804/Perspectives\\_on\\_Intercultural\\_Competence.pdf](http://www.diss.fu-berlin.de/docs/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUDOCSS_derivate_000000001804/Perspectives_on_Intercultural_Competence.pdf).
- Lázár, I. (Ed.). (2003). *Incorporating intercultural communicative competence in language teacher education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, European Centre for Modern Languages.
- MEN. (2017). *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 lutego 2017 r.w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły podstawowej, w tym dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym, kształcenia ogólnego dla branżowej szkoły I stopnia, kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły specjalnej przysposabiającej do pracy oraz kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły policealnej*. Retrieved from <http://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/du/2017/356/1>.
- Parmenter, L. (2003). *Intercultural communicative competence* [1]. Retrieved from <https://sites.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.bilash/Best%20of%20Bilash/intercultural%20competence.pdf>.
- Reid, E. (2012). “Compatibility of the National Curriculum in Slovakia with the CEFR with respect to Intercultural Education.” In B. Horváthová (Ed.), *New Directions in Teaching Foreign Languages* (pp. 138–157). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.
- Reid, E. (2015). “Techniques Developing Intercultural Communicative Competences in English Language Lessons.” *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186, 939–943.
- Reid, E., & Kovacikova, E. (2017). “How to choose the right English language textbook?” *Problemy Wczesnej Edukacji*, 36, 87–98.
- Risager, K. (2007). *Language and Culture Pedagogy: From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Spitzberg, B., & Changnon, G. (2009). “Conceptualizing intercultural competence.” In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (pp. 2–52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stec, M. (2016). Ilustracja jako narzędzie w materiałach testujących znajomość języka angielskiego u dzieci. In D. Gabryś-Barker & R. Kalamarz (Eds.), *Ocenianie*

- i pomiar biegłości językowej. Wybrane aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne* (pp. 27–42). Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Studzińska, I., Mędel, A., Kondro, M. & Piotrowska, E. (2017). *Program nauczania języka angielskiego zgodny z Podstawą Programową – Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 lutego 2017 r. – dla I etapu edukacyjnego, Szkoła Podstawowa, klasy 1–3*. Warszawa: Macmillan.
- Weber, S. (2012). *Measuring Intercultural Competence Within Vocational Education*. Retrieved from [https://www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/UFH\\_RD2012Vocational11.pdf](https://www.ufhrd.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/UFH_RD2012Vocational11.pdf).
- Wiseman, R. L. (2002). “Intercultural communication competence.” In W. B. Gudykunst, & B. Mody (Eds.), *Handbook of international and intercultural communication* (pp. 207–224). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wilkinson, D., & Birmingham, P. (2003). *Using Research Instruments: A guide for researchers*. NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

#### **Internet sources:**

- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/the-founding-principles-of-plurilingual-and-intercultural-education>
- <https://en.unesco.org/UNESCO-EU-Partnership>