Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis and Intercultural Education in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to bring about the role a contrastive approach called Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis can play in the design and the implementation of intercultural education activities in the language classroom. The author briefly describes the methodology of Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis in research and connects this methodology with intercultural education. She further explains how to proceed in a language and intercultural education classroom, step by step, using concrete examples. A final discussion concerns the controversial goal of investigating cultures on the level of ethno-linguistic communities by means of comparison in intercultural research and education.

Keywords: *discourse analysis, cross-cultural approach, intercultural education, intercultural competence, foreign language learning*

Introduction

In a context of high international mobility and the integration of citizens into relatively new political configurations such as the European Union, it is now common to discuss the acquisition of 'intercultural citizenship', which 'focuses on competences rather than identities' (Byram 2008:157). Intercultural competence can be defined as involving 'attitudes', 'skills of interpreting and relating' and 'skills of discovery and interaction' (p. 69) and can be achieved by means of intercultural education conducted during compulsory schooling. This area of education is often linked to language teaching and learning. In fact, language study can be considered a place of 'tertiary socialisation' (Byram 1989), which embodies the idea that teachers and others can help learners to understand new concepts (beliefs, values and behaviours) through the acquisition of a new language, new concepts which, being juxtaposed with those of the learners' other language(s), challenge the taken-for-granted nature of their existing concepts. (Byram 2008:113-114).

Challenging existing concepts is necessary in intercultural education since '[w]hat makes acting interculturally different from being bicultural is the issue of conscious awareness' (Byram 2008:72; see also Abdallah-Pretceille 2003:10; Guilherme 2002:130).

The mere acquisition of a new language is not enough to build intercultural competence and language teachers need a specific methodology to address 'culture', defined as the shared beliefs, values and behaviors on the level of an 'ethno-linguistic community' (Beacco 1992:17). Within a series of possibilities, contrastive approaches (see Castellotti 2008:265-266) can help to attain this goal. For Byram (2008:188), the focus on comparison is 'the most important difference between citizenship education and education for intercultural citizenship', since it 'serves as an epistemological tool for "making the familiar strange and the strange familiar" /…/, rais[ing] to consciousness that which is too familiar and taken for granted, whilst making the unfamiliar apprehensible'.

The purpose of this paper is to bring about how a contrastive approach called Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis [1] (CCDA; von Münchow 2004, 2010) can play a role in the design and the implementation of intercultural education activities in the language classroom. I will first briefly describe the methodology of CCDA in research. Then, using concrete examples, I will further explain how to incorporate it, step by step, in a language and intercultural education classroom. Finally, I will discuss the controversial goal of investigating national cultures by means of comparison in intercultural research and education.

Methodology and data

Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis in intercultural research

Not every contrastive approach is trustworthy and worthwhile. Contrastive research must be based on a well-established and explicit methodology, which itself should rely on well defined and contextualized categories. Interpretation must be preceded by a precise description of corpora whose construction must be based on a solid *tertium comparationis*. It must be clearly stated how exactly the results of the contrastive analysis can be used in intercultural education. All of this is the case in an approach I call CCDA.

It is thus important to briefly present CCDA in its original research-oriented context [2] before discussing its role in intercultural education. CCDA can be placed in the field of linguistics, at the crossroads of (French) discourse analysis and text linguistics. It deals with descriptive and interpretive comparison of discourse genres (television news programs, literature textbooks, internet newsgroups, parental guidebooks, etc.) in two or more different ethnolinguistic communities. Once we have described the enunciative, semantic and compositional traits in the documents belonging to a genre (such as the positioning of the addresser and the addressee, representation of speech, designation and characterization, recurrent themes, text types and structures, etc.) we can infer – through an act of interpretation – the function of the genre and certain beliefs and values which are circulating in the ethnolinguistic communities that produced the genre. Information from non-linguistic disciplines, chosen according to the discourse genre that is being analyzed (e.g. history, sociology, psychology, educational sciences, etc.) can help to bring about interpretive hypotheses on values and beliefs and on the origins of these values and beliefs.

The concept of 'discourse genre' is particularly useful in a cross-cultural approach since it brings about results on the level of a group smaller than an ethno-linguistic community. It is then only the accumulation of analyses that allows the researcher to articulate different results and to establish hypotheses on cultural elements beyond the discourse genre level in order to reach the level of ethno-linguistic communities. However, the relevance of this level is not presupposed by CCDA; it needs to be proven by the coherence of the articulation of results from the discourse genre level. Moreover, I commonly distinguish different 'contrastive pairs' when analyzing data from a discourse genre, i.e. instead of limiting the comparison to French and German television news programs and parental guidebooks I also compare news programs from private and public channels, guidebooks written by female and male authors, etc. Individual differences between parental guidebooks or literature textbooks by different authors are taken into account as well, which shows the range of possibilities authors have within a discourse genre and also the possible evolution of a genre, which can be further investigated by confronting data from different periods of time (see von Münchow 2005). This multifold comparison helps to avoid a culturalist attitude and introduces multiple factors into the interpretation process.

CCDA is therefore based on a systematic analysis of linguistic markers in a representative and comprehensive data set and takes a double linguistic stand on intercultural education in language learning. Not only does it deal with language as the language class does in general, but the linguistic basis of this approach also serves the aim to ensure a solid empirical foundation for the comparison, which it absolutely needs in order to avoid the mere reproduction of stereotypes. In fact, Zarate (2008:176) regrets that linguistic activities enabling students to compare different cultures often lack 'sociological relevance' ('pertinence sociologique'), which is not the case in activities implemented by CCDA, given the systematic analysis of large data sets. Moreover, the results of the different analyses I conducted

correspond, at times, to the opposite of common stereotypes. Ideological inconsistencies within the data sets (see von Münchow, 2007 on parental guidebooks) can also appear, helping students to understand – when the analyses are used in intercultural education – that cultures are never homogeneous but always carry different possibilities of expression and even inner contradictions.

Beyond demonstrating how to proceed when using CCDA in intercultural education, section 3 will also show how research is conducted in this field (see von Münchow 2004 for a detailed illustration).

Data and context of application

In order to show how CCDA can function as part of an intercultural education curriculum, I will draw on data from an analysis of ninth-grade literature textbooks. The original research (see von Münchow 2009a, 2009b) is based on five French and seven German textbooks which were frequently used in 2005. It will be referred to here to suggest tasks for 14- to 15-year-olds in compulsory schooling in France, having studied German as a foreign language since the age of 11. The analysis of textbooks seems particularly efficient in intercultural education since it provides insight into the type of activities that characterize a didactic culture (Chiss and Cicurel 2005:7-9) and helps to construct hypotheses on educative traditions linked to beliefs and attitudes towards the individual and the community (Castellotti 2008:249).

Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis in intercultural education

The dynamic nature of cultures on different levels makes it necessary for teachers as well as for students to be able to conduct their own comparisons in order to establish their own hypotheses instead of relying (exclusively) on research or didactic material which may no longer be valid or which simply does not apply to a specific individual, group or situation. It is for this reason, I have chosen to show exactly how research on textbooks can be used in intercultural education, focusing on the contrastive approach teachers and students should acquire [3]. As mentioned above, Byram (2008:69) defines intercultural communicative competence as involving 'attitudes', 'skills of interpreting and relating' and 'skills of discovery and interaction'. Except for interaction, all of these aspects are involved in CCDA, which creates knowledge 'of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country', skills of interpreting a document from another culture and of relating it to documents from one's own culture and, finally, the 'ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices' (Byram 2008:69) by the autonomous application of the previously acquired interpretation skills.

Examining German schoolbooks, in the present case, is designed to first produce an 'outside perspective' ('Außenperspektive') for French students; the comparison with French textbooks then takes place within an 'inside perspective' ('Innenperspektive') (see Selmy, 2004:90). Finally, an 'outside perspective' on German *and* French schoolbooks makes the comparison fully possible and may even allow an 'inside perspective' into what German students are expected to learn and how they are expected to act.

In order to design activities it is necessary to choose amongst the analyzed data those which are representative and likely to facilitate comprehension of the other or one's own (didactic and educational) culture. I start by presenting those data along with an interpretation for the teacher. I then mention the questions and the tasks that can be given to students in order to help them interpret the data themselves with the goal that they 'experience' striking differences between German and French textbooks and then learn how to observe subtle differences in order to be able to look at both from the above-mentioned outside and inside perspective. Additionally, I suggest a few activities aimed at breaking stereotypes.

First step: Experiencing striking differences

The lesson could begin with the presentation of 'striking' data in the sense that students will feel strongly that what they can see in German textbooks would be banned from their French equivalents.

One of the most recurrent subjects in French as well as German textbooks is *love*. The way it is treated, though, is very different in the two data sets. In fact the German approach is much more explicit than the French one, especially as far as physical attraction is concerned. The German *Magazin* [4], for instance, contains a certain number of documents about eroticism, sexual intercourse and love between young people, among which several excerpts are of the same novel. One of these excerpts (p. 87) depicts a pair of male and female adolescents sitting opposite each other in a train and the boy has to cope with an erection after having had a look at the young woman's breasts. The two teenagers then get to know each other and have a long conversation about the term (scientific, standard, colloquial, vulgar) they will use for the sexual act in which they are planning to engage (p. 94-95). They finally decide to use a word only they will understand since it is linked to a conversation they had on another subject.

In contrast, the authors of a French textbook assign the following metalinguistic task about the poem 'L'amoureuse' by Paul Eluard:

> 1. *Relevez dans la première strophe les vers qui expriment la fusion amoureuse. Quelles sont les marques grammaticales (pronoms personnels, déterminants possessifs, prépositions) qui traduisent cette fusion ? [Hatier, p. 242]* [5]

> [*Find the lines in the first verse that express the fusion of love. Which grammatical markers (personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, prepositions) translate the fusion?*]

The metaphor 'fusion amoureuse' ('fusion of love') indicates a non-explicit treatment of the theme and the numerous metalinguistic terms show that the student is not supposed to think about love itself but about its poetic representation. In *Belin* [6] (p. 32-33), the students are asked to analyze a painting picturing a couple that does not communicate anymore. The play 'Oh les beaux jours' ('Happy Days') by Samuel Beckett (p. 211), featuring a couple of the same kind, is used as an opportunity to make the students think 'about love and life as a couple' ('sur l'amour et sur la vie à deux'). This time, the theme 'love' itself is explicitly addressed. However, the painting and the play concern not adolescent couples but adults and may be difficult for adolescents to identify with. But identification is precisely what is not asked of the student in French textbooks. What French students have to learn is to put a gap between themselves and a feeling that is considered in a universal perspective rather than from their particular point of view.

Teachers can start with excerpts of the novel from *Magazin* and ask the students to read it. Reactions of surprise, shame or even of rejection are to be expected (beyond the initial laughter). Students can be asked why they are shocked by the explicit treatment of sexual issues. The students with whom I worked on these activities generally said that they would not want to talk about love with their teacher. But one student whose parents emigrated from Morocco said: 'If my father knew that we are talking about these things in class he would forbid me to go.' Depending on the cultural composition of the group of students, one can expect a strong rejection of the explicit treatment of adolescent sexual issues well beyond textbooks or even the rejection of adolescent sexuality as such, which would highlight the cultural relativity of the concept of physical love for this age group.

The teacher can then ask why the students think sexual issues are treated in this way in German books and what they think the function of textbooks is in Germany. Along with answers like: 'The authors choose subjects they think students will be interested in', one can expect comments like: 'It is demagogic', which is culturally biased. One student recently said: 'The purpose is likely for risk prevention. What it really is about is avoiding pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.' It seems that this answer is based on what it would mean to find such explicit treatment of sexual love in a *French* textbook. In fact, none of the excerpts of the above-mentioned German novel mentions pregnancy, contraception or sexually transmitted diseases of any kind.

A contrastive reading of the French excerpts can then help to construct hypotheses on the function of textbooks in France and to understand the students' reaction to the German excerpts. Additionally, questions on the image of the adolescent in both series of books could be asked.

After exploring a chosen theme from the textbooks and examining how it is treated and the lexical choices authors make when they treat it, I would suggest proceeding in the opposite direction, i.e. starting from a lexical curiosity and constructing hypotheses on what its function is. Both French and German textbooks are mainly written in standard language as far as the authors' discourse and non-literary texts are concerned, [7] but one can find quite a few exceptions in the German books. The most astonishing choice is certainly the one *Wortstark* [8] makes when the authors characterize Goethe through 'youth speak' (or through what they believe 'youth speak' is). In fact, the title of the chapter on Goethe is 'Goethe, ein klasse Dichter?!' ('Goethe, an awesome poet?!', p. 113) [9]. A section on Goethe's trip to Italy (p. 119) is called 'Bloß weg! – Goethes „Flucht" nach Italien' ('Let's get lost! – Goethe's "flight" to Italy'), which can be considered a colloquial translation of a biographical element. The following sequence can be interpreted as a translation in colloquial register and oral style as well: [10]

> *2. Und dennoch war er unzufrieden mit sich selbst. Verblasst war der Ruhm, den er sich mit dem Briefroman „Die Leiden des jungen Werther" erworben hatte. Übrigens ein Roman, in dem ein junger Mann einem Freund von Liebeskummer und beruflicher Unzufriedenheit berichtet. /…/ Wer /…/ es sich leisten konnte, der machte damals die „Grand Tour", den Trip nach Italien, wie wir heute vielleicht sagen würden. [Wortstark 119.*

> *[And yet he was unsatisfied with himself. Faded, the glory he had earned with the epistolary novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther". A novel, by the way, in which a young man tells a friend about unhappy love and professional dissatisfaction. /…/ Whoever /…/ could afford it at the time, went on the 'grand tour', a joy ride to Italy, as we might say today.]*

Goethe's experience is translated into a language 'we' would use 'today'. In this context the deictics seem to indicate an identification of the authors with young people, since the anglicism 'Trip' in German seems to come from 'youth speak'. But even a designation like 'professional dissatisfaction', which belongs to standard language, may be considered a translation since Werther's preoccupations are described using a modern-day point of view and vocabulary. Globally, adolescent readers seem to be portrayed as being in constant need of a translation to their language in order to comprehend Goethe. Goethe is translated *for* adolescents. And the effort German authors make in the field of translation is completed by the beginning of a modern version of a Goethe poem written by ninth-graders.

> *3. Mein Herz schlug bis zum Hals. Total aufgeregt schwang ich mich auf mein Bike /…/.*

> *[My heart beat on my neck. Totally excited I jumped on my bike.] [Wortstark 115]*

Goethe translated *for* adolescents ends with Goethe translated *by* adolescents. A certain number of procedures almost exclusively present in the German books thus bring authors and their texts closer to adolescent readers, which is most likely supposed to motivate students and convince them that classical literature can be interesting for them.

As for French schoolbook authors, they seem to try to convince students of the interest that reading literary texts can have for them by pointing out the quality of those texts, mainly by means of designation and characterization of authors and texts in the 'portraits' which precede the texts themselves. Literary prizes are often mentioned (*Magnard* 80, among others) [11] and the following portrait, for example, contains a semantic superlative ('un chef-d'œuvre', Eng. 'a masterpiece').

> *4. En 1963, huit ans après le début de leur aventure, ils [Nicolas Bouvier et Thierry Vernet] publieront un chef-d'œuvre : L'Usage du monde. [Nathan 19] [12]*

> *In 1963, eight years after the beginning of their adventure, they [Nicolas Bouvier and Thierry Vernet] published a masterpiece: The Use of the World.*

Affective evaluations (see Moirand, 1990, p. 113) can be found as well:

> *5. Rescapé de l'enfer [le camp de concentration de Mauthausen], il [Jean Cayrol] fit paraître plusieurs recueils de poèmes et rédigea le texte bouleversant du film d'Alain Resnais, Nuit et Brouillard (1956). [Nathan 217.*

> *[After escaping from hell [the concentration camp Mauthausen], he [Jean Cayrol] published several collections of poems and wrote the deeply moving text for Alain Resnais' film Night and Fog (1956).*

While the semantic superlative in extract 4 seems to stress the distance between author and reader rather than lessen it, the affective evaluation in extract 5 somewhat establishes an emotional contact between the two interlocutors. But unlike what we saw in German books, the contact is established between the text and a universal reader, not an adolescent reader. In both cases, the literary institution is valued and it seems that the most important factor of reading motivation for the student ought to be the acquisition of a literary culture that holds an important status in his or her community.

Again, after having focused on different registers and varieties of language in one or several previous sessions, the teacher can start by distributing the German excerpts in their context and by asking the students to read them and to react to them. The reactions might not be as strong as those to the previous series of excerpts, but students may point out that they are surprised (or even annoyed or aggravated) at the use of 'youth speak' in the textbooks. They could then think about why the authors use this language and the other types of 'translation' of classical literature. One of the responses will probably be that authors are trying to relate to their target readers and that they want to convince the students of the interest literature can have for them. For homework, the teacher could assign skimming the French textbooks the group is using in school in order to find out if and how the authors try to relate to the students and how the interest of reading literature is presented to the learner. During the next class the students can then present the results of their reading (e.g. that French authors do not try to relate to the students and that the reading of literature in French textbooks apparently does not need to be justified) [13] and the teacher can show the excerpts mentioned in this article, focusing on designation and characterization. A final discussion on the role of the student in textbooks should take place and again, depending on the members of the group, different models of literature-textbook-learner hierarchies and relationships may surface depending on the students' didactic and educational backgrounds.

Second step: Perceiving subtle differences

After having been confronted by a striking, yet relevant, difference between French and German textbooks, the students will learn, in a second step, to detect subtler differences, or differences that accompany similarities, by paying close attention to the structure and the precise wording of descriptions and tasks and to the links that are established between texts and tasks. The two related subjects I suggest exploring here are the previously addressed relationships between adolescents and adults as well as the students and what they are expected to learn.

The different statuses the adolescent has in the German and French books can be grasped in argumentative tasks staging adults and adolescents. In *Wortstark* (p. 154-155), for example, one can find an ironic text in which the narrator describes the habits of his 15-year-old daughter. This text is followed by a task consisting of the students writing the same kind of text about their father. It is as if the adolescent is engaged in 'argumentative interaction' with the text, in which he or she has the final word:

> *6. Schreibe einen ähnlichen Text, in dem die Tochter von ihrem Vater erzählt: seinem Aussehen und seiner Kleidung, seinen Vorstellungen von Rücksichtnahme und dem Leben im Allgemeinen. [Wortstark, p. 155]*

> *[Write a similar text in which the daughter talks about her father: His looks and his clothes, his idea of being considerate and of life in general.]*

The theme 'adolescence' as such is rarely treated in French textbooks, but *Nathan* (p. 96-97) contains an extract from the novel *Des cornichons au chocolat* (*Chocolate Pickles*), presented as having been written by 13-year-old Stéphanie [14], which may remind the reader of the extract in *Wortstark*. Stéphanie sarcastically complains about the conventional way in which her parents choose their clothing and their vacation spots, for instance. The tasks linked to the extract are similar to the German ones as well:

> 7. *L'attitude de Stéphanie présente-t-elle les défauts que la jeunesse attribue généralement aux adultes ? [Nathan, p. 97.*

> *[Does Stephanie's attitude show the same kind of flaws young people generally attribute to adults?]*

> 8. *Rédigez sous forme de dialogue la réponse qu'un « pépère » ou qu'une « mémère » pourrait faire à Stéphanie. [Nathan, p. 97]*

> *[Write a dialogue that could be a 'grandpa's' or a 'grandma's' response to Stéphanie.]*

But the author here asks the students to position themselves at a distance from their own reality – including the elements of 'youth speak' Stéphanie uses, placed at a distance by means of quotation marks showing that the speaker is representing another discourse – and to adopt an adult point of view. In other words, in spite of initial resemblance of argumentative transformation tasks in the German and the French book, the aims seem to be quite different. The French students do not learn to "answer back" to the adult and to defend their point of view and their lifestyles as adolescents, but to reflect upon themselves from a distance and to communicate not only with adults, but also like an adult.

One possible classroom use of these data would be to ask students to perform the tasks from *Wortstark* and to discuss whether or not these tasks could be found in French textbooks. Some students may answer affirmatively, focusing on text types and types of tasks, others negatively, focusing on the argumentative direction within the tasks. The students could then be asked to work on the assignments in *Nathan* in order to point out the similarities and the differences between French and German textbooks. A final discussion could be focused on the relationship between adolescents and adults, as the textbook authors seem to see it.

Concerning the relationship between the learner and the object of learning, similarities hide profound differences again. In effect, French and German students are sometimes asked to assess texts, even if this task is far more recurrent in the German textbooks than in the French ones. *Magnard* and *Belin* contain the following tasks.

> 9. *Qu'est-ce qui pour vous /…/ fait l'intérêt de ces deux textes [de Maupassant et de Vincenot] ? [Magnard, p. 86]*

> *[What do you think makes these two texts [by Maupassant and Vincenot] interesting?]*

> 10. *Quelles sont, selon vous, les qualités du témoignage de Maurice Genevoix ? [Belin, p. 76]*

> *[What do you think are the qualities of Maurice Genevoix's testimony?]*

In both cases the expected assessment is positive; the 'interest' of both texts in extract 9 as well as the 'qualities' of Maurice Genevoix's testimony in extract 10 is presupposed in the respective utterances and thus not open to questioning by the students. The tasks do not really encourage students to express a personal opinion, but rather to learn how to characterize the texts they are studying. However, the

following assignments in *Verstehen*, [15] about a series of poems most of which belong to German classical literature, have a different function.

> *11. a) Welches gefällt euch am besten ? Begründet euer Urteil. b) Welches gefällt euch am wenigsten ? Schreibt dem Verfasser einen Brief, in dem ihr eure Einwände gegen das Gedicht argumentativ darlegt. [Verstehen, p. 123]*

> *[a) Which one do you like best? Justify your judgment. b) Which one do you like the least? Write a letter to the author and present your criticism of the poem by using arguments.]*

Critical assessment, or rather a negative judgment about one of the poems is not only allowed here, but mandatory, the positive characterizations of the French questions being absent. What is presupposed here is that the learners are able to identify a poem they like and another they dislike. If they do not have anything negative to say it will be difficult to perform the task. Students are encouraged to exercise their sense of criticism and express their personal taste concerning pieces of literature presented in the textbook. Literature as the object of learning obviously has a different status in the French and the German books. It is part of a French cultural curriculum students have to absorb and learn to appreciate in order to become full members of the adult community. In contrast, German students are not only allowed to but asked to explicitly like *or dislike* and learn how to criticize the literature put forth.

This time, the teacher could start by asking students to paraphrase the French tasks and to clearly suggest what is expected of the learner in these tasks. In the different classes in which I conducted this activity, students invariably said: 'The learner must express his or her opinion.' The students may then be told to perform the German task, paying close attention to the semantics of the verb in the questions. They may have difficulties expressing a negative opinion about one of the poems and not fulfill the authors' expectations. The teacher could assess their productions from a German perspective. This might lead to an emotional discussion on the relationship and/or the hierarchy between the learner and the object of learning, that is literature. Finally, the students could have another look at the French tasks and re-discuss what is expected of the learner. Their answers should be different from the initial ones ('Well, no, it is not about expressing opinions after all' is the answer I generally obtain) because the analysis of the German tasks will have made 'the familiar strange and the strange familiar'.

Further steps: Breaking stereotypes

So far I concentrated on the discovery of coherence within each of the two sets of textbooks in order to make 'the familiar strange and the strange familiar'. But a longer unit of activities could also address diversity within a series of texts as well as the issue of stereotypes in general so as to avoid the construction of a monolithic conception of culture. I will briefly sketch a few trails to explore in this direction.

In effect, the work on German and French textbooks could easily be linked to an activity on stereotyping since what German schoolbooks show about education in Germany is contradictory to the stereotypes often associated with this country in France. This activity could be conducted in two parts before and after the other tasks. In the first part of the activity, the teacher could ask the students to quickly write down a few words that come to mind when they think about school in Germany (concepts such as 'discipline', 'authority', 'normative behavior' and 'obedience' are to be expected). The class could then try to analyze their stereotype and build hypotheses on why it exists. In the second part of the activity, after working on the textbooks, the students can be asked to remember the initial stereotype and to think about if and why it changed. This activity can help to question stereotypes altogether and to contextualize them as often being the result of intercultural encounters from a remote period of time.

Of course the aim of this activity could not be to replace old stereotypes by new ones. It can thus be useful at this stage to point out a few individual differences between textbooks in order to emphasize the fact that neither the French nor the German books form a perfectly homogeneous set. If students skim through the French data, they will find out, for instance, that *Magnard* contains more young-adult fiction

than the other textbooks and thus seems to be more focused on adolescents as an age group. In contrast, the following task is untypical of German textbooks:

> *12. Erläutert die Erzählperspektive und das Erzählverhalten des Textes. /…/ Achtet auf Wortwahl und Satzbau des Textes. Wie wirken diese auf euch ? [Kontext, p. 19]* [16]

> *[Explain the narrative perspective and attitude of the text. /…/ Pay attention to the choice of words and the sentence structure in the text. What effect do they have on you?]*

The choice of metalinguistic terms shows that what is important here is to understand how the text functions as a text rather than as a mere reflection of reality, which is more common in the French books than in the German ones.

Being asked if the choice of texts in *Magnard* and the choice of words in the excerpt from *Kontext* remind them of something, the students should be able to point out that the task in *Kontext* is (at least partly) different from most other German tasks and resembles the French ones, the opposite being true for the choice of texts in *Magnard*. They can thus start to perceive that the two data sets are connected to each other in multiple ways and that the contrast between them is only a tendency and not a rule without exceptions.

In general, German textbooks form a more heterogeneous set than French textbooks, which becomes obvious as soon as one examines the different covers, titles and tables of contents. This heterogeneity can be linked to the fact that each of the 16 Länder has its own curriculum, on the one hand, and that the German secondary school system consists of three different types of schools (Gymnasium, Realschule and Hauptschule), which children choose or are assigned to at age 10 depending on their academic achievements. *Kontext*, for instance, is a textbook for the highest level (Gymnasium), which could (partly) explain the choice of the metalinguistic vocabulary and the focus on the text as such.

Discussion

This paper is based on an underlying controversy, i.e. comparing cultures of ethnolinguistic communities, on which it seems necessary to state my position. This will also allow to establish a link between the construction of intercultural competence in foreign language classes and its subsequent use in a multicultural classroom.

In fact, most researchers in the field of intercultural communication legitimately consider that a culturalist approach producing an objectivist vision of cultures needs to be avoided, especially in intercultural education. It is in fact important to stress that culture is dynamic and multifold. As Byram (2008:60) points out, if one uses, as he does, the definition of 'culture' as the 'shared beliefs, values and behaviours' of a social group, /…/ 'social group' can refer to any collectivity of people, from those in a social institution such as a university, a golf club, a family, to those organised in large-scale groups such as a nation, or even a 'civilisation' such as 'European'.

Apart from this fact, which makes it extremely difficult to identify cultural elements belonging to a large-scale group, such as a nation, there is a common 'fear of reinforcing cultural stereotypes' (Kramsch 1995:89) that affects the description of national cultures, with the result that 'the default assumptions linked to national cultural ideologies remain often unquestioned and, hence, unexplored'. According to Kramsch, it is the 'overwhelming concern' for '[c]ultural diversity within the United States' (p. 88) that generally eclipses the concern for 'cultural diversity beyond'. In France, where diversity issues tend to be predominantly addressed in a context of recent migration, the 'cultural diversity within' can even make the 'cultural diversity beyond' seem illegitimate or, worse, dangerous. In this perspective researchers often refuse to describe cultural facts altogether, in order not to risk transforming intercultural education into a mere 'seizure of power' ('prise de pouvoir') or even a 'possession of the Other' ('une possession de l'Autre') (Abdallah-Pretceille 2003:12).

Comparison generates a parallel or even stronger fear, which is not justified, though, since the danger to reproduce power structures does not lie in comparison itself – provided that it be conducted in a scientific manner – but in the relationship of the two entities that are being compared. As Byram (2008:181) says, '[c]omparison is both a means of understanding and an approach to critical analysis, provided there exists a willingness to engage with otherness in a relation of equality'. This willingness is more likely to preexist in a context of foreign-language teaching involving equally prestigious European languages and cultures than in diversity work *within* a multicultural classroom. In fact, European 'otherness' does not carry the negative stereotype of necessary inferiority often associated with the non-European 'other' and its discovery may thus be used as a tool to see non-European otherness in another light, i.e. to learn to dissociate difference from inferiority. In other words, addressing the 'cultural diversity beyond' not only does not exclude or even endanger the 'cultural diversity within', but may on the contrary elicit a new approach to it.

Conclusion

In this paper I highlighted the results of a comparison of German and French high school literature textbooks in a field called Cross-Cultural Discourse Analysis to point out how the analysis of the data may be used in intercultural education in a ninth-grade German class in France. In fact, enunciative, semantic and compositional discourse procedures in these textbooks indicate that the authors have different images of the student and of the curriculum. In a universalistic 'object perspective' (Puren 1998), the French students are seen as future citizens of their country, which implies the necessity to 'learn to appreciate' required literary classics albeit keeping a certain distance from them. In contrast, the German student is seen in a particularistic 'subject perspective' (Puren 1998) as an individual in construction and as a member of an age group very different from or even in opposition to adulthood. The German textbooks – and thus the literary and non-literary documents they contain – are supposed to help the adolescents for whom they are made to resolve their everyday problems. The tasks I suggested for students to work on are designed not only for the comprehension of these differences in didactic and educational cultures, but also to gain awareness into how primary and secondary socialization influences our behavior, our attitudes, and our beliefs (e.g. what we are expected to produce in educational settings). Moreover, students acquire a contrastive approach based on linguistic tools which they will be able to reuse autonomously in order to discover and interpret other cultural differences in other contexts. CCDA can thus help to build intercultural competence, which I consider the most important goal of intercultural education in compulsory schooling.

However, it needs to be stated that what I illustrate here is only a limited approach of contrastive analysis and contrastive analysis itself is only one aspect of intercultural education.

Textbooks alone are obviously not sufficient to gain an overall view of educational and didactic cultures. It is possible in CCDA to also analyze class interaction by means of filmed sequences, for example. In addition, documents issued by educational authorities (such as 'Lehrpläne' in Germany and 'instructions officielles' in France), but also surveys published in newspapers or journals on the evolution of school systems can be studied in this context in order to provide material to the students who are trying to build hypotheses on the causes of the discursive facts they are observing. The study of different types of documents having different functions within a unit of cultural or intercultural education has already been suggested by researchers such as Beacco (2000:145-172) and Dumont (2008:167).

Moreover, other discourse genres need to be studied in order to work on a more complete picture of a society beyond its didactic and educational logics. It could be shown, for instance, that in public television news programs French journalists try to attract their audience whereas their German counterparts count on the spectators' duty to watch the news (see von Münchow 2004). Obviously, the standards are very different from those that are applied for textbooks, perhaps because adults do not have the same status as adolescents.

Finally, as Castellotti (2008:266) points out, contrastive analyses need to be constantly articulated to a more global approach of 'otherness'. In order to attain a higher level of completeness in intercultural education, it seems particularly necessary to also work on interaction between individuals, which is

always complex. It is therefore essential to keep in mind that culture is only one aspect of the self, among many others, but its presence and exploration in the language classroom is of crucial importance.

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[1] In earlier publications, the term 'Comparative Discourse Linguistics' was used to refer to the same approach.

[2] For a more complete presentation, see von Münchow 2004, 2010.

[3] Space does not permit a description of discourse-analytical tools as such, but one can easily find a series of rather complete surveys on this subject (e.g. Maingueneau 1998/2007; Moirand 1990).

[4]*Magazin* = Eßer, G., Fleig, C., Gabel-Monka, H., Schwaiger, W., Steigner, M., Vogel, J. & Westerkamp, V. (2001). *Magazin 9. Ein Lesebuch für junge Leute*. Berlin: Cornelsen.

[5]*Hatier* = Potelet, H. (Ed.). (2003). *Français 3e. Livre unique*. Paris: Hatier.

[6]*Belin* = Fix-Combe, N., (Ed.). (2003). *Français 3e. Séquences et expression*. Paris: Belin.

[7] Literary texts, of course, may contain sequences that use registers other than standard language.

[8]*Wortstark* = Boslak, G., Brauer, R., Busse, A., Czech, G., Ehls, I., Hintz, I.,… Wiesmann, F. (1998). *Wortstark 9. Themen und Werkstätten für den Deutschunterricht*. Braunschweig: Schroedel.

[9] The title contains a wordplay on the fact that Goethe is a classical poet.

[10] The italics indicate the elements on which the analysis is based.

[11]*Magnard* = Brindejonc, M.-C., Brumont, M., Causse, H., Flammant, T., Gaudin, J., Hébert, V. & Puygrenier-Renault, J. (2003). *Français 3e*. *Livre unique*. Paris: Magnard.

[12]*Nathan* = Doucey, B., Guillo, M., Lehu, Ph., Pagès, A. & Tamine, M. (2003). *À mots ouverts*. *Français 3e*. *Livre unique*. Paris: Nathan/VUEF.

[13] These are the answers I generally obtain.

[14] The book was published in 1983 by Jean-Claude Lattès. In 2007, French author Philippe Labro admitted having written it using the pseudonym Stéphanie.

[15]*Verstehen* = Berger, W. (Ed.). (2002). *Verstehen und Gestalten*. *Lesetexte* (Gymnasium). Munich: Oldenbourg.

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