# *Cross-cultural perspective of FL teaching and learning in the Polish context*

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## Abstract

This study examines whether learners' capacity to use a foreign language (FL) successfully in the global world is developed in the FL classroom in Polish high schools. The article reports results of the quantitative research which aimed at assessing whether and to what extent homogeneous FL classes in Poland are conducive to developing learners' intercultural (IC) sensitivity and competence. The results obtained from the two study samples, namely learners and teachers, are contradictory: In the students' opinion, IC teaching/learning plays a marginal role, whereas the teacher respondents claim they practice IC teaching moderately. Thus, to be able to get a broader picture of IC teaching/learning in Poland the current research should be complemented by a separate qualitative study, that is, lesson observations and interviews with teachers and students. Only then could more valid conclusions be drawn.

*Keywords*: intercultural teaching and learning, developing intercultural competence

In times of globalization and considerable increase in international contacts in all spheres of life, language teaching can no longer focus on the target language (TL), target countries and cultures as territorially defined phenomena. If foreign language (FL) teachers want their learners to become effective, cross-cultural communicators, they have to break with the traditional national paradigm and place language teaching in a global, transnational context (Risager, 2007). Thus, the development at school of intercultural (IC) competence, that is,

the ability to change one's knowledge, attitudes and behaviors so as to become open and flexible to other cultures, seems to be unquestionable (Alred & Byram, 2002). Equally important is the work on students' capability to develop relationships with people from different cultures, negotiate each other's cultural identity, and manage conflicts that cultural differences might cause. Only if students get such IC training, will they be able to execute communication behaviors appropriately and effectively in a variety of cultural contexts (Taylor, 1994).

However, because of complex, multidimensional and changing nature of culture, as well as its relation with language, what the cultural dimension can entail on a concrete level and how it can be implemented in the FL classroom, is far from self-evident, particularly considering different contexts where English is spoken nowadays (Kramsch, 1998; Kramsch, 2001; McKay, 2002). We need to reconsider long-established goals of FL teaching accordingly and adopt a more open-ended, intercultural, process-oriented approach. The FL syllabus should aim at helping learners to develop adaptive capacity by incorporating such elements as raising learners' awareness of difference and diversity between representatives of various cultures and engaging them in the process of de-centering, altering their own perspective, teaching desirable personal attitudes to otherness, like empathy and flexibility, developing their ability to mediate, promoting tolerance and benefiting rather than suffering from IC experience (Byram, 1997).

This article will report on the results of the quantitative research carried out among Polish high school students and teachers in the year 2011. The study aimed at assessing whether and to what degree a monolingual, thus homogeneous FL classroom in Poland is conducive to developing learners' IC sensitivity/competence. The results of the study have been presented separately in two previous articles (Sobkowiak, in press-a, in press-b). In this paper the findings received from the two research groups will be confronted and discussed. This will give the reader a broader picture of IC teaching/learning in the Polish context.

Intercultural Learning/Teaching in a Polish FL Classroom: Research Study

The Rationale and Aims

The impulse for the study came from the author's interest in the IC dimension of FL teaching, perceived as an indispensible fifth skill to be acquired by learners in order to be able to function effectively as citizens of the global world. Individuals who have gone through a largely mono-cultural socialization, which is the case of the majority of students in Poland, have access only to their own cultural worldview, so they are unable to form and experience the difference between their own perception and that of people who are culturally different.

That is what makes IC teaching/learning so important. It is in the FL class that learners should attain the ability to put together (and thus experience) cultural differences by structured, planned action, namely by using appropriate text-books, other sources and fieldwork.[1] However, as a reviewer for the Ministry of Education of textbooks used in Polish schools, the present author noticed that the IC component still plays a marginal role there. This raised interest in whether IC was developed in FL classrooms in the Polish context, especially since the majority of classes are taught by Polish graduates of FL departments, which makes IC input for students more difficult to get in the classroom.

The author wanted to examine empirically if and to what degree assumptions of IC teaching were being practiced in a FL class in Poland. The research was meant to answer the following questions:

1. Do FL lessons help learners develop IC competence by being a source of IC experience?
2. Do teachers focus learners' attention on the relation between language and culture, and the importance of socio-cultural knowledge in international communication?
3. To what extent do FL classes help learners become aware of cultural differences? Do students learn appropriate strategies which will help them cope with IC encounters?
4. Are "soft skills," namely the open and accepting attitude to otherness, which help in managing cross-cultural interaction, developed in the classroom?
5. Are learners made aware that they themselves are products of enculturation? Are they referred to Polish culture in the classroom or do they practice analyzing foreigners from the Polish culture perspective while looking at themselves through foreigners' eyes?
6. Do textbooks the learners and their teachers use contribute to the development of learners' IC competence? To what extent?

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[1] Byram (1997, pp. 64-65) claims IC communication can be acquired in the classroom by pedagogically structured experience outside the classroom (*fieldwork*) and by independent experience. Experience of fieldwork, particularly over a longer term where learners are separated from other learners and teachers, and from their family and friends, provides them with the opportunity to develop attitudes which include an ability to cope with different stages of adaptation, engagement with unfamiliar conventions of behavior and interaction, and an interest in other cultures which is not that of the tourist or business person (Byram 1997, p. 69). For this reason the respondents were asked about foreign exchange programs in their schools.

The Participants

The first part of the research was conducted on 338 high school students in Poznań, in the spring of 2011 (questionnaires were handed out to 353 students). Stratified, multiple stage sampling was used: 3 high schools were drawn, then 4 classes in each school. Finally, groups (strata) were established. Of the 338 respondents, 48% were men ($n = 162$) and 52% were women ($n = 176$).

The second part of the study was carried out among high school teachers in various cities in Poland (Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, Leszno, Koszalin, Lublin) from September 2011 to January 2012. Stratified, multiple stage sampling was also used: a group of high school teachers were drawn at various conferences, seminars and meetings. Finally, groups (strata) were established. Questionnaires were administered to a sample of 489 subjects, who agreed to participate in the study. Data from the final sample of 317 who completed and returned the questionnaires were analyzed, using a standard set of psychometric procedures. Within the sample, 83.91% of respondents were women ($n = 266$) and 16.09% ($n = 51$) men.

The sample size used in both parts of the research fulfilled the sample requirement of a threshold of a minimum 300 respondents for scale testing recommended by Nunnally (1994). The procedures of multiple stage sampling used in the sample selection resulted in the sample being truly representative, thus the findings could be generalized beyond the study group.

Procedures: The Method and Measurement Instrument

A paper and pencil questionnaire in Polish developed by the author was used in the study. The 24-item questionnaire, asking the respondents for their opinions, assessed the FL classroom from an IC perspective. This questionnaire was constructed after a detailed analysis of comprehensive literature on IC teaching/learning; it contained the most important elements of IC teaching (see Appendix A). Scale construction guidelines were followed (DeVellis, 1991). Students were asked to mark to what extent they agreed with the opinions concerning elements of IC teaching/learning in their classroom. A 5-point Likert scale was used and the following response options were incorporated: 1 – *strongly disagree*, 2 – *disagree*, 3 – *neutral*, 4 – *agree*, 5 – *strongly agree*. The participants were not supposed to consult each other while completing the questionnaires.

A pilot test was administered to a sample of 12 students to check clarity of instructions, item clarity, overall time taken to complete the questionnaire and balanced keying (to see if the respondents avoid using extreme response

categories). A relatively equal number of extremely positive (5) and negative (1) sentences in the sample proved that the scale had been chosen correctly.

Construct and content validity of the questionnaire was performed. Two experts were asked to participate in the study and review the item pool for clarity, sentence structure and ambiguous meanings. This aided in establishing relevancy of the items to IC teaching/learning, providing also the initial reliability and validity estimates (DeVellis, 1991). The two experts, PhD holders, were selected based on their demonstrated expertise within the IC field. They were asked to decide independently whether they felt a particular item was important for IC competence development in the FL classroom. The criterion for selecting items into the final version of the questionnaire was that each had to be accepted as important for IC teaching/learning by both experts, who also provided comments on the item's clarity and conciseness. In the process, six items were eliminated from the pool.

In order to analyze the results and perform a reliability analysis, Excel was used to compute descriptive statistics. Internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was measured for both samples; the scale had Cronbach alpha coefficient of .84 for the learner sample and .91 for the teacher sample, and thus both met the requirement of internal consistency reliability (Crocker & Algina, 1986).

Results and Discussion

The results obtained from both groups of respondents will be presented simultaneously. This will allow the reader to compare the opinions of both teachers and learners, and consequently will give him/her a more reliable picture of IC teaching in Poland.

Teachers' versus learners' opinions on ICC teaching/learning, As has already been mentioned, the instrument used to assess IC teaching/learning was a 24-item questionnaire. The respondents were asked to grade the questionnaire items from 1 to 5. The findings are presented in Table 1 and Table 2 below. The .05 level of significance was set for all the results, thus the confidence level was 95% ($p$ = .95).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for all the 24 items of the questionnaire

| Parameter | Teachers' results | Learners' results |
|---|---|---|
| Mean | 3.87 | 2.78 |
| Standard deviation | 0.98 | 1.28 |
| Coefficient of variation (%) | 25.41 | 46.04 |
| Mode | 4.00 | 3.0 |
| Median | 4.00 | 3.0 |

Table 2 IC teaching/learning in Poland – the breakdown of teachers' and learners' results for each questionnaire item and *U*-statistics

| Item | Teachers | | | | | Learners | | | | | *U*-statistics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *CV* | Mode | *Mdn* | *M* | *SD* | *CV* | Mode | *Mdn* | |
| 1 | 3.66 | 0.99 | 27.20 | 4 | 4 | 2.99 | 1.21 | 40.46 | 3 | 3 | 7.7035 |
| 2 | 4.02 | 0.88 | 22.00 | 4 | 4 | 3.13 | 1.22 | 39.09 | 4 | 3 | 10.6600 |
| 3 | 4.12 | 0.76 | 18.39 | 4 | 4 | 3.23 | 1.11 | 34.42 | 4 | 3 | 12.0620 |
| 4 | 3.50 | 1.05 | 30.00 | 5 | 4 | 2.62 | 1.11 | 42.56 | 3 | 3 | 10.4082 |
| 5 | 3.91 | 0.94 | 24.04 | 4 | 4 | 2.99 | 1.22 | 40.86 | 3 | 3 | 10.9174 |
| 6 | 3.85 | 0.96 | 24.78 | 4 | 4 | 2.86 | 1.16 | 40.59 | 3 | 3 | 12.0788 |
| 7 | 3.55 | 0.99 | 27.86 | 4 | 4 | 2.48 | 1.09 | 43.84 | 3 | 2 | 13.2660 |
| 8 | 3.62 | 1.03 | 28.57 | 4 | 4 | 2.71 | 1.28 | 47.12 | 3 | 3 | 10.0711 |
| 9 | 3.85 | 1.00 | 26.00 | 4 | 4 | 2.55 | 1.20 | 46.85 | 3 | 3 | 15.0972 |
| 10 | 4.12 | 0.80 | 19.52 | 4 | 4 | 2.95 | 1.19 | 40.24 | 3 | 3 | 14.7666 |
| 11 | 3.82 | 1.03 | 26.95 | 4 | 4 | 2.05 | 1.12 | 54.62 | 1 | 2 | 20.9944 |
| 12 | 3.88 | 1.08 | 27.77 | 4 | 4 | 2.04 | 1.04 | 51.09 | 1 | 2 | 22.2951 |
| 13 | 3.66 | 1.06 | 29.05 | 4 | 4 | 2.51 | 1.17 | 46.77 | 3 | 3 | 13.0912 |
| 14 | 3.85 | 1.01 | 26.25 | 4 | 4 | 3.52 | 1.16 | 33.03 | 4 | 4 | 3.9307 |
| 15 | 3.97 | 0.92 | 23.21 | 4 | 4 | 2.58 | 1.16 | 44.90 | 3 | 3 | 17.0460 |
| 16 | 4.18 | 0.82 | 19.51 | 4 | 4 | 3.86 | 1.18 | 30.67 | 5 | 4 | 4.0743 |
| 17 | 3.94 | 0.99 | 25.15 | 4 | 4 | 3.03 | 1.22 | 40.29 | 3 | 3 | 10.4760 |
| 18 | 3.82 | 0.96 | 25.16 | 4 | 4 | 2.19 | 1.11 | 50.63 | 1 | 2 | 20.1004 |
| 19 | 3.87 | 0.97 | 25.00 | 4 | 4 | 2.16 | 1.08 | 49.85 | 1 | 2 | 21.4346 |
| 20 | 4.51 | 0.73 | 16.09 | 4 | 5 | 2.46 | 1.31 | 53.16 | 1 | 2 | 24.9644 |
| 21 | 4.15 | 0.82 | 19.88 | 5 | 4 | 2.52 | 1.27 | 50.44 | 1 | 2.5 | 19.5200 |
| 22 | 3.33 | 1.03 | 30.81 | 4 | 3 | 2.61 | 1.16 | 44.47 | 3 | 3 | 8.4368 |
| 23 | 3.50 | 0.94 | 26.76 | 4 | 3 | 2.69 | 1.23 | 45.76 | 3 | 3 | 9.5131 |
| 24 | 4.21 | 0.85 | 20.16 | 3 | 4 | 4.05 | 1.19 | 29.49 | 5 | 4 | 1.9598 |
| Total | 3.87 | 0.98 | 25.41 | - | - | 2.78 | 1.28 | 46.04 | - | - | 13.1120 |
| N | 317 | | | | | 338 | | | | | |

The results reveal that the teacher respondents' assessment of IC teaching/learning in Poland is much higher than the learner informants' (*M* = 3.87 for all the 24 questionnaire items versus *M* = 2.78; Research question 1). What is more, the results of the teacher sample for each separate questionnaire item are higher than the results of the learner sample. All the differences are statistically significant. The teacher informants' grades for separate questionnaire items range from 3.33 (item 22) to 4.51 (item 20), whereas the learner subjects' grades are much lower and range from 2.04 (item 12) to 4.05 (item 24). Standard deviations for the majority of questionnaire items for teachers are relatively low and dispersion, which is measured by the coefficient of variation, in all the

cases but one is below 30%. This indicates that the results are very close to the mean and that the majority of the teachers surveyed were relatively unanimous in their assessment; they agreed that their FL lessons help learners develop IC competence.[2] Furthermore, the mode in the sample is 4 for as many as 21 questionnaire items. Two items score 5 at the rating scale, and only one scores 3.

By contrast, learners' sample results are spread and show a considerable diversity of respondents' opinions. Standard deviations for the majority of questions are high, which means there is a small concentration of the results around the mean value; dispersion in all the cases is higher than 30% and amounts mostly to over 40% (14 items), or even 50% (5 items). There is also a wide scattering of the mode in the learners' sample; as many as six questionnaire items score 1 at the rating scale and only one item scores 5. The score which dominates in the majority of items is 3 (13 items). This might mean that IC teaching/learning differs between schools and teachers, and that in the classroom the vast majority of learners are introduced only to some aspects of interculturality.

Both samples graded Question 24 high; a considerable number of subjects from both research groups admitted that traveling abroad and foreign school exchanges had a strong influence on students' attitudes and behaviors towards representatives of foreign cultures (*M* = 4.21 and *M* = 4.05 respectively). Moreover, a great number of learner informants attached the highest value at the rating scale (5) to this item. Coefficient of variation is below 30%, which indicates a large concentration of the results around the mean; most learner respondents graded this item high. In contrast, the teacher sample is not as unanimous in high assessment of this questionnaire item; the dominant value at the rating scale for this item is 3, which means that quite a large number of the respondents do not think that school visits abroad have such a strong influence on developing students' IC competence.

Similarly, both groups of informants also agreed that FL classes do not contribute to strengthening stereotypes and prejudices among students towards foreign cultures (Item 16, *M* = 4.18 and *M* = 3.86 respectively). What is more, the highest value at the rating scale (5) dominates in the students' responses and the mean (3.86) is 1.08 higher than the average for all the questionnaire items (2.78).

A large number of teacher respondents agreed that FL education contributes to reducing learners' ethnocentrism (Item 20). The mean for this item (*M* = 4.51) is 0.64 higher than the average mean for all the 24 questionnaire items (3.87). Furthermore, half of the informants surveyed attached the highest value at the rating scale to this item; the median is 5, which means that

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[2] High values of *SD* would mean that the results are dispersed considerably, which would make it more difficult to draw conclusions concerning the research questions.

half of the sample agreed with it strongly. Contrary to the teachers' assessment, the learner subjects graded this element of IC teaching/learning relatively low ($M$ = 2.46). There is a huge disagreement in the results obtained from both groups; in learners' results the lowest value at the rating scale (1) is dominant, whereas in teachers' results the value of 4 prevails.

A vast majority of the teacher respondents were positive about the second research question (Items 1-5, the mean from 3.50 to 4.12) concerning the attention they pay in the classroom to the relation between language and culture. In their opinions FL class in Poland helps learners to realize cultural connotations of language and make them aware that the lack of knowledge of a foreign culture impedes the ability to communicate. Similarly, FL classes contribute to the learner's knowledge of the target and foreign culture/s. However, the results obtained from the learner sample do not confirm this and show that learners were neutral in this respect; their results ranged from 2.62 to 3.23.

There is also a considerable discrepancy between both research samples concerning the answer to Question 3 (Items 6-9). The teacher informants agreed that FL classes raised their students' awareness of cultural differences. The scores for this part of the questionnaire range from 3.55 (Item 7) to 3.85 (Items 6 and 9) and the dominant value at the rating scale is 4 for all the four questionnaire items. The teacher respondents claimed that they tried to equip students to a moderate degree with appropriate strategies which should help them cope with IC encounters (Item 8, $M$ = 3.62). Contrary to this, the scores for this part of the questionnaire for the learners' sample range from 2.48 (Item 7) to 2.86 (Item 6). A large number of the respondents claimed that in FL class they neither developed the skills that would help them communicate effectively with representatives of the foreign cultures (Item 8), nor did they practice establishing and maintaining contacts with foreigners (Item 9).

Both study samples differ significantly in their assessment of how high schools in Poland prepare learners to manage cross-cultural interactions (Research question 4, Items 10-15). The study results obtained for the teacher population revealed that teachers developed in class learners' „soft skills". The scores of this part of the questionnaire ranged from 3.66 (Item 13) to 4.12 (Item 10). The teachers who were surveyed agreed that they developed in their students openness and tolerance towards foreign nations and cultures, promoted positive attitudes towards them and taught them to perceive the world from different perspectives (Item 10, $M$ = 4.12). They also taught students to disagree with the opinions or attitudes of other people in the way that did not provoke conflicts or excluded cooperation with them (item 15, $M$ = 3.97). Moreover, the subjects declared that they taught how to avoid assessing a situation or a phenomenon emotionally-driven (Item 12, $M$ = 3.88) or

how to keep negative emotions under control (Item 11, $M = 3.82$). However, the learner sample did not assess these questionnaire items positively; in their opinion developing learners' "soft skills" was completely ignored. The scores for this part of the questionnaire were the lowest and very diversified. They ranged from 2.04 to 3.52. A vast majority of the subjects declared that they were not taught how to avoid assessing a situation or a phenomenon emotionally-driven (Item 12, $M = 2.04$) or how to keep negative emotions under control (Item 11, $M = 2.05$). In addition to this, both items had the lowest mode at the rating scale (1) and a low value of the median (2).

The majority of the teacher informants were also positive about Research question 5 concerning building learners' awareness of being a product of enculturation (Items 16-21). The scores in this part of the questionnaire ranged from 3.82 (Item 18) to 4.51 (Item 20), and were the highest of all the questionnaire item results. In contrast, most of the student informants were either neutral or negative about Research question 5. There was a considerable difference in what the teachers said and the results obtained from the learners in this part of the questionnaire; the scores ranged from 2.16 (Item 19) to 3.86 (Item 16). The mode value for four of the items was the lowest (1), which means that the majority of the respondents expressed strong disagreement. Surprisingly, the respondents thought that the FL class did not help them understand their own culture and identity better (Item 19, $M = 2.16$ and the lowest mode at the scale (1) and a low median (2)). The majority of the learner subjects were also neutral when asked if they compared in class a spectrum of various foreign cultures with their own (Item 17, $M = 3.03$).

Both textbooks used in the classroom (Item 22) and FL teachers (Item 23) were assessed moderately well in the IC perspective by teacher respondents (Research question 6); the mean values were 3.33 and 3.50 respectively. However, coefficient of variation for Item 22 is high (over 30%), which indicates a considerable diversity of the responses. Both items got a relatively low value of the median (3), which means that half of the obtained responses were lower than 3 at the rating scale. This might mean that some textbooks used in Polish high schools are better than others at teaching student interculturality. Similarly, some teachers teach more interculturally than others. Contrary to this, student respondents assessed both textbooks used in the classroom and FL teachers relatively low in the IC perspective; the mean values were 2.61 and 2.69 respectively. However, coefficient of variation for both items is high (over 40%), which indicates a considerable diversity of the student responses, which might mean that there are schools where IC teaching is implemented by teachers with the textbooks. Furthermore, some teachers might teach FLs interculturally.

Factors fostering ICC teaching/learning. To get a broader picture of IC teaching in the Polish FL classroom, the next step in the study was to determine what factors, if any, determine the respondents' assessment. The following seven factors were considered to find out whether teacher respondents differentiated the questionnaire results: gender, the years in service, FL taught, the number of FLs known, travelling/not travelling abroad, having experience of living abroad and employment in a school with an/no exchange program. In the case of the learner sample gender, the length of FL education, the number of FLs learned, language proficiency, intensity of FL instruction, participation in a school exchange program and experience of living abroad were analyzed. *U*-tests were run on the seven determined subpopulations for both research groups.[3]

Significant differences were found only in the teacher sample on three measures: the language taught,[4] the number of FL known by the respondents, and travelling/not travelling abroad. The study results revealed that teachers of German focused more on developing learners' IC competence in the classroom than their counterparts teaching English. Moreover, the more FLs a teacher knew, the more s/he got involved in IC teaching. Similarly, the teachers who traveled abroad frequently were also more aware of the need to introduce elements of IC teaching in the classroom (see Appendix B).

The teacher's experience of living abroad and being employed in a school which has a student foreign exchange program are other important factors which facilitate the development of students' IC competence; although the difference for those two subpopulations was not significant, a range of separate items in those categories differed significantly (Items 12 and 9 respectively). Similarly, more significant differences were found on a few separate items for subpopulations determined by gender and years in service. For example, female informants developed students abilities to cope with intercultural encounters more (Items 8 and 9).

More experienced respondents gained higher means in three questionnaire items: they taught not only about history, geography, literature or art of the target language culture/s, but also everyday habits of the inhabitants (Item 5). Furthermore, they assessed textbooks they use from the IC perspective higher (Item 22) and they saw higher correlation between students' visits abroad and their positive attitudes towards foreign countries, cultures and foreigners (Item 24). Quite surprisingly, however, inexperienced subjects fo-

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[3] The critical values are 1.64 and -1.64 respectively, a significance level is .05.
[4] Since the majority of the sample constituted teachers of English and German, the difference between only those two subpopulations was checked.

cused more than their experienced colleagues on developing skills which help students communicate effectively with foreigners (Item 8).

No significant differences were found in the learner sample on all the seven measures. However, there were significant differences in a few separate items in the subpopulations determined by gender (3 items), the length of FL education (1 item), intensity of FL instruction (12 items) and participation in a school exchange program (2 items) (see Appendix C).

## Implications for Future Research

Some limitations of the present study should be addressed because they provide agenda for future research. Firstly, the quantitative investigation has its limitations, namely subjectivity of the questionnaire as the tool to check respondents' assessment. Secondly, to help validate the obtained data, and thereby, eventually, to increase the credibility of their interpretations, the present study should be complemented by a separate, qualitative one, that is, lesson observations, interviews with teachers and learners or different kinds of diaries, journals and logs. Only triangulation by methods and sources will help us further pursue the matter and investigate it thoroughly, and eventually, will give us a reliable answer to the research questions, thus a broader picture of IC teaching/learning in Poland.

## Conclusions

The findings of the research are conflicting. Teacher respondents' results demonstrate that FL teachers in Poland feel prepared to foster their students IC competence, but they practice IC teaching in the classroom moderately. Contrary to this, the results obtained from the analysis of learners' data reveal that IC teaching/learning in the Polish educational context plays a minor role and much needs to be done to implement multi-dimensional IC teaching/learning there. It is too soon to generalize the assessment of IC teaching/ learning in Poland on the basis of the data presented in this article; this research should be complemented by research employing other methods and sources.

## Acknowledgements

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Appendix A

Intercultural education in a FL classroom in Poland – questionnaire

A number of statements which are used to describe FL classroom from the IC perspective are given below. Read each statement and indicate by circling the right number how this particular comment refers to your FL classes. Use the following rating scale:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

1. Thanks to FL classes I (my students) know that both language and body language have cultural connotations, e.g. people in different parts of the world differ in their perception of time, the distance kept by interlocutors during a conversation or the use of gestures.
2. FL education has made me (my students) aware that lack of knowledge of cultures impedes our abilities to communicate with their representatives and can lead to a wide range of communicative misunderstandings.
3. FL classes contribute to my (students') better understanding of the TL culture/s.
4. FL classes broaden my (students') knowledge of various cultures, characteristic of the people living all over the world, not only in the TL culture.
5. FL classes provide me (my students) with the information not only about history, geography, literature or art of the TL culture/s, but also about everyday habits of the inhabitants.
6. Thanks to FL education I (my students) know that different societies differ from each other in the systems of values or attitudes that prevail there.
7. FL education is conducive to my (students') reflections on cultural differences and development of observational and analytical skills.
8. In FL classroom we (my students) develop skills which help us (them) communicate effectively with speakers who originate from various cultures. For example, we (they) do exercises or tasks which require adopting linguistic and paralinguistic behavior appropriately to the situation.
9. FL teaching is integrated with establishing and maintaining contacts with foreigners.
10. FL classes develop our (in my students) openness and tolerance towards different nations and cultures, promote positive attitudes towards them and teach us (them) perceive the world from different perspectives.
11. FL classes have taught me (my students) to keep under control my (their) negative reactions, such as anger or fury towards representatives of the cultures distant from mine.
12. In FL classroom I (my students) have learned to avoid assessing a situation or a phenomenon impulsively or emotionally-driven.
13. FL education has helped me (my students) develop empathy towards people who live in different countries or originate from different cultural regions.
14. When I (my students) compare foreign cultures or behavior of foreigners with my (their) own I (they) try not to assess them.
15. FL classes have taught me (my students) to disagree with the opinions or attitudes of the other people in such a way that does not provoke conflicts or excludes cooperation with them.

16. FL classroom does not contribute to strengthening stereotypes and prejudices among students towards foreigner cultures, e.g. Scots are mean.
17. In FL classroom we (my students) often compare foreign cultures with the Polish one.
18. FL classes help us (my students) reflect on our (their) own values and beliefs.
19. FL classes help us (my students) understand better our (their) own identity and native culture.
20. FL education contributes to reducing our (my students') ethnocentrism.
21. Contacts with other cultures in foreign language classroom help us (my students) improve our (their) self-assessment as Poles – we (they) do not have an inferiority complex toward representatives of other cultures because we (they) realize that Poles have their own valuable contribution to the world's cultural heritage.
22. FL textbooks which we have used in the classroom so far have prepared us well to function in a multi-cultural world. Among others, they had a separate module devoted to developing ICC.
23. My FLteachers are/ were (I am) very effective IC mediator/s – they (I) make/ have made us (my students) aware that we (they) live in a multi-cultural world and have prepared us (them) well to interact with foreigners.
24. Visits abroad (school exchange programs included) have a positive influence on my (students') attitude and behavior towards foreign cultures and their representatives.

## Appendix B

Table *U*-statistics for the differences between mean results in the teachers' subpopulations determined by seven factors (asterisks indicate significant differences)

| Item | Gender | Years in service | The number of FLs known | Traveling/not traveling abroad | Having experience of living abroad | Employment in schools with exchange program | FL taught |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.2126 | 0.3862 | - 2.9811* | 1.4095 | 2.3666* | 0.7921 | 0.0815 |
| 2 | 0.2090 | 0.3095 | - 2.3656* | 1.9482* | 1.1211 | 0.3126 | - 1.4824 |
| 3 | - 0.3463 | - 0.3223 | - 1.5882 | 1.7167* | 1.9560* | 2.1909* | - 2.4843* |
| 4 | - 0.8644 | - 0.9082 | - 1.6001 | 1.9901* | 3.1057* | 2.1502* | 0.5200 |
| 5 | - 0.8301 | - 1.9425* | - 0.8781 | 1.7748* | 2.9303* | - 0.0933 | - 0.6945 |
| 6 | - 0.7265 | 0.5922 | - 5.2091* | 2.8689* | 3.2341* | 0.6937 | - 2.2823* |
| 7 | 0.3541 | - 0.7345 | - 4.1974* | 1.9890* | 2.5984* | 2.8545* | - 1.7132* |
| 8 | 2.1489* | 2.1116* | - 1.5019 | 1.4771 | 2.0861* | 0.2946 | - 3.5128* |
| 9 | 1.8983* | 0.1501 | - 1.1217 | 1.5452 | 1.8590* | 0.4671 | - 3.2784* |
| 10 | 1.0274 | - 0.3310 | - 3.2964* | 1.2878 | 0.3731 | - 0.5708 | - 2.4655* |
| 11 | 1.2883 | - 0.3079 | 0.1592 | 1.2435 | 1.7308* | 0.6907 | - 1.2309 |
| 12 | 1.1407 | 0.1805 | - 0.2530 | 0.5765 | 1.1567 | 1.8593* | - 3.1043* |
| 13 | 0.0667 | 0.2206 | - 2.9339* | 0.5431 | 0.9219 | 1.2641 | - 2.1201* |
| 14 | 1.2759 | 0.0009 | - 0.6508 | 1.8719* | - 0.0927 | 2.1139* | - 2.8974* |
| 15 | 1.3667 | - 0.8320 | - 1.5097 | 1.4560 | - 0.3544 | 1.9260* | - 2.6599* |
| 16 | 1.3443 | - 0.8630 | - 1.4329 | 0.6309 | - 0.4890 | 0.9704 | - 3.8803* |
| 17 | - 0.1880 | 0.0614 | - 3.4819* | 2.7991* | 0.9947 | 0.6884 | - 1.3144 |
| 18 | 0.2910 | 0.8877 | - 3.6289* | 2.3349* | 2.0685* | 1.3481 | - 3.3103* |
| 19 | - 0.5939 | 0.0239 | - 2.2265* | 1.7160* | 1.4814 | 1.4944 | - 1.9179* |
| 20 | 1.3101 | - 0.3634 | - 0.9874 | 1.4677 | - 0.0611 | 1.2303 | - 1.9611* |

| Item | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | - 0.4821 | - 0.3328 | - 1.8328* | 0.5771 | - 0.1380 | 2.2673* | - 1.1619 |
| 22 | - 1.3312 | - 1.7534* | - 1.0336 | 1.0961 | - 0.3690 | 2.2662* | - 0.7442 |
| 23 | 0.6961 | - 1.0775 | - 4.1004* | 2.5695* | 2.5428* | 1.3674 | - 2.0839* |
| 24 | - 0.0688 | - 1.8034* | - 2.1068* | 3.2539* | 2.5947* | 4.0220* | - 2.7106* |
| Total | 0.3932 | - 0.2410 | - 2.0741* | 1.6665* | 1.4053 | 1.3611 | - 1.9471* |

## Appendix C

Table *U*-statistics and *t* test for the differences between the mean results in the learners' subpopulations determined by seven factors[5] (asterisks indicate significant differences)

| Item | Gender | The length of FL education | The number of FLs learned | Language proficiency | Intensity of FL instruction | Participating in a foreign exchange program | Having experience of living abroad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | -0.3795 | -0.9433 | -1.1153 | -0.7398 | -2.7771* | 0.6391 | 0.2169 |
| 2 | 0.2249 | 0.7012 | -1.2124 | -0.7941 | -2.1978* | 0.2118 | 0.0765 |
| 3 | -1.5733 | -0.1708 | -1.2229 | -0.8189 | -2.4645* | -1.7695* | -0.6172 |
| 4 | -1.1525 | 0.4012 | 0.1396 | 0.0920 | -0.4395 | 0.2088 | 0.0692 |
| 5 | -1.6638* | -0.5521 | -0.0266 | -0.0176 | -2.7139* | -0.6744 | -0.2267 |
| 6 | -0.6360 | 0.5224 | 0.3994 | 0.2621 | -2.2484* | 1.0363 | 0.3435 |
| 7 | -1.5198 | -0.4283 | -0.7347 | -0.4873 | -1.8748* | -0.1492 | -0.0484 |
| 8 | -1.1624 | 1.0998 | 0.1720 | 0.1133 | -1.4144 | 1.0650 | 0.3430 |
| 9 | -1.7973* | 0.1563 | -0.3124 | -0.2044 | -0.4171 | -0.8565 | -0.2775 |
| 10 | -1.4107 | 0.3618 | 1.0684 | 0.7081 | -1.2027 | 0.5238 | 0.1874 |
| 11 | 0.3125 | 1.2140 | -0.7841 | -0.5189 | -1.9975* | 0.1165 | 0.0390 |
| 12 | 0.8697 | -1.2613 | -0.9278 | -0.6154 | -0.2085 | -0.8379 | -0.2935 |
| 13 | -0.9526 | 0.8695 | -0.7956 | -0.5297 | -1.7727* | 0.1545 | 0.0494 |
| 14 | 0.6949 | 0.3615 | 1.1769 | 0.7749 | 1.1645 | -0.8278 | -0.2917 |
| 15 | -0.3767 | 1.3582 | 0.2092 | 0.1403 | -1.7833* | -1.3933 | -0.4535 |
| 16 | -0.2483 | 1.5526 | 0.7389 | 0.5029 | -0.9162 | 0.4503 | 0.1470 |
| 17 | 0.0855 | -0.2950 | 0.4434 | 0.2998 | -1.6589* | 0.0440 | 0.0135 |
| 18 | -0.7694 | 2.3394* | 0.4859 | 0.3230 | 0.5105 | 1.4181 | 0.4595 |
| 19 | -2.0228* | -0.0266 | -0.0216 | -0.0144 | 0.6612 | 0.1328 | 0.0404 |
| 20 | -1.0089 | 1.0740 | -0.3426 | -0.2259 | -0.0586 | -0.4272 | -0.1382 |
| 21 | -0.2296 | -0.1384 | -0.1580 | -0.1042 | -1.8408* | -0.9659 | -0.3213 |
| 22 | -1.5121 | -0.2367 | -1.0464 | -0.6795 | -1.8884* | -1.6546* | -0.5387 |
| 23 | -1.1943 | -0.8844 | 1.0351 | 0.7035 | -0.1966 | 0.4255 | 0.1449 |
| Total | -0.5481 | 0.2895 | -0.2441 | -0.1621 | -1.2188 | 0.0498 | 0.0164 |

[5] For the first six factors determined *U*-statistics was used, for the last one *t* test because of the small number of the subpopulation of the students who have experience of living abroad (*n* = 7).