

The centrality of interculturality in teaching literature in foreign language classes: A case study of German at the University of Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The last decade has seen the burgeoning of a field of academic inquiry focusing on the importance of literature in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. This article investigates the role played by intercultural competence and intercultural dialogue in teaching literature in German language classes at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ). This article interrogates how literature allows for the negotiation of diverse intercultural issues which are not only important in ensuring students are able to communicate across cultures but also improve their linguistic competencies in the foreign language. Theoretically drawing on the work of Kreutzer, this article proposes a didactical approach which can be used in the teaching of foreign languages using literature.

Keywords:

Intercultural Approach, double look (*Doppelblicken*), literature, culture, foreign languages, teaching

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Introduction

With the world becoming the proverbial global village that it is presently, learning foreign languages has become imperative to facilitate communication across borders and cultures. The teaching and learning of foreign languages in Africa has itself been shrouded in diverse issues mainly hinging on neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism especially in cases where the foreign languages being taught are languages of countries that previously colonised different countries on the continent (Phillipson, 2008). Recognising the paucity of scholarship in Zimbabwe on the teaching of foreign languages, the present article sets out to examine how literary texts can be integrated into teaching German in such a manner that it facilitates improved intercultural and linguistic competence of

learners. The present study, based on ethnographic classroom observations, proposes a pedagogical approach of teaching of foreign languages by focusing on the intercultural potentialities of literary studies.

This article proposes the intercultural approach as a viable pedagogical method that simultaneously promotes cultural sensitivity and intercultural dialogue for students of German at the UZ. Literature, if competently harnessed and employed in the language classroom, has the potential of being a pedagogical tool that allows learners to go beyond the worlds and existences they know and to engage with foreign worlds in a way that allows them to be critically engaged in learning and creating knowledge about themselves and the world they inhabit. Indeed, an intercultural approach allows for learning to move from the traditional teacher-oriented perspectives to learner-centred approaches that recognise the learner as an active participant who is able to navigate his/her learning process through an interrogation of self and other.

Literature review

Teachers have in the past faced diverse challenges in using literature as a tool in foreign language teaching. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that literary texts play an important role in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Literary texts are central in representing cultures and cultural practices which would ordinarily not be accessible in a foreign language classroom. Neuner and Hunfeld (1993) assert that it is important to teach culture in a foreign language class as this creates a platform for learners to relate what they learn (culturally) to their own experiences. Kreutzer (2009) also advocates for an intercultural approach to teaching which benefits the learners as well. Agossavi (2003, p.35) argues that intercultural communication recognizes the existence and deviation of different cultural spheres and it does not misconceive, misjudge or repudiate any culture. One's own culture can be defined by its relationship to other cultures and in this case, an intercultural approach/doppeltblicken is regarded as an intersection between 'Eigenem und Fremden' where one's awareness of his/her culture makes him/her aware of the other culture.

Frontal teaching was used in the teaching and learning of foreign languages for a certain time (Luther, 2000, p.59). Through this method, the teacher was responsible for the knowledge that the learners acquired and learners tended to understand what they acquired from the teacher. It was later revealed that learners progressively forgot what they learnt in class (Luther, 2000, p.60) and new ways of teaching foreign languages had to be devised. Klafki (1975) postulated a systematic and innovative way of teaching and learning foreign languages, which focuses on the individual's relation and interaction with others in knowledge creation and acquisition. In this manner, each learner has personal biases and predispositions which inadvertently affect his/her comprehension of diverse phenomena. Constructive didactics emphasises the learning of a foreign language in an active environment where learners are expected to participate and involve themselves in creating meaning and knowledge in the target language (Klafki 1998). Constructivists like Wolff (1996) advocate for learning strategies which were first introduced in 1950 'to describe actions which are undertaken to achieve set learning goals' (Klafki, 1998, p.29).

In this line of thinking, the learners are expected to acquire more specific and special knowledge on interpretation in class. As mentioned by hooks

When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where the teachers grow, and are empowered by the process (1994, p.21).

I thus viewed a dialectical process in which whilst students learnt, the lecturer also learnt and unlearnt certain ideas and practices that he/she had come to take for granted.

hooks rightly posits that the main objective of education, in all its diverse forms, should be to ensure the independence of the learner. She explains that there is always need to 'transgress those boundaries that would confine each student to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning' (hooks, 1994, p.13).

Intercultural communicative competence is a method that is worth recognising especially in this study because it informs the teacher about what needs to be worked on and if achieved it makes the students interculturally competent. It can be used as a yardstick on how to teach target culture as well as for students to know how it has helped them enhance their linguistic and cultural knowledge towards the target language and culture.

Banafshech, Khosravi and Saidi (2013) carried out a study that sought to analyse the relevance of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language classes. The study addressed two research questions: “how Iranian teachers perceive the intercultural communicative competence and its importance to the teachers?” and “Do the Iranian teachers’ experiences influence their perception of intercultural communicative competence and its relevance to English language teaching?” 100 Iranian English as foreign language teachers participated through the use of questionnaires within the period of 1 week (Banafshech 2013, p.69). The questionnaires asked for information on how the teachers perceived the objectives of English/foreign language teaching, what they think of ‘culture teaching’ objectives in an English or foreign language teaching context, what kinds of culture teaching activities these teachers practice during class room teaching time, what particular aspects do they teach and their opinion regarding the intercultural dimensions in foreign language teaching. It was noted that there is need to hold workshops for the teachers’ intercultural communicative competence and intercultural teaching (Banafshech 2013, pp.74-76).

For a foreign language learner, it is important, when considering the type of literary texts they should read, to consider the choice of the text and how the texts are chosen, type of reading adopted, concept of interculturality in use, pedagogical implications, cultural background and understanding (Matos 2012: 87). Matos (2012) affirms that literature can be viewed from different perspectives, pedagogically and interculturally. In both aspects, it enhances the learning of a foreign language and culture (57). Through literature, it is possible to be conscious of what is happening in one’s immediate environment as one is able to know

more about their own culture. Literature exposes the reader to possible worlds and enables the reader to appreciate worlds and experiences that are foreign to him/her. Through literature, one is able to appreciate other worlds that is not his/her own and is able to understand the way of life of others. The more one knows/reads about a certain culture, the more one is able to interpret the events that take place in that particular culture, enrich their knowledge and be able to reflect on their own culture (Matos, 2012, p.57).

It is important to highlight the characteristics of learning a foreign culture in class. Culture learning can be regarded as a process of interpretation. The purpose of teaching culture, according to Kramsch (2003, p.32) is to enable learners to “understand why the speakers of two different languages act and react the way they do, whether in fictional texts or in social encounters, and what the consequences of these insights may mean for the learner.” During this process, the learners are enabled to interpret and make sense of their inner and outside world.

The major findings of this review of scholarship have been that Fennes and Hapgood's (1997) approach of teaching foreign literature, the triangular didactic, ensures that students learning a certain language and students from a target culture meet and converse. Agossavi (2010) and Ökten (2013) advocate for the use of literary texts in a foreign language class for the students to be able to know the target culture and be able to appreciate literary texts better.

Scholars mentioned above also assert that intercultural interaction in a foreign language class is important in a foreign language class. It is of imperative necessity that cultures expressed and embedded within literary texts are discussed in the foreign language classroom so as to enhance the learning of the target language. Intercultural interaction in foreign language classes is enhanced when students grapple with translated literary works. Translated literary texts can be used as an effective tool to enhance the learners' communicative competence whilst also opening up to learners' new worlds which would not have been possible owing to language barriers. With reference to what diverse scholars have discussed, the present researcher has noted, with some concern that these scholars were not clear

as to how the teachers of foreign languages are supposed to choose the literary texts for the effective learning of a foreign language.

This study has therefore attempted to fill this cavernous gap by explaining how literary texts were chosen to be used within the space of a foreign language classroom. As mentioned above, scholars have given advantages of using literary texts in a foreign language class but did not give suggestions on how one goes about implementing this recommendation. I also observed the dearth of scholarship on didactics of literature in a foreign language class particularly in the African context. This study thus fills this yawning gap in scholarship by proposing a pedagogical tool and method which could be effectively tested and adapted to the African context.

The teaching and learning of literature in a foreign language class is regarded by the scholars mentioned in this chapter as vital in enhancing the language and cultural knowledge of the students. From the vast scholarship discussed in this chapter, I was able to deduce what could be relevant for the students learning German at the University of Zimbabwe so as to improve the current methods of teaching German at UZ.

Theoretical considerations

The study generated new knowledge on the didactics of literature and how literary studies can be better used and integrated into foreign language acquisition. Such knowledge highlighted the fact that literary studies should not be in any way detached from the language acquisition. As such, literary (and indeed intercultural competence) should work in tandem with linguistic competence. The intercultural approach has been used as a theory of analysing literary texts in this study as well as a method of teaching literature in a foreign language class.

This article draws on the theory of interculturality and the concept of double look (*Doppeltblicken*) proposed by Kreuzer (2009) as well as critical discourse analysis. The intercultural approach, based on an in-depth “double look” (*Doppeltblicken*), allows learners of a foreign language like German to have empathy

for the “other.” The in depth ‘double look’ reveals similarities in differences and vice versa, thus enhancing intercultural dialogue.

Doppeltblicken is a concept that was propagated by Nobert Ndong (1993) under the supervision Leo Kreutzer who later developed it into the intercultural approach. This approach for teaching German literature based on interculturality was developed as the “*interkulturelle Zusammenführung von Texten deutschsprachiger und afrikanischer Literatur*” (Kreutzer 2009:58), (Intercultural compilation of texts of German language and African literature). One can analyse literature ‘... *durch ... das Eigene (die eigene Literatur) >im Lichte< des Fremden (einer fremdkulturellen Literatur), das Fremde aber zugleich >im Lichte< des Eigenen erschiene*’ (ibid: 51) (... through ... the own (the own culture) in the light of the strange (a foreign culture), while the strange also appears in the light of the own.) The *Doppeltblicken* approach helps in promoting a critical understanding of texts by the students by not only comparing and contrasting different texts from different cultural backgrounds, but also to promote an intercultural dialogue between texts. It is understood as part of the intercultural approach.

In the study, although I acknowledge the use of various teaching methods, I contend that the most appropriate in teaching literature would be the intercultural approach and the concept of *Doppeltblicken* from Kreutzer (2009) and Ndong (1993). Ndong (1993) did preliminary work on a concept of double look ‘Doppeltblicken,’ in which he emphasizes the interconnectedness between German and African texts via an intercultural comparison. ‘Double look’ (later on developed by Kreutzer at the University of Hannover, Kreutzer 2009) is an intercultural comparison of literary texts from the German-speaking countries and Africa, in which one can view his/her culture in light of him/herself and also in light of the stranger and at first look, one might see the strangeness/foreignness of another culture but on a second look, that strangeness disappears (ibid, p.58). The intercultural approach and the concept of *Doppeltblicken* gave a counter argument to the idea propagated by Wierlacher. Wierlacher (2003) asserted the view that students learning German as a foreign language should be able to comprehend and interpret German

literary texts according to their specific sociocultural context. He describes this process as “multi perspectivity” (Wierlacher, 2003). For the purpose of this study, intercultural approach is understood to be the process of looking at the self from the perspective of the other and vice versa (Kreutzer, 2009, p. 59). This therefore involves two forms of analytical movements: introspective movement as well as outer movement towards the other. The intercultural approach is based on an in-depth ‘double look’ (*Doppeltblicken*) concept which enables the reader to have empathy towards the other. The double look, which forms the basis of the intercultural approach from Ndong and Kreutzer, allows the reader to have a closer look that allows one to see similarities in differences and vice versa and this allows a dialogue between the two or more cultures involved. This intercultural approach allowed students to relate to what they have read in the texts to what they experience in their real lives thus the interaction and mutual dialogue of cultures helped the students in overcoming superficial cultural differences and experiences (Kreutzer, 2009, p.13).

According to Foucault, the question of authenticity does not exist when dealing with literature. Instead, the focus should be placed on the function of the author. By not focusing on authenticity, students/learners are afforded sufficient analytical space to closely examine the function of the author and not the author himself. This has a direct link with the intercultural approach for it will enable students to concentrate on the narrative and therein developed themes and motifs of the text rather than on the author.

Using discourse analysis helps direct the students’ attention to the role of language in a society and how people use language to shape their worlds. For example, in Dambudzo Marechera’s *The House of Hunger* there is a theme of poverty that closely resembles deprivation in Wolfgang Borchert’s *Das Brot*. A close analysis reveals however that the perception of poverty in both texts is significantly influenced by the social and historical factors underlying both texts leading to different reactions by the characters. Discourse analysis offers an effective way of explaining the discrepancy among apparently very similar themes. Hence,

Foucault, in his essay, 'What is an Author?' (1969) points out that in literature, when one is reading, one needs not to focus on the author of the text, but rather on the function of the author. The author is not an autonomous or omniscient subject but a product of discursive processes and power relations. By looking at the function of the author, the students would be critically looking at how the author has brought out the message thus analysing the language functions associated with social practices.

Discourse analysis is important in explaining and understanding the extra-textual information and the discourses that shape the literary narratives. Foucauldian discourse analysis advocates for an approach to reality through language and how the author linguistically puts across ideas about a certain society. By using discourse analysis, learners are able to examine the vocabulary used (in this case in literary texts) and the social factors that could have affected the application of the language and choice of language. It enhances critical thinking as it ensures that students focus on the conditions and circumstances under which a text is produced. Discourse analysis helps the students to make informed analysis on certain issues in the given texts through the background knowledge and textual and non-textual elements they were expected to acquire.

Foucault's (1988) discourse theory is part of his archeology of knowledge. He analyses the structure of different knowledge. He thereby examines the discursive rules determining what can and cannot be said. For example, from his text he gives us an example in *Die Geburt der Klinik: Eine Archäologie des ärztlichen Blicks (Figuren des Wissens/Bibliothek)* (1988) where he explains that in the middle ages someone with epilepsy was considered as someone possessed with demons and therefore, he/she was treated as an outcast. Nowadays, it is not the same, epileptic people are offered medical attention and it is now known that it is a medical condition. Therefore, the focus should be on how they are portrayed in the texts respectively.

Whereas the intercultural approach was used as a valid pedagogical method that allowed learners to critically analyse, negotiate and engage with meaning of literary texts, discourse analysis was used in order to let the students analyse how

different themes like poverty and social relationships were shaped by the society and how certain perceptions changed through society. Discourse analysis enabled the students to scrutinize deeper the cultural representation offered by the novels as well as extra textual information for example the author's background as well as the sociohistorical contexts of the texts. This helped the students in making informed decisions and answers pertaining to the two texts.

Material and methods

The study was carried out in three interconnected and sequential phases. In the first phase, the students were given the two texts, Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* and Wolfgang Borchert's *Das Brot*, to read without any influence and prior knowledge of the intercultural approach. In the second phase, the intercultural approach was explained and the students were given two texts, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and Bertolt Brecht's *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*, in order to find out if they have understood the concept of intercultural approach. In the third, the students were given the two texts again, Marechera's *The House of Hunger* and Borchert's *Das Brot*, to test the effectiveness of the intercultural approach.

Each phase was analysed using the four stages used when teaching in a foreign language class. These stages are: 1. The introduction where I explain what the students will be doing in the lecture. 2. Presentation, here I will present the texts, and in some cases read part of the texts with the students in class. 3. Interpretation is where the students discuss and exchange their views, identify themes, historical content, plot and characters. 4. Production stage is where the students fill in the questionnaires within the classroom environment and under strict guidelines and timelines.

An anthology of short stories entitled *The House of Hunger* by the Zimbabwean author, Dambudzo Marechera (1978) was read for comprehension. The second was German short-story written by Wolfgang Borchert entitled *Das Brot* (1945). These texts were read in phase 1 (pre-test). *Petals of Blood* (1977) written by the Kenyan author, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1953) written

by the German author, Bertolt Brecht were read in the intervention stage (phase 2) which was meant to introduce *doppelblicken*/intercultural approach. The texts were appropriate for the students according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for B1 level of proficiency. This framework stipulates that students should be able to understand and also produce simple connected texts on topics familiar to participants or any other topics of their personal interest as a qualification for B1 level of proficiency. I, therefore, chose texts that had issues that students could relate to.

The German texts are normally read in class as classic texts by mother tongue speakers and are also read in some universities by students who are learning German as a foreign/second language. The English texts are read worldwide especially by English literature students. The English novels were acquired from University of Zimbabwe library and the German texts were acquired from University of Nairobi in Kenya, German Section library.

Questionnaires (achievement tests) were used in order to get information from the students. The questionnaires were in German and the students were expected to respond in German. The questionnaires have open ended questions in order not to limit students when writing their answers. Students were expected to be able to express their opinion without any reservation. Answers were rated according to how the quantity and quality of the answers the students gave, the more points and supporting examples from the texts the students gave, the more they got from the lecturer. The questionnaires were designed by myself. I made sure that the questions would obtain information that was as complete and as accurate as possible. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it was easy for the respondents to fully understand the questions and were not likely to refuse to answer or to lie to me or try to conceal their attitudes. The questionnaire was organized and worded to encourage respondents to provide complete, accurate and unbiased information. The questionnaires were designed in such a way to make it easy for respondents to give necessary information for me to make sound analysis and interpretation. The questionnaires were:

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- i. to evaluate the effectiveness of the intercultural approach as an alternative strategy for teaching German at the University of Zimbabwe;
 - ii. to analyse the quality of teaching process using *doppelblicken*/intercultural approach; and
 - iii. to establish the attitudes of learners towards learning of Germany in foreign classes after having experienced the Intercultural Approach

In this study, I made use of the theories and methods mentioned above, as a way of enhancing the general appreciation of literary texts, lexical competence and critical thinking of students. A close examination reveals that the learner's reading ability was also enhanced. This was shown through the questionnaires which they were given in the first and third phases of their learning in class. The quality of answers given by the students in their first phase where they did not know about the intercultural approach and the *Doppelblicken* is very different from the answers they gave in the third phase where they were acquainted with the two concepts. The concept of *Doppelblicken* and the intercultural approach were propagated specifically for German students, native or foreign language learners to make them more cognisant, introspective and creative for the development of their skills.

Thirteen third year students of German participated in the study. They were the only ones studying German culture and civilisation and had the highest level of proficiency because they were in their final year of study.

Results

Below are the questions that students were asked in phase 1 and 3 of the study.

Phase 1:

1. *Was fällt Ihnen zu den beiden Texten ein?* (What are your comments about the two texts).¹

¹ This and other translations were done by me YC.

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2. *Bennen Sie die Themen in den beiden Texten* (Name the themes in both texts).
 3. *Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Texten?* (Are there any similarities and differences between the two texts?).
 4. *Sehen Sie Ähnlichkeiten in Unterschieden und umgekehrt?* (Do you find any similarities in differences and vice versa?)

Phase 3:

1. *Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach, Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Texten?* (Are there any similarities and differences between the two texts?).
2. *Sehen Sie Ähnlichkeiten in Unterschieden und umgekehrt?* (Do you find any similarities in differences and vice versa?).
3. *Könnten Sie anhand dieses Ansatzes über Ihr eigenes Leben bzw. über die Gesellschaft in Simbabwe besser reflektieren?* (With the aid of this approach, could you/were you able to reflect on your own life or society in Zimbabwe better?).

Phase 2 was meant to introduce the intercultural approach and discourse analysis. Two novels were used for the purposes of this phase. Students were given Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and Bertolt Brecht's *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*. A different set of books in phase 2 was used so as not to influence the students' responses in phase 3. The two novels were analysed using the intercultural approach and discourse analysis so that the students grasp the two concepts. The students were given class exercises and from their responses, I could tell that the students had understood the two concepts.

I looked at the texts that the students wrote and analysed what the students had written in response to the questions they answered in the questionnaires. The answers of the students were analysed using the intercultural approach and discourse analysis to see whether the students had improved or not.

From the current study, one can deduce that before the use of the intercultural approach and discourse analyses, students were able to identify what is common

between the two texts, for example, in question 1, phase 1, *Was fällt Ihnen zu den beiden Texten ein?* (What are your comments about the two texts), students were able to identify the setting of the two novels, the times the novels were written and some also commented on the titles, that they both represent hunger.

All the students scored above 50%. This shows that the traditional method allowed students to understand the texts and identify attributes in these different texts. The students were able to identify the times that the texts were written, this information was not found in the texts. The traditional method allowed the students to look for the background information of the authors as well as the situation during the times the texts were written.

Students were able to identify themes in both novels. The traditional method, which the students were used to, focused also on identifying themes in texts. The students had no difficulties in carrying out the task. This is seen in the way the students answered the second question, *Benennen Sie die Themen in den beiden Texten* (Name the themes in both texts), in phase 1.

In Question 3, *Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach, Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Texten?* (Are there any similarities and differences between the two texts?), all the students identified similarities and differences in both texts with 50% of them writing many similarities and differences.

50% of the students commented on colonialism and world war, 66% discussed the themes and 16% discussed the oppression of women in both texts. This shows that although the students were not yet equipped with the intercultural tools on how to analyse literary texts, using the traditional method, the students were able to carry out the task without difficulties. The fact that 16% of the students were able to make thematic comparisons between two texts is an important indicator of the intercultural competence that learners already possess.

The fourth question, *Sehen Sie Ähnlichkeiten in Unterschieden und umgekehrt?* (Do you find any similarities in differences and vice versa?), demanded explanation on the differences in similarities and similarities in differences. Although the students

could identify similarities and differences, this question seemed challenging to them. 50% of the students got an average mark while the other 50% got below half.

The reason why 50% of the students scored below half could be that the students' level of German proficiency could not allow them to explain their answers and to some extent, understand the question. The traditional method in this question neither allowed nor equipped students to think beyond their own cultures. The students could not have understood the question well or they did not have enough vocabulary to explain their answers.

In phase 3 the students did fairly well, considering that they were now equipped with the intercultural tools on how to analyse literary texts. Students were able to articulately explain their answers with the use of examples from the two texts. The questions in third phase asked for answers which needed explanations. The students managed to answer the questions fully without giving one-word answers, although with some grammatical mistakes.

In question 1, *Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach, Unterschiede und Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den beiden Texten?* (Are there any similarities and differences between the two texts?), all the students could identify similarities and differences in both texts. The same question was also asked in phase 1, question 3 where all the students could identify the similarities and differences. In phase 3, the students were more articulate when writing their answers.

The students both in phase 1 and phase 3 scored higher. 67% of the students could also identify the differences in the times the texts were written and the situations in the two countries when the texts were written. 50% of the students commented on the titles having different names but same meaning in both societies.

Question 2, *Sehen Sie Ähnlichkeiten in Unterschieden und umgekehrt?* (Do you find any similarities in differences and vice versa?), in this phase is similar to question 4 in phase 1. I repeated the same question so as to test the effectiveness of the

intercultural approach in phase 3. In phase 1, 50% of the students scored 3 out of 6 while the rest scored below half. In phase 3 there is an improvement, only one student scored below half. Most of the students could identify the similarities in differences and vice versa.

Some students were able to identify the differences in hunger, food, unemployment, colonialism, repercussions of war and culture while others identified similarities in repercussions of war and in themes like hunger and marriage. When one compares the answers of students in phase 3 and in phase 1, for example, where the students could not list many similarities in differences and vice versa, the students were able to list more than one. Whereas some students in phase 1 could only talk of the differences and similarities at thematic level, in phase 3 the students could talk of more similarities and differences for example about marriage, the differences in cultures, hunger, poverty and the students were able to explain their answers more.

83% of the students, from the answers they wrote, identified how the intercultural approach helped them understand the texts, for example: While others commented about the similarities in social lives and the problems of people in both Zimbabwe and Germany, some specified that they did not know that people in Germany could have similar problems to the people in Zimbabwe.

67% of the students, in their answers, commented that the intercultural approach promoted dialogue between the texts as well as between the cultures represented in the texts. Some students also mentioned respect as an important aspect when dealing with different cultures and also how people in these different countries, who have different cultures, tried to find solutions for the problems.

In question 3, *Könnten Sie anhand dieses Ansatzes über Ihr eigenes Leben bzw. über die Gesellschaft in Simbabwe besser reflektieren?* (With the aid of this approach, could you/were you able to reflect on your own life or society in Zimbabwe better?), 50% of the students scored above half while the other half could not explain their answers in an understandable manner.

Half of the students generalized their answers and could not pin point how the intercultural approach helped them in reflecting anything about their lives or their society. Some could not write their answers coherently.

The students in the third phase were more articulate in writing their responses and were using more examples when explaining their answers. The intercultural approach and discourse analysis should also be commended for enabling the students to widen their vocabulary and explain their answers. although in the last question of phase 3, 50% of the students could relate to events in their lives or society, those who did not were able to explain generally why the intercultural approach was important to them and how they now view other cultures.

Teaching sequence of teaching German literature in a foreign language class using *doppelblicken* approach and discourse analysis

Based on the above phases, the following pedagogical model/sequence was developed in which literature is used as a tool to enable improved intercultural and linguistic competence.

The pedagogical sequence is divided into 4 categories namely introduction, presentation, interpretation and production stage. Three hours are used for teaching and learning purposes followed by an extra session of around 40 minutes dedicated to assessment in the form of exercises and tests. 6 weeks of classes that involved reading the texts and discussing with the students were used. This means that students have roughly 18 hours of learning without writing a test. Tests and class exercises are given after 6 weeks. Students are also assigned a certain number of pages to go and read at home and when they came in class, they discuss what they would have read and move forward. After each hour students are given a 5-minute break. There is a one week break between the pretest and the second phase, where intercultural approach is introduced. After the introduction of intercultural approach, there is a one week break then the students write the post test.

The sequence of the lecture which introduces *doppeltblicken* and discourse analysis

This sequence is used for introducing both *Petals of Blood* and *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan*. The one below is for *Petals of Blood*.

Introduction:

In this stage, I spent 10 minutes introducing the lecture, where the teacher explains the objectives and the expected learning outcomes. The teacher also introduces the topic (analysing German and African literary texts using the intercultural approach) and the literary texts to be read in the lectures.

Students are asked if they have read any books written by local authors but in English. Students are also asked to give summaries of the books they have read. This is done in 20 minutes.

In the following 15 minutes, the teacher elaborates the use of *doppeltblicken*/intercultural approach.

Presentation:

Before reading the text, students are put in groups to discuss the author Ngugi wa Thiong'o. The students are asked to look for background knowledge of the author, other works that Ngugi wrote and what he generally writes about. Questions about the audience or the readers of Ngugi's novels and the motivation behind the stories are also asked. The teacher can also ask if there are any local authors who employed the same type of writing and for what purpose. This stage takes about 35 minutes.

Interpretation:

In this stage, the students and the teacher read parts of the novel, discuss or ask questions in between. Probing questions are asked that compel the students to discuss different issues that are depicted in the literary texts and especially how these relate to their own lives and lived experiences. Students can also be given tasks

to do, for example, to discuss life in rural areas, if they can relate the experience stated in the novel to their real-life experiences. Students can be asked what they would do in certain situations they would have read in the text, suggest solutions to problems faced by characters in the text and discuss themes they found in the text. They would report individually or put in groups of threes or fours. These discussions are done in German. The discussions can last at least 50 minutes to an hour depending on how students are forthcoming and interacting.

The production phase is done after the students have finished reading both literary texts, that means, the production stage is implemented three weeks after the students start learning.

Production Phase:

In this phase, students are given some form of assessment. The assessment seeks to preliminarily evaluate whether the teaching approach based on interculturality improves the critical thinking skills of the learners by allowing them to analytically engage with material in literary texts.

Conclusion

Through the pedagogical technique that focuses on teaching literature through an intercultural approach, the concept of *Doppelblicken*, the students were able to view the German and the Zimbabwean culture at the same time, without one culture being superior to the other. Students were able to identify, without difficulties, the similar problems in both the German and Zimbabwean societies and dig deeper into the causes of the problems. Comparing the current method of using intercultural approach and discourse analysis to the traditional method which the students were used to, the traditional method can be commended for enabling the students to identify themes in both texts. The intercultural approach and the discourse analysis took the students further into analysing the literary texts using the socio-historical background information as well as making use of knowledge about their culture. Although the intercultural approach did not specifically explain how to go about a literature lecture and how to handle with weaker students, I

managed to come up with systematic phases which one can follow when teaching literature in a foreign language class, i.e., when one is using the intercultural approach. I engaged the weaker students by pairing them with stronger students so that they improve their German proficiency.

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