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"The Role of Content in EFL-

Content Specifications under Considerations of European Language Policy Recommendations"

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Jennifer Anna Maria Gritsch

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English all by myself. Quotations from sources are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the biographical references either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and / or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BGBl	Bundesgesetzblatt der Republik Österreich
BIFIE	Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation & Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Frauen
BMWF	Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung
BMUKK	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur
CEF	Common European Framework of Reference[1]
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CoE	Council of Europe
ECML	European Centre for Modern Languages
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EU	European Union
LEPP	Language Education Policy Profile
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
ToC	Table of Contents

[1] The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001: 2) refers to itself as “CEF” rather than “CEFR” as adhered to in many publications (e.g. Alderson 2007).

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INTRODUCTION

> If any word in the English language is hot, buzzworthy and finger-snappingly with-it, surpassing even millennium in both general discourse and insiderese, that word is content. Get used to it, because we won't soon get over it (Safire 1998).

If we talk to friends, if we read a newspaper, if we listen to a song or compose lyric poems content is being communicated in a myriad of ways. We speak, we listen, we read and we write in order to transmit or receive information, we transmit and receive *content*.

The word *content* seems to be an intelligible term for people to use in their everyday speech. Certainly, *content* is supposed to contain something dependent on context, "some sort of environment; […] where language is involved", the word *content* is used in (Halliday 1999: 3). On consulting dictionaries in order to find out about the precise meaning of the word *content,* definitions such as "[…] things that are inside something […], things that are written in a book, magazine, letter, document etc.", " the list at the beginning of a book or magazine, showing the parts into which the book or magazine is divided", "the subject, ideas, or story that a piece of writing or a radio or television programme deal", with are suggested (Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners 2002: 300). The Cassell Concise Oxford Dictionary (Kirkpatrick 1994: 281) refers to content as "that which is contained in a vessel, writing or book", "the amount contained in a mixture", "a table or summary of subject-matter. Furthermore, *content* is described as "[…] the material dealt with in a speech/text […]" (Soanes & Hawker 2006: 210). The Oxford Dictionary of English (Soanes & Stevenson 2005: 373) describes *content* as

> the things that are held or included in something […], the amount of a particular constituent occurring in a substance, a list of the chapters or sections given at the front of a book or periodical [and] the material dealt with in a speech, literary work, etc. as distinct from its form or style […].

Not only is *content* an inherent feature in real-life situations, but also in the EFL context.

> […]Der Stoff besteht im Fremdsprachenunterricht aus Sprachstoff, Sachstoff und Verfahrensstoff […]. Die fremdsprachenmethodische Literatur spricht anstelle von Stoff oft vom Inhalt, der anzueignen ist (Enter 1993: 200).

Language is used to talk about and grasp content-matter. There is no doubt that content in one way or another has an encouraging effect on learners and fosters their motivation. *What* is being communicated is *per se* contributing to the learners' progress rather than *how* it is said

(Krashen 1982: 120). The fact that thematic *content* is delivered in language learning is still commonly disregarded in some EFL approaches and methods (Mohan 1986: 1) although a shift introducing content by means of themes in the EFL context, a general trend from form-focused towards message-focused approaches, from *how* towards *what* (Johnson 2010: 172), from linguistic content to thematic content, can be recognised.

It has to be understood that c*ontent* within the concept of this thesis is the content of what is being communicated, *content* that constitutes the scaffold of every language act, and imparts information to increase knowledge one is required to possess for performing language related tasks in real-life situations. Thus, *content* must not be narrowed down to a mere "global specification" (Martyniuk 2006: 9) of competence proficiency describing generally what language learners should be able to do in the four language skills listening, reading, speaking and writing[2]. This often overemphasises linguistic forms in EFL tuition, but *content* ought to be seen in respect of contextualization within specific domains and themes that activate a communicative performance. "Linguistic competence *deals with […] phonology, morphology […] and syntax"* as "formal characteristics of a language" that function as skeleton (Martyniuk 2006: 8). Thematic *content*, however, represents the core of a language activity as it stores information that is either received or produced. Hence, having specific language structures at one's disposal, knowing how to put them into practice and verbalise specific phrases does not necessarily guarantee successful communication. While a language learner might be capable to express wishes, opinions or formulate questions, such as *I would like to have*, *In my opinion…*, *Can you tell me …?*, he/she might not be able to specify what it actually is he/she desires, thinks or is looking for since he/she lacks content knowledge or content based lexis. While linguistic patterns are often taught aiming at accuracy without focusing on thematic content during the course of a linear language learning process, thematic content knowledge seems second choice.

Considering the above – let us call it - "content-dilemma", it seems utterly important to draw attention to EFL ideology. What types of skills, knowledge, competences and above all - being of particular interest for the thesis at hand- what kind of content is dealt with and set out in national curriculums heavily relies on language policies, stakeholders, language teaching ideologies and EFL teachers. The Austrian curriculum for foreign languages at lower and upper secondary levels of academic schools (BGBl 2004: 26) for instance has made it a must to develop communicative competences on the basis of the Council of Europe's popular framework for language teaching and learning CEF (2001).

[2] "English language proficiency benchmarks" (Little 2007: 652)

This thesis seeks to illuminate the pivotal role of content in EFL and will address the following research question:

To what extent do the English as a foreign language course books *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5* take into account language teaching recommendations as set in the Council of Europe language teaching and learning tool 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' (CEF 2001) with regard to thematic content?

Chapter 1 therefore deals with content specifications and recommendations in a European dimension. The Council of Europe as well as the European Union regularly disseminate recommendations regarding foreign language teaching and learning to their member states. These (including Austria as a member state of both the EU and the Council of Europe), have the option of selecting, adapting and implementing the recommendations in their national language policy. Any content specifications in the Austrian EFL curriculum adopted in connection therewith will be determined throughout this discussion.

Chapter 2 provides a multi-perspectival approach towards the definition of *content* on a pedagogical level and illustrates the shift in notion of this term. This can evidently be explained due to the transformation of aims and objectives in various teaching methods and approaches. A shift of aims and objectives clearly results in a shift of both syllabus design and content. Hence, in this chapter also different approaches and methods advocating diverse amounts of content specifications in various syllabi types are discussed. In adherence to the content arrangement of syllabi types, chapter 2 centres on the role authenticity plays within the EFL context.

In **chapter 3** thematic content criteria and categories are introduced since thematic content rather than linguistic content is considered a major focus of attention within the present thesis. A sound reason for highlighting thematic content rather than linguistic content is the assumption that linguistic content can be taught through thematic content more naturally than vice versa, however in order to communicate content, specific language competences are indispensable. Based on content related recommendations in the CEF (2001) a connection between language competences and thematic content will be established.

After a review of topic related literature on European language policies in **chapter 1** and Council of Europe language tools such as the Threshold Level (Van Ek 1990) and the influential CEF (2001), in **chapter 3**, the latter two shall serve as a basis for an empirical analysis of two Austrian English course-books, *Into English 1* (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks &

Lewis-Jones 2013) and *Prime Time 5* (Hellmayr,Waba & Mlakar 2010) in the last chapter. Given the content specifications and recommendations on a European level it is of genuine interest if Austrian EFL material developers and EFL coursebook authors respectively, take them into account, and if so, which themes and topics they commonly adopt or neglect. Since there is no ready-made tool of research methodology investigating the impact of CEF's specifications on Austrian EFL coursebooks, a new research tool to gather quantitative data based on content related CEF criterions will be developed and introduced in **chapter 4**.

The last part, **chapter 5**, contains discussion points arising from the findings of the analysis of the two EFL books *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5* with its focus on content juxtaposed to their "content's content" and exploring differences or commonalities.

1. CONTENT- SPECIFICATIONS IN EUROPEAN POLICY DIMENSIONS

Every language course displays content. Content can have many different forms and varies from country to country, from school type to school type, from classroom to classroom and from coursebook to coursebook. It can comprise grammatical, phonologic, morphologic or topic-based discussions, all of which are only a brief extract of what types of content exist in EFL. At the end of the day however, the question arises which content is dealt with in which situation and for what reason. As stated in the *Introduction*, content is commonly specified in national language teaching policy legalized by governmental bodies and executed by educational administrations. Two major European political institutions influencing European language policies are the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Although countries within the European Union and member states of the Council of Europe (both of which will be referred to in their abbreviated form: EU for the European Union and CoE for Council of Europe throughout this thesis) are responsible for their individual language policy, most member states have set up their language policies by following recommendations made by the EU and/or the CoE (Extra & Yağmur 2012: 14). This is why this thesis will take a closer look inside language policy recommendations and guidelines of the EU and the CoE in terms of content. The EU and the CoE have for many years promoted the importance of language education, in particular on the basis of Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity. The EU and, in particular, the CoE, support the language policy work of their member countries (BMUKK & BMWF 2008: 9). More precisely:

> The major language policy agencies in these two institutions are the *Unit for Multilingualism Policy* within the Directorate-General of Education and Culture in the European Commission and the *Language Policy Unit* of the Directorate of Education in the Council of Europe. The work done by these agencies underpins the important resolutions, charters and conventions produced by the respective bodies (Extra & Yağmur 2012: 14).

Austria, as a member state of both the EU and the intergovernmental CoE, has also taken account of language policy suggestions and recommendations from the EU and the Language Policy Unit of the CoE.

1.1 The Council of Europe

Within the discussion of European content recommendations, the CoE can by no means be left aside as it constitutes the big language policy player in Europe. The CoE is an intergovernmental organisation that is concerned not only with human rights and socio-political matters, but also with language and education matters.

The CoE emphasises the great importance of plurilingualism as a tool for "linguistic tolerance [and] an essential element of intercultural education" (Beacco & Byram 2007: 17-18). With linguistic diversification being the priority in language education policies, it is interesting that only Estonia, France, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland and Austria are reported to have two foreign languages compulsory at both the lower and the upper secondary level (Extra & Kutlay 2012: 9). Cullen, Cullen, Maes and Paviotti (2008: iii), have analysed Europe's policies on multilingualism in 2008 and state "that there is still significant reluctance or resistance with respect to additional language learning – apart from learning English". Only one European in five is reported to be an additional language learner, according to Cullen's study.

The CoE (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division_EN.asp, 5 April 2014)

> […] promotes linguistic diversity and language learning in the field of education [….] carried out within the framework of the European Cultural Convention, […]. The Language Policy Unit […] implements intergovernmental medium-term programmes with a strong emphasis on activities and tools to support policy development. The Unit's programmes are complemented by those of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML - Graz, Austria) with a particular focus on implementation of policy.

Even though the language policy of the CoE mainly focuses on promoting plurilingualism, it has also been supporting its 47 member states who are individually responsible for their national language policy, in planning foreign language curricula through reference books such as the communicative language teaching related *Threshold Level* (Van Ek 1975, 1977), and its updated version *Threshold 1990* (Van Ek & Trim 1991) and since 2001 its widely used *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEF 2001) meant to make language teaching more transparent and coherent throughout Europe. In 1975 and 1977 the CoE published its first edition of the Threshold Level" written by Van Ek and "Waystage English" by Van Ek, Alexander and Fitzpatrick. Both publications offer an explicit account of European learning objectives and a clear outline of themes and sub-themes, which will be further elaborated on/discussed in *chapter 3.1* on the basis of the

revised “Threshold Level 1990” by Van Ek and Trim (1991).

The use of the CEF was officially recommended to the member states (Extra & Kutlay 2012: 16) in order to organise the countries’ language policies, language learning and teaching (Little 2007: 647). In the field of language learning and educational matters, the CoE’s contributions are developed at two institutes, its Language Policy Division in Strasbourg and the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz.

Most of its 47 member states[3] have adapted their national language policies including curricula and standards to its recommendations (CoE http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/country-profiles, 21 March 2014), especially to the CEF. The recommendations are, as the term already implies, only suggestions and provide advice to every member state, but are binding interventions into the countries’ educational policies (Little 2007: 647).

Apart from the CEF, a further valuable tool devised by the CoE is the European Language Portfolio which includes a language passport, language dossier and language biography (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/ 23 April 2014).

1.1.1 The CEF

In the field of language pedagogy, the significance of the CEF cannot be ignored. The CEF was devised by the CoE in 2001 and “provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (2001: 1). In addition to that, the CEF (2001: 1) offers a description of which skills and knowledge language learners have to learn in order to tackle problems and “be able to act effectively”. The CEF contributes to Europe-wide transparency of assessment and curricula, as well as to the enhancement of mobility (Alderson 2007: 660), meaning the facilitation of learners moving to different countries within the EU.

It should be noted however, that the CEF, being a policy document, pursues political objectives based on the aims

- [t]o equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry.
- [t]o promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and

[3] Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain ,Sweden, Switzerland ,"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom

cultural diversity through more effective international communication.

- [t]o maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages, including those less widely taught.
- [t]o meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which requires a sustained, lifelong effort to be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies.
- [t]o avert the dangers that might result from the marginalisation of those lacking the skills necessary to communicate in an interactive Europe (CEF 2001: 3-4).

Clearly, the above-mentioned statements advocate mutual intercultural respect, plurilingualism and cooperation between economic, educational and political institutions.

If the Austrian curriculum for academic upper secondary education is based on CEF language teaching and learning recommendations, which include guidelines on content, we must commit ourselves to take a closer look at CEF's suggestions on the topic of content. Is it only about linguistic components such as "forms (e.g. conjugations), structures (e.g. interrogative sentences) [and] lexis (e.g. word families)" or does it include "language acts (e.g. complaining), themes (e.g. young people), social scripts (e.g. going to the cinema)" (Beacco, Byram, Coste & Fleming 2009: 31) too?

Unfortunately the CEF does not offer a clear definition of content in the context of language learning. To cite a few examples: The CEF refers to content by suggesting "The planning of language learning programmes in terms of […] their content" (CEF 2001: 6), by emphasising the importance of "the definition of content" (2001: 7) and by "understanding course content" (2001: 14), by mentioning "Council of Europe content specifications" (2001: 17) or by making the learners capable of "dealing with everyday situations with predictable content" (2001: 34). However, scanning the CEF specifically for "content", the significance which the CEF attributes to EFL content becomes evident. It is the CEF's description of objectives, tasks and competences that may reveal the meaning of content in the context of the framework. It is when stating the importance of the context in which language is used that the CEF brings content into play. Choosing content and form for a communicative act largely depends on the particular situation (CEF 2001: 45). It is the CEF's first indication for a distinct difference between *form* and *content*. There, among objectives and methods, content is described as a third field for which the CEF provides clear descriptions intended for planning language learning programmes, including a content syllabus for assessments (CEF 2001: 1,6).

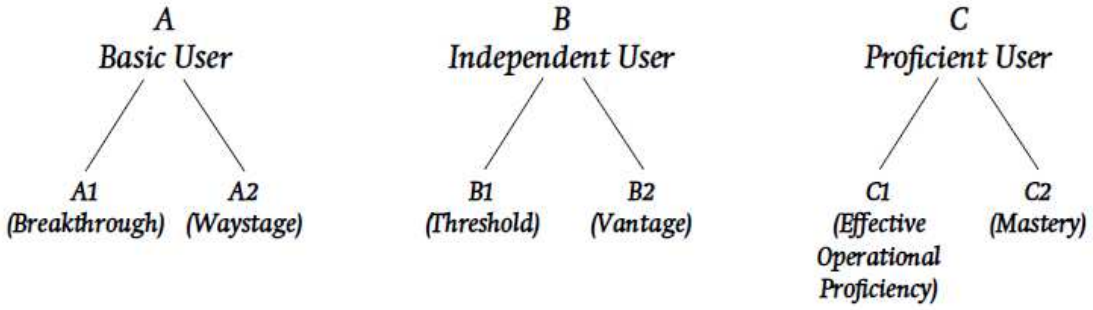
Turning to thematic content, the CEF suggests content areas such as the four domains (2001: 14-15) which will be elaborated on in *chapter 3.3* of this thesis. Apart from the content areas, one can identify other areas related to thematic content. These other essential areas of content are firmly rooted in *"General competences"*, such as knowledge of the world, intercultural and sociocultural awareness, and *"Communicative language competences*", such as sociolinguistic competences (CEF 2001: 108-131) and will be dealt with in c*hapter 3.4*.

In its chapter on "Content coherence" (CEF 2001:33) the CEF refers to "functions, notions, grammar and vocabulary" collectively as content, responsible for the ability of "performing the communicative tasks". Astonishingly the CEF makes no explicit mention of content matter in this passage of the framework. Its descriptions of communicative tasks on Reference Level B1 (the very level the course book analysis in part 2, c*hapter 4* of this thesis is related to), reflecting the Threshold Level as a sub level of the Independent User Level (B), however, provides an indication of knowledge of content matter being involved. In order to tackle problems in everyday situations, such as situations on public transport, arranging a holiday or in order to communicate on familiar themes, pass on facts or describe one's health biography (CEF 2001: 34-35), knowledge of grammar is necessary, but also thematic and topical knowledge. Despite these clear signs in the CEF about the importance of the interaction between language forms and thematic content, teaching grammar for its own sake still seems to be in use as shown in the following example: having in mind CEF's impact on many a national curriculum and accordingly on EFL teaching in the classroom, it is astonishing that the ECML Research and Development report on *"An Introduction to the Current European context in language teaching"* (Boldizsár 2003), although intended to relate its teaching suggestions closely to the findings in the CEF, seems to ignore the area of a thematic content in their *Self-reflection checklist*. Teaching content in this publication mainly consists of grammar (Boldizsár 2003: 71-72). It conveys a message that is by no means *content* oriented, but traditionally accepted: Teachers who teach along CEF's recommendation may see linguistic forms as support for learners to perform a communicative task with more accuracy, but based on thematic or topical content.

Moreover, the CEF (2001: 43-44) raises teachers' awareness of the importance of informing the language learners not only about what language act they should be able to perform, but what they ought to know and urges all stakeholders to be concrete when it comes to the "the content of texts, exercises, activities, tests, etc.". This also includes letting learners on a regular basis know their state and goal of achievement during the course of language process by referring to the six levels of achievement that are said to cover the learning space

and necessary content for the average European learner at different stages. Graded content for the independent user (B1) for example is provided within the *Threshold Level* (CEF 2001: 23)[4].

Figure 1: CEF's 6 broad levels of the learning space relevant to European language learners (CEF 2001: 23)



Using CEF's list of questions meant for text book writers, teachers and examiners, one may become aware of the EFL situations when content comes into play, even though CEF – once again – fails to tell us concretely what it means by content: Questions such as "Can I predict the domains in which my learners will operate […]?, […] What themes will they need to handle?, […] What knowledge of the world or of another culture will they need to call on? […]" (CEF 2001: 44) will raise our awareness of thematic content being involved when dealing with domains, knowledge of the world, knowledge of another culture and themes as described in more detail in *chapter 3* of this thesis.

1.1.2 Intercultural and Learner-Oriented Content

It can be stated that the Language Policy Division of the CoE has been largely influencing the language policies of governmental and non-governmental organizations especially since its measures were set out in Recommendation No. (82) 18 in 1982: The measures

> ensuring the access to the knowledge of the languages of other member states including communicative skills, using languages for understanding life and cultural heritage of other people and peoples and objectives that are valuable, realistic and based on the learners communicative needs and motivation (Boldizsár 2003: 9-10)

can be related to *content* or, to be more precise, to knowledge of specific content areas.

All the CoE's publications are meant to

[4] for further insight see *chapter 3.1*

> [...] invite the governments of Member States, [...] to implement sets of measures to promote the acquisition of language skills by encouraging the use of foreign languages for the teaching of certain subjects, to facilitate lifelong language learning, and make linguistic diversification the priority in language education policies […] (Council of Europe 2007: 33).

Contents of language teaching and learning in compulsory education should be learner-oriented and chosen on the basis of "[...]their role in intercultural education [and] [...] in education in democratic values and the creation of social cohesion and solidarity" (Council of Europe 2007: 97-99). Considering the aforementioned points, it is evident, that the recommended content shall focus on cultural and linguistic diversity using language for understanding cultural heritage and life.

Linguistic variety can even occur in the classroom itself and is considered as a further content-related recommendation in the CoE. The CoE (2007: 52-53) argues that "prior […] language biographies should be taken into account" as different language biographies shape the approach to content-matter. For example the following linguistic varieties might occur in an EFL classroom: Learners who speak English as their mother tongue or first language. "*Mother tongue"*, as described in the Council's Guide (Council of Europe 2007: 51) is "the corresponding everyday term which, however, has affective connotations such as family and origin that are not present in the term *first language*." There might be classroom situations with learners with English as their second language, (e.g. learners who have acquired English through bilingual parents or learners who have lived in an English-speaking environment for some time) and, most commonly of course, constellations of English as a foreign or modern language subject[5].

There might also be students - with regard to the 1st year of academic secondary schools, upper level or 1st year of vocational higher education colleges (BMBF 2013: 2) who have a better competence in another foreign language than English (e.g. French, Italian) due to different school demographics. Teachers of EFL should therefore consider if they are to teach English as the learners' first or second foreign language as differing English language biographies should be taken into account (Council of Europe 2007: 52-53) when setting

[5] The term *foreign* or *modern language* is often used […] to refer to linguistic varieties the teaching of which is offered essentially in schools. Unlike the second languages present in the environment, there may be less motivation to learn so-called *foreign* languages in that learners are not in contact with those varieties, or only in a virtual or limited fashion (cinema, television, visits to the country where it is used, etc.). They may therefore have little awareness of their needs as regards foreign languages, which they see as ordinary school subjects where what matters is not always actual acquisition but appraisal (tests, examinations) certifying achievement (Council of Europe 2007: 52).

individual achievement tasks. This may mean applying more independent learning strategies on more complex, content-related texts and language tasks on a higher proficiency level also for learners of English as their first foreign language in contrast to learners of English as their second foreign language. For the latter, school curricula should either settle for a less demanding language proficiency or install pedagogical devices that help to catch up with students whose first foreign language is English. The Council of Europe suggests to rethink the possibility of "peer teaching" (CEF 2001:144), when discussing the role of EFL teachers and learners. Admittedly this methodological advice has little to do with the topic *content* itself, yet one may consider this thought-provoking impulse and engage advanced learners as teaching assistants to communicate *content* to less advanced learners.

A further recommendation by the CoE (2007: 97-98) is content relating to "the usefulness in the medium term". Language learners should be provided with contents that correlate with educational usefulness, medium term aims, students' age and proficiency level rather than with contents that put their focus on goals far in the future. It is not obvious, however, whether these recommendations as to the usefulness in the medium term in the Language Policy Guide 2007 of the CoE refer to an institutional or pedagogical perspective, whether they refer to a successful accomplishment of exams or to achieving language competence for the world outside school.

With reference to *content* there is another message from CoE's Language Policy Guide 2007: The choice of contents for language teaching and learning in compulsory education (including year one of academic upper secondary school level) depends on learners' language needs that are not really identifiable at this stage yet. It is argued however, that contents should also be chosen on the basis of "their immediate […] value for motivating learners" (Council of Europe 2007: 97).

The c*ontent* dealt with in the language classroom can offer a substantive motivational factor for the language learner if the themes seem relevant and interesting to them (Snow, Met & Genesee 1989: 202). The CoE (2007: 99) recommends that "content should be chosen by individual students depending on […] [their] interest and motivation". In equal measures "[…] courses should focus […] on themes […] or cultural activities […]" (Council of Europe 2007: 99). The CEF (2001: 166) states similarly: "[A] high level of motivation to understand due to personal interest in the content will help to sustain the learner's efforts […]". According to Snow, Met, Genesee's (1989: 202), CoE's (2007: 99) and CEF's (2001: 166) suggestions, content and related tasks should be chosen from a motivational point of view. However, one may assume, that nationally set language goals and standards for competence

levels, leave little margin for EFL teachers for choosing content based on the individual's needs and interests. If national curricula were based on a "social issue and not a matter of exclusively technical decisions (pedagogical or didactic)" (Council of Europe 2007: 100), learning languages would become more student-oriented. Even more so if language learning could be

> conceived and organised as leisure activities, courses focusing on themes (friendly relationships) or cultural activities (cooking, cinema, team sports […]) [...] the necessary linguistic competences can be identified according to choice of activity (Council of Europe 2007: 99).

From this statement one can deduce that *content* in this context has two different meanings: On the one hand content refers to *thematic or topical* matters, while on the other hand, for receptive, reproductive or productive communication, content refers to a *linguistic* know-how.

1.1.3 Content, Language Skills and the Place of Grammar

Since CEF's suggestions for foreign language teaching and learning have been adopted by many European Council member states including Austria, the language aims are communicative competences that should also include functional and humanistic elements in the form of reflecting on one's own cultures (Beacco, Byram, Coste & Fleming 2009: 5). The approach should be action-oriented "basing language on the performance of communicative tasks and on language communication" (Goullier 2007: 6). According to the European Council Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe (Council of Europe 2007: 100),

> care should […] be taken to diversify teaching methods in such a way as to take into account [....] [that] level C learners are more likely to want grammatical explanations or explanations of precise language questions than beginners (level A) and prefer more analytical methods.

This is an increased emphasis on the notion that EFL contents, especially within an academically oriented language curriculum, should comprise both linguistic components for grammar awareness and correct use of grammar in communication (CEF 2001: 108-130) in combination with content arising from themes or topics with reference to various domains (CEF 2001:14) and general knowledge areas (CEF 2001: 101-108). Barnes suggests that foreign language competence should allow learners to

> […] consider not only what one knows but how one knows it, to consider, that is, the strategies by which one is manipulating the knowledge, and therefore to match the strategies more closely to the problem (Barnes 1976: 20).

In order to understand content-based information it seems essential to understand or to deduce the meaning of lexis. If a learning activity for example, aims at the skill of reading a text on a specific topic, understanding details, and communicating its content to others, then learners should be familiar with "careful reading strategies" (Gassner, Mewald & Sigott 2007: 9-12). They should be able to know or deduce meaning of words and phrases, know grammar forms and structures in order to communicate their findings (information on content) to others with reference to their level of communicative competence. This implicates that beyond topical and linguistic content, learning strategies for carrying out language-skills-oriented tasks constitute yet another area of content in EFL teaching and learning. This proposal is given support by Fleming and Little (Fleming & Little 2010: 12). Fleming & Little (2010: 12) state that one of the roles of the *European Language Portfolio* is reflecting on one's "mastery of content and skills development". Language becomes the mean for exchanging knowledge and the instrument for raising awareness of its forms and structures (Fleming and Little 2010: 12).

1.1.4 Learning versus Acquiring Content

One should also point out that it is generally assumed that very young children acquire their first language and mother tongue respectively, spontaneously and effortlessly including grammar and lexis. According to Fleming's *Policy Forum* document (Fleming 2010: 5) however, not even the competence in one's first language can be acquired naturally once the goal is to reach a language level of pre-academic competences. Thus, EFL students at Academic secondary school, upper level in Austria who are supposed to reach the CEF's competence level B1 after year 1 and are to fulfil the B2 requirements set for the Matriculation exam at the end of their academic secondary schooling, "may need to be explicitly taught" and must study (e.g. language forms, lexis, content) unless the students have a "privileged linguistic background" (Fleming 2010: 5). In other words, knowledge of thematic contents on a higher pre-academic level in the course of the foreign language learning process will –similarly to other elements of language - not be acquired naturally, but gained by using various means of learning strategies that include skill strategies for understanding, storing and communicating content information.

When it comes to perform a communicative task we have learned that this includes both thematic content and linguistic forms. An academically structured secondary school will of course devote both attention on general competences, on content within the domains, on

knowledge of the world, but also on formal aspects of language as the latter are considered, too, when it comes to grading students' performances. If, the students were able to gain a "cognitive access to routinized knowledge of linguistic forms, it would free the learners to deal with content" (CEF 2001: 162).

1.2 The European Union and its Recommendations on Content

The EU is, besides the CoE, the other big player in Europe in promoting language education policies. With its 28 member states, similar to the CEF of the CoE, the EU elaborated '*A European Reference Framework'* pooling life competences, a tool for policy makers, education providers, employers, and learners themselves .The underlying idea was to set common goals for the Union (The European Parliament and The Council of the European Union 2006:12-13). In the joint 'Recommendation' 2006 by 'The European Parliament' and 'The Council of the European Union' EU Member States were recommended to

> […] develop the provision of key competences for all as part of their lifelong learning strategies, including their strategies for achieving universal literacy, and use the 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (The European Parliament and The Council of the European Union 2006: 11).

Compared to the CoE, the EU attributes an equal social, cultural and educational importance to languages (Little 2007: 647) and also positions content-matter revolving around plurilingualism at the centre of language learning. This (European) Reference Framework contains goal descriptions of knowledge, skills and attitudes for 8 different competences. Two key competences relate to language learning: "Communication in the mother tongue [and] communication in foreign languages (The European Parliament and The Council of the European Union 2006: 13).

Relating to communicative competences, in *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. A European Framework* the European Communities refer to the significance of culture-related topics and themes implying that other foreign languages should be acknowledged and their cultural characteristics be compared to the language learners' own (European Communities 2007: 5). In order to prepare them for appropriate interaction in both oral and written form, the necessity to provide a variety of societal contexts, such as being at home, in an educational or occupational setting or free-time situations, is emphasised. Furthermore, the framework recommends that

> competence […] requires knowledge of vocabulary and functional grammar and an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction and register of language. Knowledge of societal conventions, and the cultural aspect and variability of languages is important (European Communities 2007: 5)

Even though in direct comparison with CoE's CEF the EU framework contains strikingly fewer tangible descriptions on thematic contents in teaching a foreign language, broad outlines of thematic content areas are set: Such are cultural and societal fields (home, education, occupation, cultural conventions). Along these content areas communicative language competences should be developed.

1.3 Implications for Austria's Language Policy with regard to Content

According to the Austrian Language Education Policy Profile (LEPP) Austria has successfully developed a language policy for schools that is likely to set effective language education plans that are in accordance with recommendations and conventions of the CoE and EU (Carnevale, de Cillia, Krumm & Schlocker 2008: 29). Not only does the Austrian curriculum apply the reference levels of the CEF to identify achievements and skills applied, but also do the

> Austrian curricula pay attention to the promotion of plurilingualism, the recognition and use of diverse ethnic minority languages (including the languages of Austrian minorities), and the enrichment that comes through intercultural contacts as well as through linguistic and cultural diversity (Carnevale, de Cillia, Krumm & Schlocker 2008: 77).

It is emphasised, that the increased mobility, "European dimensions", the positive aspects of foreign languages on occupation and industry, international relations and transnational ability to work and study shall be emphasised in foreign language teaching (BGBl 2004: 23). BIFIE, Austria's Institute for educational research, innovation and development and in charge not only of designing and organizing E8 standardized tests (after school-year 8) but also the nationwide Matura exam in English as a foreign language at the end of academic secondary school upper form, state on their special website:

> Im Zentrum des Konzepts der standardisierten kompetenzorientierten Reife [...]-prüfung steht das im Lehrplan vorgegebene Ziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts, die Schüler/innen beim Erwerb jener Kompetenzen zu fördern, mit denen sie elementare kommunikative Anforderungen des gesellschaftlichen und beruflichen Lebens in der jeweiligen Fremdsprache erfüllen können. […] Grundlage für den geltenden Lehrplan

> ist der Gemeinsame europäische Referenzrahmen für Sprachen (GERS) (BIFIE https://www.bifie.at/node/78 , 4 April 2014).

In other words, the recommendations by the CEF (CEF 2001), promoted, initiated and disseminated by the CoE to its member states on how languages should be taught, learned and assessed, have been adopted by the official Austrian language policy authorities, thus proving the crucial and decisive role of the CoE and its language department amidst the large European society with its enormous linguistic diversity.

As pointed out by BIFIE (https://www.bifie.at/node/78 4 April 2014), for meeting the requirements of the CEF-level B2 at the end of the academic secondary school, upper level, students should be capable of expressing themselves in a clear and detailed manner on familiar topics related to the personal domains *family, friends, spare time, public sector such as shopping, travelling, entertainment, school* and *work*. With these requirements, EFL teachers are already made aware that thematic content has its place within the national EFL curriculum. All the content areas mentioned above are based on suggestions in the CEF and will be referred to in more detail in the course of this thesis. Considering the importance of the final examination at the end of upper secondary education as matriculation standard for tertiary studies, test strategies and content-based knowledge should be addressed at an early stage in order to approximate to the standardized competency-based exams. BIFIE itself suggests:

> Um Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten eine optimale Vorbereitung auf die standardisierte kompetenzorientierte Reife- und Diplomprüfung in den lebenden Fremdsprachen zu ermöglichen, sollten die zur Anwendung kommenden Testmethoden im Unterricht frühzeitig thematisiert werden (BIFIE https://www.bifie.at/node/78,4 April 2014).

Examining further the "Bundesgesetzblatt der Republik Österreich" (BGBl) (2004: 22-25) to find out about concrete hints towards content-matter in the Austrian curriculum for foreign languages there certainly are recommendations of the CoE and EU traceable, for example:

- "Handlungsorientierte Fremdsprachenkompetenz", set within private, occupational and social contexts in order to foster the students' social skills
- "Interkulturelle Kompetenz", in which cross-cultural topics are discussed to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of various cultures, lifestyles and customs free of stereotyping
- "Erwerb linguistischer Kompetenzen", pronunciation, intonation, grammar and vocabulary shall approximate the language learner to the foreign language; authenticity plays a decisive role in foreign language teaching, preparing the language learner for real-life situations

- “Erwerb soziolinguistischer Kompetenzen”, to raise awareness of different varieties, dialects, accents and register; language learners learn how to react adequately in specific situations with different interlocutors

When it comes to a concrete specification of domains, *language and communication, people and society, nature and technology, creativity and art, health and movement* are listed (BGBl 2004: 23); these domains are of varying complexity. They differ from the CEF domains with one exception: *People and society* may be assigned to CEF’s Public domain. There is, however, little conformity among the other Austrian curriculum domains with the personal, educational and occupational domains of the CEF. This makes you wonder why, recalling the fact that on one hand the Austrian EFL curriculum strongly recommends teaching on the basis of the CEF, it on the other hand neglects nearly all the CEF domains, but one.

Even though the Austrian curriculum additionally lists several themes such as *home, family, restaurants, shops, culture, sports, globalisation, education, leisure, attitudes, values, media, professions, literature, music, lifestyle, environment and school* upon which to base a variety of communicative tasks (BGBl 2004: 25-26), they are not in any way near to the systematically structured thematic areas of the CEF, categorised into ‘domains, themes, external situations, world knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competences (CEF 2001). Considering the fact that *chapter 5* in this thesis will be dealing with a thematic content based analysis of English course-books for Austrian academic secondary schools at the proficiency level B1, the B1 competency description in the BGBl (2004: 27), adopted from the CEF (2001: 34 & 58-129), yields further answers as to which thematic content should be covered. According to the Austrian national curriculum for the secondary schools' upper level, *content* shall be based on

> […] vertraute Dinge aus Arbeit, Schule, Freizeit […], aktuelle Ereignisse und über Themen aus ihrem (Berufs-und) Interessensgebiet […], Gefühle und Wünsche […], Themen des Alltags wie Familie, Hobbys, Arbeit, Reisen, aktuelle Ereignisse […], Träume, Hoffnungen und Ziele, Meinungen und Pläne erklären […] (BGBl 2004: 27).

2. THE NOTION OF CONTENT IN THE EFL-CONTEXT

Defining the notion of *content* in EFL- circumstances is fairly challenging and does not yield a clear-cut answer. The reasons for this can certainly be found in the course of history of foreign language teaching and learning. Foreign language teaching and learning have undergone major changes throughout the last decades. This is due to an increased demand for English initiated after World War II that was inextricably linked to greater mobility, increase in trade and international commerce, immigration and expansion (Richards 2001a: 23-24). These transformations certainly had implications on language learning inasmuch as new methodologies were required to meet the learners' needs. Various foreign language teaching and learning-oriented approaches, methods and skill training activities have been adapted to meet latest research findings and theories on foreign language acquisition and learning with due regard to more precisely stated competences foreign language learners should be equipped with (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 1-3)[6].

Considering the definitions mentioned in the *Introduction*, the meaning of the term *content* seems to be straightforward, namely that something is included within a certain collection and dealt with. Ways of defining *content* in an EFL context appeared already in the 1960s, when Mackey (1965: 11) differentiated between *content* as "what is being talked about" and the mode of communicating and expressing the subject matter. As a speaker of the target language, one decides about which subject matter the discourse revolves and in what way. Similarly, Ur (1996: 175) distinguishes two types of content in language courses, namely metalinguistics, "the language itself (its pronunciation, grammar, how to read it, etc.), and the ideas, or subject matter which the language is used to express". Fairly similar to Ur's suggestion, yet extended to a third option, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000: 187) point out that *content* encompasses, "linguistic […], thematic or situational […], and subject-matter content". They state that linguistic content focuses on linguistic theory and language content and consider "notions […] and [...] functions as the key elements in identifying language content […]" (Celce- Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 188). In the thematic or situational content, themes and topics are discussed which should foster students' cultural background and

[6] Approaches are philosophies of and views about language learning which allow for a variety of individual applications (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 245). It describes how people acquire their knowledge of the language (Harmer 2001: 78). Methods, on the other hand, are reflections on approaches and the level in which theory is put into practice according to specific rules (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 245).

increase their motivation (ibid. 2000: 188). Subject-matter content, known as content-based instruction or CLIL, focuses on the "acquisition of knowledge and information via the target language" (ibid. 2000: 188). This means that the language learner uses the language in question to acquire knowledge. The target language will therefore be learned primarily as "natural by-product (ibid. 2000: 188). McGrath (2013: 138) notes that content can refer to "topics, contexts [and] cultural referenced". Rejecting *language as content* as content, Richards and Rodgers (2002: 204) present the term as referring "[…] to the substance or subject matter that we learn or communicate through language rather than the language used to convey it". Comparing innovative language classes to "stereotypical" ones, the content in the latter emphasises the language skills that are being taught. Moreover, the terminology of *content* is fairly misleading since *language as content* as opposed to *topical/thematic content* is both referred to under the umbrella term *content*. While *language as content*, or let us also term it *linguistic content*, is a holistic description embracing grammar, morphology, semantics, phonology and the like, topical/thematic content revolves around a particular non-language topic.

Before a different variety of perspectives on content in EFL will be illuminated, it needs to be clarified in what manner content itself is determined in EFL. There are indeed specifications as to which content is suggested to be discussed in EFL settings, outlined in a syllabus or laid out in curriculum. The ever-changing trends in EFL clearly have had implications on content specifications. Hence, a number of syllabi and curricula have emerged.

2.1 Content and Syllabus Design

Taking a closer look at the ToC of various books, be it a textbook, a teacher's manual or a reference book, one is introduced to the content. Similarly, when looking at a course syllabus and curriculum in EFL, course content is presented. But what precisely is content in EFL and how is it arranged in a syllabus or curriculum? Before the content specification of a syllabus and curriculum will be elaborated on, a brief focus on terminology shall provide clarity about the two terms "syllabus" and "curriculum" since they are often perceived as the same.

EFL courses are based on a specific syllabus with focus on a specific content in a specific context (Ur 1996: 176). A syllabus determines content and objectives throughout a language course (Nunan 1988: 6; Harmer 2001: 295; Richards & Rodgers 2002: 25) and is

concerned with the principles of content selection and grading (Nunan 1988: 5; Nunan 1989: 15). Likewise, Widdowson (1990: 127) describes a syllabus as a

> […] specification of a teaching programme or pedagogic agenda which defines a particular subject for a particular group of learners. Such a specification not only provides a characterization of content, the formalization in pedagogic terms of an area of knowledge or behaviour, but also arranges this content in succession of interim objectives.

In straightforward terms, one can conclude that syllabi determine the course content and the key elements covered in a method or approach. It is noteworthy, that a syllabus by no means limits itself to course content alone, but often incorporates aims, objectives and methodologies (Johnson 2010: 216).

Other than a syllabus, a curriculum embraces specifications on a larger scale. According to White (1988: 4), a curriculum is "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system". A curriculum incorporates the activities and experiences involved in language learning, its organisation and processes that shape aims and objectives of the course which again determines a specific syllabus (Nunan 1988: 3; Richards 2001a: 3). A curriculum, therefore, outlines " the needs of a group of learners, […] aims and objectives for a program […], an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials […]" (Richards 2001a: 2). In contrast to a syllabus, in which items are enumerated and graded in an adequate sequence, a curriculum incorporates not only the list of items covered, but also administration of specific education programmes and how items are organised, implemented and evaluated (Harmer 2001: 295). Therefore, one can assume that a syllabus is a subordinate element of a curriculum (Richards 2001a: 2). According to Stern (1984: 10-11) the difference between curriculum and a syllabus is their

> content, structure, parts and organisation, […] what in curriculum theory is often called curriculum processes, that is curriculum development, implementation, dissemination and evaluation. The former is concerned with the WHAT of curriculum: what the curriculum is like or should be like; the latter is concerned with the WHO and HOW of establishing the curriculum.

Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000: 185) issue a clear description of either terms stating that a curriculum is concerned with "the goals, the rationale, and the guiding principles for language teaching […]", while a syllabus is concerned with "[translating] these guiding principles into specific goals, content, and activities to be carried out in a particular, and well-defined context". Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000: 185) argue, however, that both terms are concerned with the same principles only differing in degree.

This is where methods and approaches come into play as they display various content specifications mirrored in syllabus types. Throughout the past decades, language teaching has been characterized by considerable change and innovations yielding novice methods and approaches. Common to each method and approach are the various principles they incorporate. They differ from each other in terms of "the relevant language and subject matter around which language teaching should be organized and the principles used in sequencing content within a course" (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 25). This means that every method and approach decide on the subject matter covered, "the what of a language programme", and the methodology, "the how" (Nunan 1988: 6). Methodology shapes the content-selection that is used in an EFL course and content that is dealt with certainly determines the syllabus one adopts (Yalden 1984: 14; Richards & Rodgers 2001: 25). Drawing a clear distinction between syllabus and methodology is rather challenging, as "one needs not only to specify both the content […] and the tasks […] but also to integrate them" (Nunan 1989: 15). One can conclude that the difference between methodology and syllabus design is that the latter is concerned with the selection and grading of content, while methodology determines the selection and sequencing of learning activities, which is a set of teaching devices and students' activities and tasks (Nunan 1989: 15). Syllabi refer to the results of language learning, while methodology focuses on the processes that should generate the latter (Nunan 1988: 11). These course content specifications are determined in a course syllabus or curriculum. Widdowson (1990: 124) does not approve of methodology as part of a syllabus and hence draws a distinction between the two concepts. On the one hand, a syllabus is confined to content specifications, on the other hand methodology "realises this potential by mediating activities" (Widdowson 1990: 124).

It is apparent that there is justification for different definitions of the terms *curriculum* and *syllabus* respectively. Nevertheless, considering the fact that the two terms are still used as synonyms, especially in applied linguistics (Johnson 2010: 215), and that both terms are concerned with the same principles only differing in degree (Celce-Murcia & Olshatin 2000: 185), the present thesis makes use of the term *syllabus* only.

There is no doubt that considering the huge variety of methods and approaches (see *chapter 2.3*) with different aims and objectives at their core, one can assume that there must be a good number of syllabus types available too. Syllabus designers have to bear in mind their language learning theories and organise course content accordingly. In the Council of Europe's Threshold Level (Van Ek & Alexander 1980: 17-117, quoted in Brown 1995: 151), a syllabus comprises the following information:

- The situations in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics that will be dealt with
- The language activities in which the learner will engage
- The language functions that the learner will fulfil
- What the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic
- The general notions that the learner will be able to handle
- The specific (topic-related) notions that the learner will be able to handle
- The language forms that the learner will be able to use when the course is completed
- The degree of skill with which the learner will be able to perform

Ur (1996: 177) adds *time schedule*, *preferred methodology* and *approach*, recommended *material* and the *sequencing of tasks* according to their level of difficulty to the characteristics of a syllabus.

The chart below compares Widdowson's (1990), Brown's (1995), Ur's (1996) and Harmer's (2001) syllabus suggestions:

Widdowson (1990: 130-131)	**Brown** (1995: 7)	**Ur** (1996: 178-179)	**Harmer** (2001: 296-300)
Structural	Structural	Grammatical	Grammar
Notional/Functional	Notional	Notional	-
	Functional	Functional/Notional	Functional
	Situational	Situational	Situational
	Topical	Topic-Based	Topic-Based
	Task-based	Procedural	Task-based
	-	Lexical	Lexical
	Skills-based	-	-
	-	Grammatical-lexical	-
	-	Process	-
	Mixed or Layered	Mixed or 'multi-strand'	Multi

Widdowson's (1990: 130-131) suggestions shall serve as a reference as to which syllabus (!) types exist. Widdowson (1990: 130-131) refers to two types of syllabi: the *Structural* and *Notional/Functional*. The *Structural Syllabus* assumes grammar as key element. Grammar aspects, such as verb tenses, articles and nouns (Jordan 1997: 60) which are sequenced

according to their level of difficulty and frequency, are internalized in order to understand the grammatical system and use language through speaking, writing, listening and reading (Widdowson 1990: 131).

On the other hand, the *Notional/Functional* syllabus opts for semantic concepts and communicative actions as core elements within the course syllabus. In this case the learning principle is learning English on the basis of communication for accumulation and thus promoting language use rather than learning about language (Widdowson 1990: 132-133; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 187). The *Notional/Funtional* approach's primary aim is to classify communicative functions of notions subordinating grammar and lexis (CEF 2001a: 116). The structural and *Notional/Functional* syllabus can similarly be found in Brown (1995: 7), Ur (1996: 178-179) and Harmer (2001: 296-298), although these two latter experts term the *structural* syllabus *grammatical* and *grammar* syllabus respectively, these terms can be used interchangeably. Furthermore, Brown (1995) considers notional and functional as two separate syllabi. Ur (1996) distinguishes between notional and functional-notional, whereas Harmer (2001) only lists a functional syllabus. Nevertheless, any of the three terms can be attributed to the notion of *Notional/Functional* syllabus since notions depend on functions and vice versa and thus are inextricably linked. Notions are ideas and concepts we have in our mind. These notions can be either general, such as quantity, size or emotion, or synonymous with a vocabulary item, such as *bike, blue* or *eat* (Ur 1996: 178; Harmer 2001: 197; Christison & Murray 2014: 99-100). Moreover, notions are sequenced in terms of chronology or usefulness (Brown 1995: 7). In order to communicate these notions and accomplish a purpose we utilise language functions. Possible functions are requesting help, offering advice, inviting, agreeing/disagreeing or making promises (Ur 1996: 178; Harmer 2001: 197; Christison & Murray 2014: 99-100). Like notions, functions are arranged according to chronology and usefulness. In order to avoid terminological confusion the present thesis will adhere to the term *structural* and the umbrella-term *notional/functional* henceforth.

The *Situational syllabus* provides real-life circumstances[7] of language use rather than confines itself to functions and grammar (Brown 1995: 7; Ur 1997: 178; Harmer 2001: 298). The basic idea is that a huge variety of situations and contexts are sequenced according to the language learners' needs (Brown 1995: 8). The students find themselves in communicative situations like the following: in a taxi, at the airport, in a restaurant or at a hotel reception. These situations could be chronologically ordered, starting with the check-in at the airport, the arrival at the hotel reception rounded off by a ride in the taxi to a restaurant to put it in a

[7] for a definition of "real-life tasks", see *chapter 2.2.1*

meaningful arrangement. The syllabus focuses on relevant learning situations and provides linguistically heterogeneous learning materials (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 83).

A further syllabus mentioned by Brown, Ur and Harmer, is the T*opic-based* or T*opical* syllabus. As the name already reveals, the syllabus is arranged and organised according to a specific set of topics, such as *family*, *hobbies*, *sports* or *music* (Brown 1995: 7; Ur 1997: 178; Harmer 2001: 298-299). The topic-based or topical syllabus is quite similar to the situational syllabus, yet organised in a broader manner and arranged according to topics and themes rather than on single situations (Brown 1995: 9; Ur 1997: 178).

In the *Procedural* (Ur 1997: 178-179) or *Task-based* syllabus (Brown 1995: 11; Harmer 2001: 299) tasks are determined that need to be accomplished such as filling out a form or making a phone call. The syllabus is arranged according to tasks and hence provides a purposeful context for language learning. In contrast to other syllabus types, the present one does not demonstrate "items determined through some form of linguistic analysis", nor what the language learner is required to have achieved at the end of the course (Nunan 1988: 43).

Ur (1996: 178) and Harmer (2001: 297) both identify a *Lexical* syllabus. While the grammatical syllabus defines solely grammatical structures such as tenses, the lexical syllabus takes lexical items in combination with, for example, collocations and idioms as its basis (Ur 1990: 178). According to Harmer (2001: 297), lexis can relate to

- the vocabulary related to topics (e.g. art, clothes, crime)
- issues of word formation (e.g. suffixes […], morphological changes)
- word-grammar triggers (e.g. verbs […] followed by certain syntactic patterns)
- compound lexical items (e.g. *walking-stick* […])
- semi-fixed expressions (e.g. […] *If I were you I'd*…)
- connotation and the use of metaphor (e.g. black mood) (2001: 19)

Ur (1996: 178) even extends the list of syllabus types to a G*rammatical-Lexical* syllabus which singles out structures and lexis.

The *Skills-Based* syllabus is mentioned by Brown (1995: 11), defining a syllabus that "organizes materials around the language or academic skills". Skills-based syllabi are arranged according to the chronology, frequency or usefulness of the skills (Brown 1995: 11). Examples would be skimming a text, scanning for information or deducing meaning from the context.

A further syllabus is exemplified by Ur (1996). Ur states that (1996: 179), in the *Process* syllabus content is negotiated and arranged by both the teacher and language learners before or even throughout the language course. The syllabus accounts for the questions "who does what to whom on what subject-matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what

learning purpose(s)" (Jordan 1997: 62). Process syllabi are especially purposeful in circumstances outlined by Breen and Littlejohn (2000: 2):

- when course content is to be negotiated and the teacher does not have the same background as the students
- when a limited number of teaching hours make teacher choices of contents arbitrary
- when there is a necessity to find common ground in mixed ability classes
- when there is difficulty identifying the learners' varied achievements
- when no published course materials are provided
- when there is a necessity to take into consideration students' prior language experiences
- when a course is open-ended and exploratory in nature

Examining an extract of a ToC in an Austrian textbook, it becomes evident that the syllabus is characterised by a palpable variety of features that have just been discussed:

Figure 2: Extract of aToC (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks & Lewis-Jones 2013a: 3)

UNIT 01	MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY • Best of British					p. 6
Present simple vs. present continuous (review) Present perfect simple with *for* and *since* review Present perfect simple with *just, already, yet* and *still* Present perfect simple with *for, since, yet* and *already* **Grammar for Communication:** *How long* questions with *for* or *since*	Giving statistics and making generalisations Making new friends **Wordwise:** Expressions about/in Britain	The Schwa	R Teenagers in Britian (a quiz) R What do you think about England? (an interview) R Cultural influences L Interviews with foreigners in Britain S **Into Communication:** Talking about statistics	Reading Reading Tip: Multiple choice cloze	Into Literature – *Ruby Tanya* by Robert Swindells Into Music – Pulp *Common People*	Multiple choice cloze (missing words)

It is impossible to ascribe the syllabus to one specific syllabus since grammatical (e.g. present simple vs. present tense), lexical (e.g. Phrases with *talk* and *speak*), topical (e.g. Multicultural Society- Best of British), task-based (e.g. Multiple choice) and skills-based (Speaking, Reading) features are combined. Such a combination is termed *Mixed* or *Layered* (Brown 1995: 12), or *Mixed* or *Multi-strand* (Ur 1996: 178), or *Multi* (Harmer 2001: 299) syllabus. Today, there is a growing tendency towards a multifaceted syllabus in EFL. The reason for this can be ascribed to inherent limitations to each syllabus when utilised on its own: lack of communicative purposes (structural syllabus), unnatural language use (notional/functional and structural syllabus), possible incoherence (notional/functional and lexical syllabus), lack of usefulness or relevance (situational and topic-based syllabus), "an assumed unrealistically high level of competence in teachers and learners" (White 1988: 101) , learners' demotivation

to negotiate (process syllabus), the *task*[8]- definition issue and the futility of isolated syllabi features (task-based syllabus) ((Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 82-83; Nunan 1988: 28-48; Breen & Littlejohn 2000: 3-4; Harmer 2001: 296-299). Thus, the *Multi*-syllabus (Harmer 2001: 299-300), or *Mixed* or *Multi-strand* syllabus (Ur 1997: 178), combine various syllabi types ranging from grammatical principles, themes and tasks to lexical items and skills outweighing the drawbacks either syllabus disposes.

The wide gamut of syllabi types should be sufficient to classify which methods and approaches in EFL can be ascribed to what syllabus. Yet, what is clearly missing in Widdowson' s (1990), Brown's (1995), Ur's (1996) and Harmer's (2001) approach to syllabi types, is a *Content* syllabus. All other types certainly refer to content in various ways, but content-based "has come to mean the particular requirements of specific academic disciplines […]. [S]uch a syllabus or approach focuses on teaching students the language [and] skills […] associated with their particular subject and its content (subject matter)" (Jordan 1997: 61).

Considering the interchangeability of some syllabus types, one can narrow them down to a list of nine core syllabi: 1) structural, 2) notional/functional, 3) situational, 4) topical, 5) content-based, 6) skills-based, 7) process, 8) task-based and 9) Mixed. Jordan (1997: 60-63) categorises them according to *Content*- based, *Skills*-based and *Process*-based. The Content-based heading focuses on the content perspective and the results. Skills- based emphasises skills, whereas process-based is concerned with processes of language learning and the "means to an end" (Jordan 1997: 60). Hence, the structural, notional/functional, situational, topical and content-based syllabus belongs to the content-based category. That the skills-based syllabus appertains to the skills-based category seems self-explanatory. Lastly, the process-based category comprises the process and task-based syllabus, whereas the mixed syllabus embraces a combination of syllabi types and cannot be ascribed to one of Jordan's (1997) classifications.

2.2 The Interrelation of Tasks and "Real-Life"

Different types of competences, elaborated on in *chapter 3.1*, are triggered on the basis of tasks language learners are supposed to tackle. The search for a general definition of the term "task" is hampered by the diverse definitions that are in use. It seems there is no clear-cut answer as to what counts as a task in the field of language pedagogy. Willis (1996: 23) points out that textbooks often refer to the term *task* as "[activity] including grammar […], practice

[8] for a detailed discussion of the term "task" see *chapter 2.2*

activities […] and role plays". She (1996: 26-28), however, presents a detailed outline of task types:

- **Listing**: brainstorming, fact-finding→ the language learner accumulates and collects ideas revolving around a specific topic; eventually exhibits a list of ideas (e.g.: reasons, features, etc.)
- **Ordering and sorting**: sequencing items, events, classifying of activities/concepts/people, categorising items → language learner organises ideas or information according to a particular criteria (e.g.: advantages vs. disadvantages)
- **Comparing:** finding differences/similarities → language learner identifies similarities/differences of a given information (e.g.: contrasting two persons, places, animals)
- **Problem solving**: organising, giving advice, reasoning, develop solutions → language learner tackles a problem by finding and offering a solution which can eventually be evaluated; the use of real-life problems is commonly applied (e.g.: giving advice, describe experiences, agreeing a solution)
- **Sharing personal experiences**: talking freely about oneself→ language learner reports on personal experiences based on subjective impressions which they might share with others (e.g.: holidays, embarrassing situations, emotions)
- **Creative**: often projects (on a large scale); combination of various task types is possible (e.g.: ordering, listing, etc.)→ language learner undertakes a project which can be presented to an audience (e.g.: design a magazine, plan a TV show, sometimes out-of class research)

Nunan (1989: 10) defines

> […] task as a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form.

Similarly, Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001: 11) argue that while focusing on meaning, a task is fulfilled by using language in order to reach a goal. They mention, however, that the notion of task is shaped by the goal of the teacher, of the learner or of a specific group that has been established respectively. As Nunan (1989: 10) and Willis (1996: 24), Prabhu (1992: 24) emphasises the goal-oriented nature of tasks arguing that a task is "[…] an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought […]". Likewise, an outcome-linked nature can be discovered in Bygate's (1999: 186) perception:

> Bounded classroom activities in which learners use language communicatively to achieve an outcome, with the overall purpose of learning language.

Likewise, Sánchez (2004: 52) defines tasks as objective-oriented. Breen (1987: 23) provides a broader definition of the term "task" emphasising the predominant role of language within the classroom:

> ‘Task’ is […] assumed to refer to a range of workplans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem- solving.

Other than Nunan (1989) and Bygate, Skehan and Swain (2001), Breen (1987) proposes the importance of focus on form rather than on meaning. A focus on the role of language in terms of tasks can also be observed in Richards’, Platt’s and Weber’s definition (1985: 289) who take the view that “task is an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language”.

Widdowson (1998: 328)) states that an “‘exercise’” can be distinguished from a “‘task’” in terms of “meaning, goal and outcome”. While an exercise presupposes linguistic skills in order to acquire communicative abilities, a task assumes that communicative abilities enhance linguistic skills. Quite similar to Widdowson (1998) Skehan (1998, quoted in Ellis 2009: 112) provides also a clear distinction between task and exercise outlined in figure 3.

Figure 3: Difference between “exercise” and “task” (Skehan 1998; quoted in Ellis 2009: 112)

	Exercise	Task
Orientation	Linguistic skills viewed as prerequisite for learning communicative abilities.	Linguistic skills are developed through engaging in communicative activity.
Focus	Linguistic form and semantic meaning (‘focus on form’).	Propositional content and pragmatic communicative meaning (‘focus on meaning’).[4]
Goal	Manifestation of code knowledge.	Achievement of a communicative goal.
Outcome-evaluation	Performance evaluated in terms of conformity to the code.	Performance evaluated in terms of whether the communicative goal has been achieved.
Real-world relationship	Internalization of linguistic skills serves as an investment for future use.	There is a direct and obvious relationship between the activity that arises from the task and natural communicative activity.

By looking at the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF 2001: 157), one can deduce that tasks “are a feature of everyday life […]” and are carried out in order to attain a clear goal and fulfil a specific purpose. Furthermore, tasks are, according to the CEF (2001: 157), performed in four core domains: personal, public, educational or occupational which will be further discussed in *chapter 3.3*.

> A *task* is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved. This definition would cover a wide range of actions such as moving a wardrobe, writing a book […], playing a game of cards, ordering a meal in a restaurant […] (CEF 2001: 10).

Varying in degrees of difficulty, tasks involve miscellaneous activities, for example "creative […], skills-based […], problem-solving […] [and] taking part in a discussion" and prepare the language learners for communicative instances in either of the four domains outside the language classroom (CEF 2001: 157). Long (1985) pursues a similar approach highlighting the importance of the real-life nature of tasks. According to him (1985: 89) a "[…] 'task' is […] the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play […]". The content of tasks hence can be identified as for example typing a letter, making a hotel reservation or buying clothes in the right size.

These so-called "'real-life'"- tasks (Kramsch 1993; Lebow & Wager 1994; Ur 1996;Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 189; CEF 2001), also referred to as "'real-world'"-tasks (Nunan 1989; Stryker & Leaver 1997; Hedge 2000; Richards & Rodgers 2002; Ellis 2004; Ozverir & Herrington 2011) are opposed to "'pedagogic'" tasks (CEF 2001: 157). Lebow and Wager (1994: 234) refer to pedagogic tasks as "'in-school'" – tasks which is fairly misleading since, as will be illustrated throughout the following discussion, real-life tasks also occur "'in-school'" and not even typically outside the language classroom. In order to avoid further confusion as related to the proliferation of meanings and terminology around tasks, the terms "'real-life" and "'pedagogic'" tasks utilised in the CEF (2001) will be adhered to throughout the present diploma thesis.

The question arises in what way the two types of tasks, real-life and pedagogic, differ. Nunan (1989: 40) points out that real-life tasks are relatively consistent with tasks language learners will face outside the language classroom. This means that learners are acquainted with competences required in the public, personal, occupational and educational domain respectively (CEF 2001: 157) in order to carry out tasks with language (Stryker & Leaver 1997: 297; Ozverir & Herrington 2011: 1424). As examples of real-life tasks, Willis (1996: 27) takes "expressing hypotheses, describing experiences, comparing alternatives and evaluating and agreeing on [a] solution".

By contrast, pedagogic tasks focus on the development of communicative competences (Nunan 1989: 40). Pedagogic tasks attempt to prepare the language learner for real-life tasks by means of classroom activities (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 189). An example for a real-life task would be to read and understand a recipe to prepare a meal with the given instructions. A pedagogic task, however, would ask learners to answer true/false questions on the recipe or to write down metric units that occur.

North, Ortega and Sheehan (2010: 16) provide a broader distinction of the two terms pointing out that "if there is a problem identifying a context […] this is an indication that the

subject of the scenario may not be a real world scenario at all, but a pedagogic task or game that would not occur in reality". Lebow and Wager (1994: 233) provide a detailed account of how real-life and pedagogic tasks differ:

Real-Life
1. Involves ill-formulated problems and ill-structured conditions.
2. Problems are embedded in a specific and meaningful context.
3. Problems have depth, complexity, and duration.
4. Involves cooperative relations and shared consequences.
5. Problems are perceived as real and worth solving.

In-School [pedagogic]
1. Involves "textbook examples" and well-structured conditions.
2. Problems are largely abstract and decontextualized.
3. Problems lack depth, complexity, and duration.
4. Involves competitive relations and individual assessment.
5. Problems typically seem artificial with low relevance for students.

While in real life situations experience is required in order to understand certain circumstances in various contexts, pedagogic tasks simplify these situations. Furthermore, in real life tasks problems are embedded in a specific context requiring the language user to apply prior knowledge in a purposeful manner. In pedagogic tasks the focus often lies on recognition and isolated skills which can lead to a task's ambiguity.
It is clearly illustrated that pedagogic tasks lack real life context and – depending on the situation- often miss out on meaningful purposes. The simplification of tasks in a pedagogic context and the deliberate construction of tasks for EFL do not approximate learners to the real world due to the artificial (re-) presentation of tasks.

Thus, the question arises why there still is academic justification for pedagogic tasks despite the observable facts stated above. Nunan (1989: 41-42) notes that pedagogic tasks are an adequate preparation for the world beyond the classroom. According to him (1989: 41), pedagogic tasks can be implemented in a real life context, for example "listening to a text and write a sentence restating the gist". Other than that, real life tasks are fairly difficult to anticipate or are even redundant for learners. However, even a "pseudo-communicative activity" that does not concern learners' needs can foster necessary skills valid for real-life involvement (Nunan 1989: 60). Similarly, Skehan (1996: 38) states that the focus of tasks is on the outcome and that "there is some sort of relationship to the real world" even though one uses no real life tasks. This means that language learners are eventually required to utilise the same kinds of communicative skills and features regardless of the context- pedagogic or real

life- they were exposed to. Likewise, Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002: 205) approve of the implementation of pedagogic tasks rather than the sole use of "tasks lifelike from the beginning". This includes the pedagogic tasks in which the language learning process enhances the learners' understanding of the target language. Ur (1996: 150) believes that less proficient learners should not be provided with unnecessarily difficult tasks since they might discourage language learners. According to her, pedagogic tasks can be especially helpful at an early language learning stage to avoid frustration.

Nonetheless, the need for more real-life features in both content and task in language learning should not be neglected. As stated by Lebow and Wager (1994: 233)

> understanding develops through application and manipulation of knowledge within the context of the ordinary practices of the target culture […] through authentic activity.

North, Ortega and Sheehan (2010: 13) mention, however, that "real life tasks and pedagogic tasks [should] be as closely related as possible" in order to achieve successful learning results.

2.3 Content and Task Authenticity

Throughout the last decades, the term *authenticity* has been subject to scientific scrutiny in the field of language pedagogy. Syllabi have focused on content-arrangement rather than on authenticity (Shomoossi & Ketabi 2007: 150). This means that all kinds of syllabus types, discussed in chapter *2.1*, focus on how content is arranged rather than on authenticating these types (Shomoossi& Ketabi 2007: 150). New methods and approaches in EFL, however, are directed towards an authenticated syllabus, but in order to find out about the authenticity of tasks and materials, it needs to be clarified when a task is entitled to be called an *authentic task*.

The general definition of the term *authentic* encompasses "undisputed origin", "based on facts" (Soanes & Hawker 2006: 57) or "genuine" and "really proceeding from the professed source" (Kirkpatrick 1994: 83). In an EFL context it should be acknowledged that the definition of the term *authentic* gives rise to debate.

Authentic materials and tasks involve the natural use of the target language as distinct from "prefabricated artificial language" (Kramsch 1993: 177) and correspond to real-life needs (Reeves, Herrington & Oliver 2002: 564). The tasks and materials used in the EFL context "emanate from the culture being studied" (Stryker & Leaver 1997: 294) and are originally produced for the target-language community, the native speakers (Wilkins 1976: 79; Harmer 1991: 185-188; Stryker & Leaver 1997: 295). By receiving, what Stryker and

Leaver (1997: 295) call "'authentic input'" in embracing texts and language, the language learners are supposed to fulfil various authentic tasks in the target language. Authentic materials can relate to both reading and listening. The language learners are provided with "'authentic texts'", such as newspapers, magazines or books from the culture at hand, and "'authentic language'" in the form of lectures, conversation with native speakers or TV shows (Stryker & Leaver 1997: 295). Authentic texts comprise of printed material from the target language, for example menus, postcards, horoscopes, theatre programmes or newspapers. Where valuable authentic language can be found on the news, in interviews, debates, weather or announcements (Hedge 2000: 67-68). Dealing with authentic materials is important insofar the language learner adjusts to the target language and is prepared to accomplish tasks outside the classroom utilising the language at hand (Hedge 2000: 67). Students benefit from authentic materials as they are exposed to naturally occurring language and are able to simulate real-life occurrences in the classroom as it "is helping to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and "'a student's capacity to participate in real world events'" (Wilkins 1976: 79).

On the other hand, it is often argued that authentic tasks are frequently too challenging and hamper the learner's progress (Williams 1983: 187; Guariento & Morley 2001: 348).It is generally understood that less proficient learners, in particular, are therefore provided with less difficult texts. It needs to be mentioned, however, that if language learners are only exposed to artificial language, deliberately designed for EFL classes, their first encounter with the "real" target language might be discouraging. Certainly, we want the language learners to cope with real-life instances for which authentic input is recommended. Thus, it is suggested that the more advanced the learners become in the target language, the more one can introduce them to authentic material (Ur 1996: 150; Hedge 2000: 67; Lynch & Mendelsohn 2002: 206). Given that pedagogic tasks focus on features relevant for real-life situations, Ellis (2004: 339) even proposes that they are "situationally authentic". Nonetheless, Guariento and Morley (2001: 348) sound a word of caution as to simplified versions of authentic texts and tasks. Although they do not disapprove of simplification in general, they stress the importance of an adequate simplification in terms of "lexical and syntactic simplicity and/or content familiarity […]" (Guariento & Morley 2001: 348). Their statement is reinforced by Lynch (1996: 15) who claims that "simplification- that is successful simplification- contributes […] to the current communicative event and to longer-term language development".

On the other hand, Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002: 205) argue that authentic materials and tasks are neither necessarily relevant to the learners' immediate needs nor of higher value.

Authenticity is highly dependent on the language learner's response and his/her interaction. Thus, learning tasks should trigger personal involvement and personal response (Van Lier 1996: 128; Widdowson 1990: 45). It is not the text that provides authenticity, but it is a quality "created by the response of the receiver" (Widdowson 1979: 166). Furthermore, Widdowson (1998: 711) disapproves of using authentic language in an EFL context arguing that

> […]we need to make language and language learning a reality for learners, and we cannot do so by bland reference to "real English." It can only be done by contrivance, by artifice. […] I say appropriate, not authentic. By that I mean language that can be made real by the community of learners, authenticated by them in the learning process. […]The appropriate language for learning is language that can be appropriated for learning (Widdowson 1998: 715).

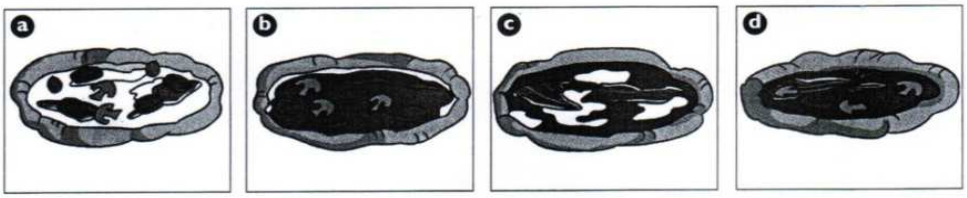
According to Widdowson (1998: 711), authentic language uses its authenticity as soon as it is withdrawn from the actual context. Similarly, Sánchez (2004: 50) points out that real life tasks cannot necessarily be transmitted to pedagogic settings as these settings provide a re-contextualized environment. While, for example, repairing constitutes a possible real-life task, it is not suitable for a language classroom- task.

Figure 4: Pedagogic task (Gerngross et al. 2008: 67)

SbX

5 Read the dialogue and write the names under the pizzas.

Waiter Are you ready to order?
Mr Hutton Yes, I think we are.
Mrs Hutton I'd like a medium pizza with ham, cheese and tomatoes.
Waiter And to drink?
Mrs Hutton Mineral water, please.
Mr Hutton And for me, a medium pizza, too, with ham, mushrooms, tomatoes and green peppers. And a cola.
Ben I'd like a medium pizza with ham, sausage, cheese, mushrooms and olives.
Mrs Hutton Ben, you never eat olives at home.
Ben Mum, please!
Mrs Hutton OK.
Waiter And to drink?
Ben A cola, please.
Vicky I'd like a medium pizza with mushrooms, tomatoes, green peppers and sausage. And a glass of orange juice.
Waiter Anything else?
Mr Hutton I haven't got a knife and fork.
Waiter I'll bring them straightaway.



The present example perfectly exemplifies a non-authentic dialogue which was deliberately designed for the EFL purpose of training reading skills using a dialogue that is characterised by coherent discourse patterns and linguistically complete expressions. In real-life situations one would perceive much more natural utterances, informal language and the ending would be left open. The language learners are supposed to read the text and attribute the right names to each pizza. Certainly, ordering food in a restaurant is essential in real life. However, the task lacks 'authenticity' and does not necessarily constitute a real life task since a native speaker would never be asked to assign the name of a pizza to the appropriate picture apart from games and riddles. Considering the age of the language learners in this example, ranging from 11 to 12 years old, one can argue that even though this is a fairly inauthentic task, it is "essentially 'pedagogic' in nature" as it is "communicative to the extent that [it requires] learners to comprehend […]" (CEF 2001:158). With regard to *content,* prior knowledge of various food, drinks, table manners, ingredients of pizzas, British/American/Euro money could be activated or introduced.

Even though tasks should approximate demands of real life settings as closely as possible (Clarke & Silberstein 1977: 51), because real life tasks grant authenticity (Ellis 2004: 283) and embed new information in a purposeful context, both authentic tasks and pedagogic tasks contribute to a language learning progress that can be "facilitated and appropriately acknowledged" (CEF 2001: 158). However, matters of real life tasks are not helped by such a CEF statement which is likely to slam new doors on real life language performances in favour of teaching for the tests.

2.4 Content in Methods and Approaches

Having illuminated possible syllabus types and authenticity in EFL one can now turn to the role of content in various methods and approaches. The different methods and approaches that are being introduced in the present thesis differ as they set different objectives. Consequently, *content* depends on the subject matter and the linguistic matter "around which language teaching should be organized and the principles used in sequencing content with a course" (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 25) or as Mohan, Leung and Davison (2001: 54) put it, "content […] [is] the meaning […] that is, what is communicated". Snow (1991: 315) mentions that the term *content* has had various meanings depending on the approach or method that is used.

While on the one hand earlier approaches and methods respectively used to focus on form, vocabulary and accuracy based content, such as in the *Grammar-Translation Method*

(Prator & Celce-Murcia 1979: 3), automaticity of habits through set phrases, such as in the *Audiolingual Method* (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 56-58), and latterly, communicative competence based devices, as in *Communicative Language Teaching* (Brown 2001: 43). On the other hand, these methods put forward a more natural way towards language learning by focusing on both form and communicative function or even on using the foreign language as a means of teaching subject matter (Lightbown & Spada 2006: xv).

Hence, it is not surprising that the notion of *content* has changed as well since c*ontent* is inextricably linked to the language proficiencies one desires to achieve. The shift of paradigm in language teaching and learning has resulted in a questioning of traditional teaching and learning strategies, thus encouraging innovations in EFL and attempting to establish guidelines in content and how to teach English (Hüllen 1987: 15). Hüllen (1987: 15) claims that there is hardly any comprehensive account as to which *content* is dealt with in EFL. Nonetheless, he (1987: 15) states that content can be deduced from various disciplines such as (*language-learning-) psychology, linguistics, different aspects of cultural studies, pedagogy, sociology* and *politics*. It has to be mentioned, however, that by the time of Hüllen's (1987) publication a fairly explicit taxonomy of content specification in EFL already existed, the "Threshold Level" and "Waystage English" by Van Ek, and Van Ek, Alexander and Fitzpatrick respectively. As has been stated in *chapter 1.1* of the present thesis, both publications provide information on European learning objectives and a clear outline of themes and sub-themes. Howatt and Widdowson (2005: 338-339) describe the Threshold Level as "consisting of (i) general notions (essentially grammar), (ii) specific notions (vocabulary), and (iii) language functions". It has to be said that the specific notions in the Threshold Level (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 59) do indeed cover vocabulary items, but what is even more mentionable is the organisation into themes and topics which will be further discussed in *chapter 3.1*. Although, Howatt and Widdowson (2005: 339) and Van Ek and Trim (1991) themselves allude to the Threshold 1990 as *notional/functional* syllabus, there is a sound reason to refer to it as *mixed* syllabus. Not only does the Threshold 1990 enumerate a set of language functions (1991: 27-48) the language learner should be able to fulfil and notions (1991: 48-59) one is required to refer to, but it also is topic-related (1991: 59-81), has "specific notions", as Van Ek and Trim coined it and skills-based (1991: 112) components. For this reason, notions and functions are required to communicate topic-related information and topics arranged according to notions and functions.

While Hüllen (1987) seems not to be aware of these publications specifying content in EFL, he (1987: 15) is right in saying that possible content-areas can be derived from the

above mentioned disciplines, a statement which is reinforced , for example in the Threshold 1990. An example are the sociocultural competences with "everyday life" (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 95) as a theme pertaining to different aspects of cultural studies.

In many approaches and methods, language is considered as the actual content. While the content dealt with in those approaches and methods revolves around lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic[9] competences (CEF 2001: 109), other approaches and methods combine the latter competences in order to communicate content that is based on themes and topics. Methods and approaches specify the processes in language teaching. Not only is there a comprehensive account in what way something is taught, but also about what is taught (Richards 2001a: 3).

In the *Grammar-Translation Method*, whose origin goes back to the teaching of classical languages, language is learnt by rules of grammar and its application from the students L1 language, to another. Basic to the grammar-translation method is the structural syllabus. While a lot of attention is given to direct translation, accuracy, reading and writing, the two other skills (speaking and listening) are rather unimportant (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 5-6) and "content is defined as the grammatical structures of the target language" in the grammar-translation method (Snow 1991: 315).In this so-called "'deductive method'" [10], (Krashen 1982: 29) language is learnt through grammatical features and grammar rules which are then applied in translation-tasks. In order to make grammar instruction and explanations perfectly intelligible to the language learner, the learner's L1 is predominantly used (Krashen 1982: 127; Richards & Rodgers 2002: 6). The importance of the content of the texts is, however, neglected since "in a typical Grammar-Translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated, [and] a list of vocabulary items is presented" (Richards & Rodgers 2001: 6) which contributes to a mere focus on grammar patterns and vocabulary rather than on a more holistic view and examination of the text's subject-matter.

By the end of the 1950s, *the Audio-Lingual Method*, a structural approach, was said to be the popular teaching device in the United States. Core learning principles of the latter method were the emphasis on oral language and automaticity. However, spontaneous and free speech was limited in order to forestall mistakes and rather foster correct responses based on automatic habits (Cantoni- Harvey 1987: 24). Moreover, the common assumption was that

[9] Language learner should make sense of orthographic symbols while reading or presenting a text. This may for example be to comprehend ambiguous words (homonyms) and punctuation marks in order to apply adequate intonation (CEF 2001: 117-118).

[10] The rules are taught in the first place, which are then demonstrated in practice (Krashen 1982: 29).

receptive skills such as listening and reading should precede productive skills, speaking and writing (Johnson 2010: 165). Based on behaviourism and contrastive analysis, content in the audio-lingual method comprised vocabulary, sound patterns as well as grammatical structures since this method emerged as a reaction to the grammar-translation method (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 138). The aim of the audio-lingual method is "comprehension, accurate pronunciation, recognition of speech symbols […] on the printed page, and […] reproduce these symbols" (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 58). In this case, for example, the aim could be accurate pronunciation which is taught through auditory input. The foreign language learner is supposed to reproduce these speech sounds on the basis of four core drill types: "[…] repetition, substitution […], transformation […] and translation" (Krashen 1982: 130). A further traditional behaviourist method in second language teaching is *The Direct Method*. The direct method is based on the same grammatical premises as in the above mentioned methods and approaches. Based on the insights of first language acquisition and natural language learning where no translation is required, the principle distinguishing the present method from others, however, is that grammar teaching happens inductively and is taught in the target language (Haley & Austin 2004: 37). Language learners thus attempt to find out grammar rules while the language teacher supports them by eliciting information and intensive question-and-answer teaching (Krashen 1982: 135; Richards 2001: 3; Richards & Rodgers 2002: 11-12), adding a conversational mood to the language sessions. By presenting objects, realia and pictures, concrete and everyday vocabulary is taught in accordance with accurate pronunciation (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 12).

Resembling the grammar- translation method inasmuch as "competence precedes performance" (Krashen 1982: 132-133), the *Cognitive Code Method* emphasises the mastering of all four skills rather than a mere focus on reading. Established in the 1970s, in the cognitive code method topics are dealt with revolving around a grammatical pattern. The grammar rules are explained and followed by practice. It fosters "the direct association of foreign words and phrases with objects and actions […]" (Haley & Austin 2004: 42).

Another example for the wide gamut of language teaching trends is *The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching* developed from the 1930s to the 1960s (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 36). This method focuses on vocabulary as it is seen as key component in order to comprehend written texts (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 37). Not only vocabulary is considered as a central aspect, but also grammatical content is emphasised. Furthermore, spoken language and structural features are seen as the basis of language teaching and learning. Hence, content-matter is taught orally in the first place. Once a new

language feature is discussed, it is discussed situationally. The Oral Approach, later referred to as *Situational Language Teaching* embraces

> principles of *selection* (the procedures by which lexical and grammatical content was chosen), *gradation* (principles by which the organization and sequencing of content were determined), and *presentation* (techniques used for presentation and practice of items in a course) (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 38).

Similar to the a*udio-lingual method*, accurate pronunciation and grammar patterns and avoidance of errors are the predominant components.

A humanistic method in language teaching constitutes *The Silent Way* method by Gattegno (1972). As the name already reveals, silence is intrinsic to this method. This means that the teacher should intervene as little as possible in order to enhance the language learner's participation (Haley & Austin 2004: 54). The language course is organised around grammatical structures and depending on their complexity, language and vocabulary items are discussed. According to Gattegno (1972: 81-83) topics such as family, education, personal identity, travelling, cultural features of the community in question and everyday-life events are discussed with a focus on reading, writing and grammar.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a shift to communicative approaches in language teaching and learning (Howatt & Widdowson 2005), approaches that seem to have established themselves. There has been a trend towards using language as a medium of communication and away from learning about the language itself (Stryker & Leaver 1997: 6). *Content* in a communicative context is "defined as the communicative purposes for which speakers use the second language" (Snow 1991: 315). This shift was triggered by Krashen who states that the language learning should emphasise comprehensible input rather than analytic structures (Snow 1993: 37; Lightbown & Spada: 2006: 38).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) "is based on the premise that successful language learning involves not only a knowledge of the structures and forms of a language, but also the functions and purposes that a language serves in different communicative settings[…]" (Lightbown & Spada 1991: 196). A communicative purpose in the EFL setting fosters classroom communication, turning away from a mere emphasis on language structures and moving towards the potential of communication (Brumfit & Johnson1979: 3, Sullivan 2000: 118; Harmer 2001: 84; Richards & Rodgers 2002: 153), "a view in which meaning and the uses to which language is put play a central part" (Brumfit & Johnson 1979: 3). Although, even if grammar still plays a role, the course content goes far beyond structures and enlarges the language learner's communicative repertoire with which he/she is prepared to respond to communicative demands (Littlewood 1981: 77; Nunan 1989: 13). On that account, the

classroom is rendered a student-centred, communicative area (Sullivan 2000: 118). This new view together with the stereotypical structural view enables us to deduce a broader holistic communicative view (Littlewood 1981: x), merging the "semantic-grammatical" principle with a communicative perspective (Wilkins 1976, quoted in Richards & Rodgers 2002: 163). As explained earlier, Van Ek and Trim adapted Wilkins' (1976) functions in the "Threshold 1990" and added situations language learners might find themselves in and with which they have to cope by means of language (Van Ek & Trim 1990: 1), such as free time, travel and daily life (1990: 65- 68). Furthermore, the language teacher can decide on topics and themes that catch the language learners' interest (Littlewood: 1981: 78). In addition to specific topics, the notions used in communication, grammar structures and vocabulary items are needed to fulfil specific functions in speech, such as agreement, disagreement, and orders (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 163). Hence, the language learner is prepared to apply language in specific contexts for specific purposes (Harmer 2001: 84-85).

In the 1980s, *Task-Based Language Teaching* (TBLT) - another communicative teaching approach- emerged, calling for tasks that literally trigger communicative interaction (Richards & Rodgers 2002: 223). The language learners face a challenging language task they are asked to accomplish, such as to tackle a problem or to fill in a personal form. Once the language learners have successfully fulfilled the task, the teacher offers them feedback or error correction (Harmer 2001: 87). It is noteworthy, that content in TBLT can be versatile inasmuch as the language tasks may focus on different language components such as

- language structures
- functions
- topics and themes
- macro-skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)
- competencies
- text types
- vocabulary targets (Richards and Rodgers 2002: 230)

This list can be read as meaning that each of these language components presented by Richards and Rodgers need to function well together for a language user to be competent; content in this listing will arise out of topics, themes and vocabulary targets. As opposed to the CEF which describes language competence as the sum of all language characteristics (CEF 2001:9) Richard and Rodgers see competencies as part of the language components.

As Snow (1991: 315) mentions, the meaning of content has recently changed in that it "is the use of subject matter for second language teaching purposes". Hence, topics and

subjects are discussed that meet the students' needs or interest. In some cases there is an emphasis on specific content areas as the content dealt with is used for specific purposes. *English for Specific Purposes* (ESP), most notably used at university level, refers to teaching or learning specific language and skills in order to meet a groups' communicative needs (Hyland 2007: 391), for example medical jargon for people involved in medical care. ESP has both a content-based and situational syllabus at its core. Consequently, thematic content is accessed relevant in real-life professional or academic contexts (Brinton, Snow & Wesche 1989: 7).

In 1994, according to Mehisto (2008: 9), a new term called *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) appeared defining "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language". Unlike traditional EFL teaching and learning in schools where the degree of difficulty of content is geared to the supposed language competence level of learners – suggested in national curricula -following a linear progression from basic, independent, to proficient usage (Council of Europe 2001: 5), content in *Content and Language Integrated Learning* refers to a subject matter or even to other school subjects taught in the student's non-native language. Hence, Stoller (2008: 59) points out that the foreign language course should not only focus on linguistic, cognitive and metacognitive skills in a content-based context in order to fulfil real tasks in the target language, but in addition, learners should meet subject content, for instance with reference to geography, biology or history embedded in meaningful language setting.

As stated by Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2007: 7), there is a rich variety of alternative terms referring to the combination of a foreign language learning and content all over the world. For example, Content-Based-Instruction, Englisch als Arbeitssprache (EAA) and English Across the Curriculum. Brinton's, Snow's and Wesche's book title (1989: vi), for example, is on context related teaching and learning "Content-Based Second Language Instruction (CBSLI)". A similar term is used by Lyster (2007: 1), referring to content- based teaching as "Content-Based Instruction" [CBI]. Halliday (1999: 2) refers to "Language Across the Curriculum" when discussing the relationship between "language as a medium of learning and […] as the substance of what is being learnt […]". In the present diploma thesis, the term "CLIL" is used since this term is predominant in the European educational discourse.

The increased mobility and the globalisation triggered an educational shift towards students 'preparation for cosmopolitan purposes (Dalton-Puffer 2007: 1). Similarly, this tendency towards internationalisation is reflected in the Austrian syllabus for upper secondary foreign language learning, discussed in *chapter 1.4*, revealing that the main aim is to develop

the students' capability to cope with core communicative requirements of social life linked to intercultural competences and lifelong learning (BGBl 2004: 4-5).

In reference to the mentioned approaches and methods in this chapter, it goes without saying that throughout the last decades, *content* in the field of language teaching and learning has shown that this word is utterly ambiguous. The attempt to find a common ground in the definition of content is fairly challenging and often results in imprecise and not very clear-cut definitions given the amount of methods and approaches that have accumulated in language teaching and learning.

3. Content as Topics and Themes

Having illuminated common methods and approaches all based on a specific syllabus type in a specific context (Ur 1996: 176), this chapter will focus solely on thematic rather than on linguistic content. Considering the empirical analysis of two Austrian English coursebooks in *chapter 4*, which is based upon thematic content, "Content as to Topics and Themes" deserves to be discussed in an individual chapter.

In 1975, the first account of theme- based instruction could be found in one of the Council of Europe's earlier language tools, *Threshold Level*, which was later revised and expanded to a broader range of contexts and learning aims in 1991 (Van Ek & Trim). In 1996, Ur (1996: 197) distinguished ten types of non-linguistic content types. Five years later, the highly influential publication by the Council of Europe on the European language learning pedagogy, the CEF (2001), revealed so called content-*domains* in which social life is organised.

3.1 The Threshold Level 1990

The Threshold Level (1991: 59) identifies fourteen themes relevant in an EFL context:

- personal identification:
  who they are, spell name, state address, give telephone number, place/date of birth, state age, sex, nationality, say where they are from, what they do for a living, describe their family, their religion, if any, state their likes and dislikes, say what other people are like: elicit/understand similar information from others

- house and home, environment
  describe a house, flat, rooms; refer to furniture and bedclothes, cost, services and amenities, describe regions and natural environment; obtain/understand similar descriptions and references from others; exchange views on these matters

- daily life
  describe daily routines, at home/ at work, give information about income, schooling and prospects; obtain/understand similar information from others: exchange views on these matters

- free time, entertainment

  say when they are free; what they do in their spare time, reference to hobbies and interests, public entertainment and private pursuits, mass media, sports and reading: obtain/understand similar information from others: exchange views on these matters: make use of entertainment facilities

- travel

  use and refer to means of transport: travel by road, rail, sea and air for business and holiday purposes

- relations with other people

  refer to personal relations, participate in social life, deal with matters of correspondence, refer to club membership/ forms of government and politics, to matters of crime and justice, of war and peace, to social affairs; exchange information and views on these subjects with others

- health and body care

  refer to matters of personal comfort, stating whether they feel well, are hungry, tired, etc., refer to matters of personal hygiene and obtain the articles required, refer to matters of health and illness and describe what is wrong to a doctor or dentist, report accidents, refer to medical services and insurance; exchange information and views on these matters

- education

  exchange information and views on educational matters, particularly types of education, school subjects and qualifications

- shopping

  use shopping facilities, particularly obtaining food stuffs, clothes, household articles and smokers' requisites, discuss prices, pay for things bought; exchange information and views on these matters

- food and drink

  refer to and order various kinds of food and beverage, also in a restaurant, café, etc.; exchange information and views on food, drink and places for eating and drinking

- services

  refer to, enquire about and make use of postal services, telephone, telegraph, bank, police, diplomatic services, medical services, car maintenance services and petrol stations

- places

  ask the way and give strangers directions

- language

  refer to foreign-language ability and deal with problems of understanding and expression

- weather

> understand a weather forecast and exchange information and views on climate and weather conditions

These topics refer to specific palpable situations and contexts the language learner might encounter including communicative purposes. A categorisation of social spheres into fourteen topics might seem fairly loose, yet there are subcategories suggested to each theme.

It is vital to elaborate further on one example to illustrate not only the concept of thematic content in the Threshold Level, but also its intrinsic purpose. Choosing "personal identification" (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 60) as exemplification, fifteen subcategories were established ranging from "name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, age, sex, marital status, nationality, origin, occupation, family, religion, likes and dislikes, character/disposition [to] physical appearance". These subcategories in turn contain a large array of lexical items, notions, according to the topic. "Religion", for example, displays locations, such as *church*, *cathedral* or *mosque*, institutions (church, cathedral and mosque apply here likewise), actions such as *to believe in…*, events, such as service and persons, such as *God* (the latter category might ignite a theological debate, but this is clearly not the focus of this thesis) and objects, such as names of religions (e.g. Islam, Christianity) (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 62).

A further example are the subcategories ascribed to "free time, entertainment" which incorporate "leisure, hobbies and interests, radio and TV, cinema and theatre, exhibitions and museums, intellectual and artistic pursuits, sports [and] press" (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 66-67). Focussing on "cinema and theatre" one can deduce *locations*: e.g. booking office, cabaret, circus, disco; *persons*: e.g. musician, pop star, actor/actress, star; *events*: e.g. performance, revue, opera, concert, floor show; *objects*: instruments, row, seat, lavatory/toilet; actions: to dance, to play (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 66-67).

What gives the impression of a mere listing of content related words is meant for pointing in the right direction of content areas. Thus, the language learners are required to explore these fields of content in more depth, adding speech functions, such as "imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out attitudes, getting things done, socialising, structuring discourse [and] communication repair" (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 27), in accordance with notions, such as "existential, spatial, temporal, quantitative, qualitative, mental, relational [and] deixis" (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 48) in order to fulfil activities revolving around a specific theme.

The topics suggested in the Threshold Level aim at a variety of contexts and situations. The language learner is seen as actual participant in these contexts. By means of language he/she activates or acquires notions and functions that are inextricably linked to the approach of either topic.

3.2 Ur's Content-Categories

In 1996, Ur (1996: 197-198) distinguished various types of content arguing that the objectives of a specific course predetermine its content. Ur (1996: 197) refers to content as the "topics the language talks about, as distinct from the language content itself" enumerating nine core non-linguistic content features:

1) **Zero or trivial content**: neutral content with hardly any real-world issues and cultural references, for example stereotype family stories, many pop-songs or 'soap-opera' style narrative
2) **The language**: the target language is illuminated through topics of study such as its history
3) **Another subject of study**: a subject is taught through a foreign language, for example: maths or geography
4) **Home culture**: Discuss topics that relate to the language learners' original culture
5) **Culture associated with the target language**: other than in point 4 of the present list, point 5 focuses on the culture of the target language
6) **Literature of the target language**: Although it could be attributed to point 5, point 6 constitutes a separate content inasmuch as it deals with written text types such as poems or novels
7) **World or general knowledge**: Topics concerning geographical, literary, political, general or historical issues all over the world
8) **Moral, educational, political or social problems**: Learners are supposed to tackle a problem/offer a solution to a question
9) **The learners themselves**: Focus on learners' experiences

Furthermore, Ur (1996: 199) draws attention to the role of course content as it "conveys a hidden curriculum". Course content may deliver political, religious or cultural messages or are in general considered inappropriate for EFL contexts. It needs to be mentioned, however, that especially nowadays, more and more pop-songs (Ur considers "pop-songs" as a topic with zero content) and musicians in general process political, religious or cultural events. Hence, Ur's classification of pop songs into the aforesaid content-category should be handled with care.

These sensitive topics, especially in the field of course-book publishing, are referred to as "PARSNIP"- topics, standing for politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms and pork (Gray 2010: 119). For example, in a class with learners from various political or religious

backgrounds, “zero or trivial content” would circumvent sensitive discussions (Ur 1996: 199). To consider politics as a taboo topic seems fairly inappropriate. Politics is not only decisive factor in intercultural relations, but also an indispensable theme for anyone interested in world affairs that cannot and should not be ignored due to moral issues. Richards (2001b: 2) argues however, that course-books in particular, neglect real-world issues or even idealise them in order to render them more acceptable. Consequently, the content is distorted and instead “an idealised white middle-class view of the world is portrayed the norm” (Richards 2001b: 2). Similarly, Dendrinos (1992: 153) takes the view that people from other cultures, “African, Indian, Pakistanese […] who make up a considerable part of the population[…]”, as well as sensitive topics such as “problems of the homeless and the unemployed, […] underprivileged, […] illiterate […]” are scarcely mentioned, while on the other hand topics dealing with “the white middle-class population […], their concerns about holidays and leisure time, home decoration and dining out […]” are addressed . The necessity to deal with a true reality, pointing towards a variety of cultures, customs and languages that are neither distorted nor neglected, will be further discussed in *chapter 3.4*.

During the course of studying Ur’s content categories carefully, thoughts came up integrating Ur’s content features into the research process by comparing the Austrian EFL course books with Ur’s 9 content categories. The idea was dropped on realising that one cannot examine thematic texts on the basis of criteria that have no legal link -such as CEF has- neither to the European language policy of the EU and the Council of Europe, nor to the Austrian curriculum for EFL.

3.3 The CEF- Domains

Language users, as stated earlier, are required to approach tasks in various situations and contexts in which their competences and skills are activated (CEF 2001: 9) since “all educational learning is mediated through language” (Halliday 1999: 2). The language learners’ language in use crucially depends on the context and thus shall trigger a content related language reaction:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both general and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts, under various conditions and under various constraints. This

engages learners in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains. Thus, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks are to be accomplished. These tasks - "the actions […] performed by one or more individuals strategically using their own specific competence to achieve a given result" (CEF 2001: 9) - are linked to texts in which strategic language activities are involved. The texts can be of either written or spoken and are sequenced in four domains. Remembering the words in the *Introduction* as regards the importance of thematic content in EFL, the CEF (2001: 45) provides clear criteria for a careful choice of content-domains:

> The choice of the domains in which learners are being prepared to operate has far-reaching implications for the selection of situations, purposes, tasks, themes and texts for teaching and testing materials and activities. Users may have to bear in mind the motivational effects of choosing domains of present relevance in relation to their future utility.

Probably the greatest index in respect of content, or should one expand it to content matter, are the 4 domains which any language act is referred to and from them themes and external situations emerge. We all use our language in diverse circumstances, in different societal areas which the CEF refers to as the *personal,* the *public,* the *occupational and* the *educational* domain (CEF 2001: 45). Within these domains language acts depend where they are happening, which institution is concerned, who is involved, what kinds of objects there are, what the planned events are, what activities people involved do and what texts come across (CEF 2001: 46). The CEF provides a schematic view of interplay between domains, external situations and appropriate thematic fields of content.

Domains "refer […] to the broad sectors of social life in which social agents [the language learner] operate." Furthermore, domains are referred to as "areas of concern" (CEF 2001). Every context and situation is set within the four domains identified in the CEF (2001: 10, 44). Hence, language activities such as receptive, productive, interactive or mediating ones are triggered (CEF 2001a: 14).

In the *personal* domain, the themes are sequenced according to an individual's life surrounded by activities centred on his/her family, friends and acquaintances (CEF 2001a: 45). In contrast, in the *public* domain the individual is seen as part of society and hence his/her activities are organised as regards to public involvements (CEF 2001: 45). The *occupational* domain describes the individual's transactions in a professional sphere, whereas the *educational* domain focuses on the individual's involvement in organised learning, often

in an educational setting (CEF 2001: 45). In each domain, as in reality, external situations are taken into account: the people involved, locations in which a situation occurs, the institutions and objects in the environment, events that take place, launched operations and texts one has to face (CEF 2001: 46). An example for illustration has been adopted (see *Figure 5*).

Figure 5: Adapted version of the CEF domains: "External context of use: descriptive categories"(2001: 48-49)

Domain	Location	Institution	Persons	Objects	Events	Operations	Texts
Personal	home: house, garden, room; seaside, countryside	the family social networks	parents, siblings, friends, aunts, uncles, offspring	furniture, pets, clothing, books, toys	family occasions, visits, holidays, cycling, accidents	DIY, cooking, eating, gardening, hobbies, TV	recipes, junk mail, novels, teletext, personal letters
Public	public spaces: shops, cinema, pub, hotel, public transport	the law, public health, political parties, public authorities	police, waiters, receptionist, priest, passenger, shop personnel, officials	money, weapons, passport, meals, programmes	incident, law-suit, wedding, funeral, illness	buying, journeys by road/ rails/ ship/ air, public entertainment	menu, hymns, public announcement, timetable, contract, leaflets,
Occu-pational	office factory, airport, farm, shop	multinational, corporations, firms, trade unions	employer, employee, colleague, client, customer, cleaner	business machinery, craft tools	meeting, interview, conference, trade fairs	selling, marketing, office maintenance, trucking	business letter, job description, advertising material, visiting cards
Educational	schools: classroom, playground, university, lecture theatre, canteen	school, professional, college, adult education, university	teacher, parents, classmates, students, caretaker, library staff	writing material, school uniform, food, computer, chalk, blackboard	return to school, sports day, disciplinary problems, exchanges	lessons, playtime, library work, clubs, societies, lecture	textbook, dictionary, computer, journal articles, reader

Clearly, some situations do not confine themselves to only one domain, but rather correlate with one or two others. An example would be a supermarket leaflet sent to one's home address announcing a new shop opening, clearly linking the public domain to the personal domain.

As stated earlier in this chapter, the CEF refers to themes as "communicative themes" (CEF 2001: 51). These "communicative themes" arise out from domains as visualised in *figure 5* and are described as preconditions for communicative language activities. Dealing with such themes in language acts is based on thematic or topical content (CEF 2001: 53). "Especially students in academic upper secondary education may explore scientific, technological, economic, etc. themes in some depth" for performing tasks on related domains such as public, educational or occupational, once they have reached the competences

necessary to deal with themes on a *personal*, more informal and less demanding domain (CEF 2001: 53). In this context CEF (2001: 52) suggests to refer to the thematic categories as classified "into themes, sub-themes and 'specific notions'" based on the Threshold Level 1990 (1991).

For communicating content to others thematic knowledge though is not enough. Students will have to make use of all their linguistic ability to reduce the information received (CEF 2001: 100), thus making the importance interrelation of form and topical content for communicative language performances understood. Even teachers prone to a communicative, natural approach ignoring the teaching of language forms (teachers who are convinced that in foreign language learning too, forms can be acquainted naturally through mere communication) will realise that knowing and using grammar consciously will support the accuracy level in a communicative performance. To describe it differently: Supplying students with appropriate linguistic elements as scaffolds, sets them free for a communicative activity. CEF itself places language forms into the field of content categorizing them as linguistic competences such as lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competences (CEF 2001: 109) and emphasizes their role in language learning:

> The stage of development of the learner's linguistic resources is a primary factor to be considered in establishing the suitability of a particular task or in manipulating task parameters: level of knowledge and control of grammar, vocabulary and phonology or orthography required to carry out the task[…] (CEF 2001:161)

3.4 The learner' competences

In order to communicate the different types of content, elaborated on in the Threshold Level (1991), Ur (1996) or the CEF (2001), and accomplish tasks involved in the production or reception of texts, the language user needs competences such as *general competences* and *communicative language competences*. In the course of every communication these competences can be further developed (CEF 2001: 101-108). The CoE recruited Byram and Zarate to provide the CEF with input in order to establish a sociocultural dimension in foreign language teaching. Having established a model, Byram and Zarate referred to it as a conceptual tool of *intercultural* communicative competence rather than *sociocultural* competence, changing the name to be "more precise in meaning" (Houghton 2012: 63). Byram continued developing the model on his own by adding a further component to the already existing four (Houghton 2012: 64) yielding the following elements: knowledge (*savoirs*), skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), skills of interpreting

and relating (*savoir comprendre)* attitudes (*savoir être*) and education (*savoir s'engager*) (Byram 1997: 34)[11]. It becomes somewhat evident that Byram's intercultural communicative competence and "'content-free'" model, as he calls it (Byram 1997: 31), influenced the CEF even though only three out of the five components were taken into account, namely *savoir-être* (existential competence), *savoir* (declarative knowledge) and *savoir apprendre/faire* (ability to learn/skills and know-how), splitting the latter into two separate entities. Interestingly, what is being left out in the CEF is the "education"- component of Byram's model, focussing on political education and critical cultural awareness. According to Byram (1997: 46), teaching language and culture should generate political and critical awareness which is why he positioned the present component at the centre (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Factors in intercultural communication (Byram 1997: 34)

	Skills interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (*savoirs*)	**Education** political education critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** relativising self valuing other (*savoir être*)
	Skills discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

Clearly, political knowledge about the language learners' country of origin and/or target language country is essential especially in an intercultural learning process. Political education yields potential to enhance language learners' intercultural competence and similarly raises their critical awareness in order to take position. Nevertheless, there are some compelling reasons not to incorporate political issues in a language course. As mentioned earlier, Ur (1996: 199) draws attention to controversial topics that can lead to a highly emotive discussion especially in multicultural classrooms. While the CEF does not incorporate political education and critical cultural awareness as individual *savoir*, a brief look at the public domain introduced in *chapter 3.3* confirms that political issues are covered.

In addition, the "skills" *interpret* and *relate* (savoir comprendre), the ability to interpret documents or events from the target culture to one's own, are not implemented in the CEF model as such. However, it is stated that it relates to already existing knowledge either acquired through formal education or in informal contexts (Byram 1997: 37) and thus, equals the component "knowledge of the world" stated in the CEF (2001: 101).

[11] For further insights see Byram (1997)

While it might seem that the five *savoirs* are individual components, they commonly interdependently constitute the general and communicative language competence of language learners.

3.4.1 Knowledge of Content in EFL as *General Competences*

The CEF (2001: 101-108) suggests that declarative knowledge *(savoir),* skills and know-how *(savoir-faire*), existential competences *(savoir-être)* and the ability to learn *(savoir-apprendre)* relate to general competences.

The language learners' success not only presupposes knowledge and specific skills for an appropriate communication, but also depends on a variety of competences, such as the *existential competence (savoir-être).* Attitudes, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality factors constitute a person's identity and can either hinder or foster the learner's ability to communicate and learn a language respectively (CEF 2001: 106-107). It is fairly common that the aforementioned features are negative and thus hamper interaction (Byram 1997: 34). Equally, positive prejudices can impede successful cultural interaction. There should simply be a natural willingness to communicate with people (CEF 2001: 23), a "curiosity […], openness, [and] readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Byram 1997: 91).

The *ability to learn (savoir-apprendre)* describes the language learners' participation in new situations in which newly acquired knowledge is implemented into prior knowledge that might then be adjusted (CEF 2001: 106). The ability to learn is relevant in cases where the language learners have no or hardly any knowledge to encourage them to determine their own learning process and dealing with challenging learning situations (CEF 2001: 106). Byram, Zarate and Neuner (1997: 16) describe *savoir-apprendre* as the "ability to produce and operate an interpretative system with which to gain insight into hitherto unknown cultural meanings, beliefs and practices, either in a familiar or in a new language and culture". General phonetic awareness, language and communication awareness study and heuristic skills are, among others, the components of *savoir-apprende*, (2001: 107-109).

Skills and know-how (savoir-faire) incorporate social skills (performing expected routines), living skills (routine actions such as cooking, bathing, walking, etc.), vocational and professional skills (mental and physical skills) and leisure skills (arts, crafts, sports and hobbies) (CEF 2001: 104). Furthermore, it can be seen as an integration of savoir-être and savoir-apprendre as the language learner needs to activate already existing knowledge

(Byram, Zarate & Neuner 1997: 18).

Since the three general competences, skills and know-how, existential competence and ability to learn, can hardly be applied to areas on thematic content, this thesis will not take account of these aforementioned competences. Skills and know-how for instance, as well as the ability to learn, are strategies for acquiring or learning content. Thus, they belong to the device of methods, not thematic content. As far as existential competences are concerned, they are not content-based, but prerequisites of successful language learning and cannot be classified among elements of content either. They might be involved in acquiring content knowledge, but are not content *per se*.

3.4.1.1 Declarative knowledge (savoir)

The declarative knowledge embraces "knowledge of the world", "sociocultural knowledge" and "intercultural awareness" (CEF 2001: 101) and, other than its counterparts in the previous section, can certainly be applied to thematic content. It is a "system of cultural references which structures the implicit and explicit knowledge acquired in the course of linguistic and cultural learning" and allows for the language learners' needs required in a communicative interaction with the target culture/language in question (Byram, Zarate & Neuner 1997: 18). One can consider it as "knowledge resulting from experience […], from more formal learning" (CEF 2001: 11) or from "socialisation in the family" (Byram 1997: 35), either consciously or subconsciously.

3.4.1.1.1 Knowledge of the World

We all possess knowledge of the world. All communicative activities depend on a shared set of beliefs in the knowledge of the world (CEF 2001: 11). Knowledge of the world incorporates factual knowledge and derives from experience. It is mediated by the environment the language users find themselves in, is defined during early childhood, education, academic settings, formal learning, empirical knowledge and other sources influencing the language learner (CEF 2001: 11). Empirical knowledge refers to daily routines both in public and personal domains, such as mealtime, using public transports or conversation. Routines that are just as well relevant in foreign language learning and teaching (CEF 2001: 11). This knowledge, residing on the model of the world in which the language user is being situated, acquired and developed throughout one's whole life, constitutes the

major “tool of thought” (Johnson 2009: 2). In foreign language learning and teaching it is fairly common that the language teachers require a particular prior knowledge of the world – stored within one’s first language memory capacity - depending on the task (CEF 2001: 101) By drawing upon the students’ experiences, one can raise their awareness of societal features which usually only fade into the background (Byrne 1981: 20-21), yet these are not always accomplishable (CEF 2001: 101).

3.4.1.1.2 Sociocultural knowledge

In addition to the knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge can be attributed to declarative knowledge and also contributes to the language user’s capability to communicate content. The CEF (2001: 102-103) refers to sociocultural knowledge as “knowledge of the society and culture of the community […] in which a language is spoken” covering “features distinctively characteristic of a particular European society and its culture”:

- *Everyday living* (food, drink, meal times, table manners, holidays, working hours, leisure activities)
- *Living conditions* (housing, welfare, living standards)
- *Interpersonal relations* (relations between classes/ races/ communities/ sexes/ generations/ public and police/ in work situations; family structures and relations; class structure of society)
- *Values, beliefs and attitudes* (social class, occupational groups, wealth, national identity, politics, religion, humour, minorities, security, foreign countries)
- *Body language* (gesture, proxemics, body contact, posture, facial expression) (CEF 2001: 89)
- *Social conventions* (punctuality, presents, behavioural/ conversational conventions, taboos, dress)
- *Ritual behaviour* (birth, rites, celebrations, death)

Generally speaking, in order to develop sociocultural competence, it is indispensable to possess/acquire sociocultural knowledge in the first place. English, like every other language, is located in a specific sociocultural context in which the foreign language learner makes use of tools that differ from the ones in his/her native language (Van Ek 1986: 35, quoted in Byram 1997: 10). Being familiar with that particular context to a certain extent is however, a prerequisite (Van Ek 1986: 35, quoted in Byram 1997: 10). Although, sociocultural knowledge could be a subcategory of knowledge of the world, the CEF (2001: 102) highlights the importance of sociocultural knowledge as separate entity due to the cogent reason that sociocultural aspects might have been irrelevant or even blurred in the language learner’s prior experience.

It is utterly striking, that the CEF (2001: 102) does primarily relate to a “European society” disregarding a more global and holistic view with an emphasis on a multifaceted society. Although the CEF recommendations are mainly targeted at stakeholders and practitioners within Europe, a wider sociocultural perspective should be maintained.

3.4.1.1.3 Intercultural Awareness

According to the CEF (2001: 103), intercultural awareness is the “knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation […] between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’ […]”. Intercultural awareness permits a comparison of both the home- and target- culture and their similarities and differences that facilitates the understanding of a versatile community (CEF 2001: 103). The increasing mobility and the worldwide use of English as lingua franca and international language, ranging from simple shop talks to political discussions, have triggered cultural transgressions (James 2006: 222). Likewise, Straub, Weidemann and Weidemann (2007: 1), emphasise the importance of intercultural awareness since it can be considered as the key competence in a globalised world characterised by cultural encounters and exchanges. It is not surprisingly therefore, a necessity to generate and develop intercultural awareness in order to prepare language learners for an interaction with people from various cultures. These cultures share different traditions and beliefs which can be further explored and consolidated (Byram, Gribkova & Hugh 2002: 10). By developing the language learners’ intercultural awareness, dealing with cultural intricacies is facilitated and stereotyping is obviated. There are however, as Kramsch (1993: 1) states, possible issues teaching culture “for culture is difference, variability, and always a potential source of conflict when one culture enters into contact with another”. Nonetheless, language and culture are inextricably linked since language can be considered as the result of a culture (Byrne 1981: 19). It seems therefore indispensable to teach a foreign language with reference to its culture (Valdes 1986: 121) drawing the line between language and cultural content. Learning a foreign language always entails learning about the target language culture and the ability to deduce its communalities and differences to the native language (Brown 1986: 43).

3.5.1.2 Communicative language competence

Equal to the declarative knowledge, communicative language competence embraces three components, namely linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic (CEF 2001: 108). *Linguistic* competences refer to lexical (e.g. lexical [phrasal idioms] versus grammatical elements

[articles, relatives]), grammatical (e.g. classes, structures), phonological (prosody, sound-units), semantic (connotation, collocation), orthographic (logographic signs) and orthoepic (spelling conventions) competences (CEF 2001: 108-118), whereas

> pragmatic competences are concerned with the language learner's knowledge of the principles according to which messages are a) organised, structured and arranged […], b) used to perform communicative functions […] [and] sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata […] (CEF 2001: 123).

Nevertheless, for the same reasons as with skills and know-how, existential competence and ability to learn, in which a thematic content-specification can hardly be drawn up, only sociolinguistic competence will be further elaborated on and used as a tool for the empirical research in *Part II* of the present thesis.

3.5.1.2.1 Sociolinguistic competence

Sociolinguistic competence refers to "the knowledge and skills required [dealing] with the social dimension of language use" (CEF 2001: 118). Language users do not only draw upon linguistic competences, but also on the use of appropriate language in a particular context in relation to society in order to fulfil formality and politeness conventions (Hudson 1996: 1; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000: 16; Niezgoda & Röver 2001: 64; Byram, Gribkova & Hugh 2002: 10). The study of language in relation to various cultures is indispensable as it becomes evident which choice of language is the most appropriate in a specific context. The relationship role in both verbal and non-verbal communication (Hedge 2000: 49-50) such as "[…] when to speak, when not, what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner (Hymes 1971: 277). Sociolinguistic competence is utterly sensitive to specific components and hence has an impact on communications between interlocutors of different cultures as it is to the language user to relate linguistic elements to the context and situation (Van Ek 1986: 41, quoted in Byram 1997: 10; CEF 2001: 13). The CEF (2001: 118) identifies five core elements of sociolinguistic competence as far as language use is concerned:

- Linguistic markers of social relations
- Politeness conventions
- Expression of folk wisdom
- Register differences
- Dialect and accent

Linguistic markers of social relations vary from culture to culture. Being applicable in one language, they do not necessarily have a similar counterpart in another language (CEF 2001: 119). *Use and choice of greetings*, such as *Hello!* or *See you later*, *use and choice of address*

forms, frozen (My Lord), formal (Sir), informal (first name only), familiar (mate), peremptory (surname only), ritual insult (you stupid idiot), *conventions for turntaking* and *use and choice of expletives* (Bloody Hell!) can be classified into linguistic markers of social relations (CEF 2001: 119). Equal to the linguistic markers of social relations, *politeness conventions* are divergent in different cultures and thus cause a risk of multiple misunderstandings (CEF 2001: 119). Politeness conventions include "'positive' […], 'negative' politeness […], appropriate use of 'please', 'thank you' […] [and] impoliteness" (CEF 2001: 119-120).

Further important components of sociocultural competence are expressions of folk wisdom, which are commonly used set phrases that often embed attitudes. *Proverbs* (e.g. a stitch in time saves nine), *idioms* (e.g. a sprat to catch a mackerel), *familiar quotations* (e.g. a man's a man for a' that) and *expressions of belief* (fine before seven, rain by eleven), *attitudes* (clichés) and *values* (CEF 2001: 120).

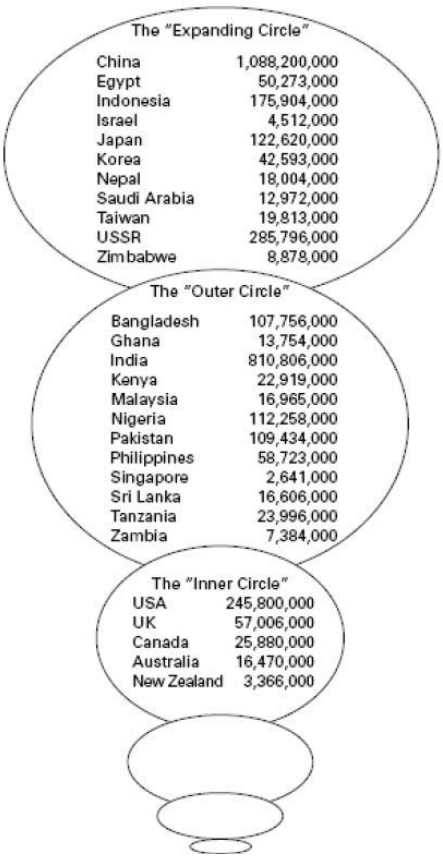
Register differences relate to "systematic differences between varieties of language used in different contexts" and can be organised into six levels of formality: *frozen, formal, neutral, informal, familiar* and *intimate* (CEF 2001: 120). In an EFL context, lower proficiency levels are introduced to rather neutral language first since formal and familiar use of language might irritate the language learners.

As a last point linked to sociocultural competence, *dialect and accent* is of importance. Certainly, there are plenty of dialects and accents since every language is characterised by heterogeneity. These peculiarities can correlate with *social class, regional provenance, national origin, ethnicity* and *occupational groups* (CEF 2001: 121). The linguistic markers used in dialects and accents such as different *lexicon, grammar, phonology, vocal characteristics, paralinguistics* and *body language* may well lead to stereotyping and superficial perspectives (Alptekin 1996: 60). This however, can be challenged by means of intercultural knowledge (CEF 2001: 121).

What one misses in the CEF, however, is taking account of not only dialects and accents, but also of the different varieties available of English. "No European language communities are entirely homogeneous" (CEF 2001: 121), nor is any other language community on a global scale. English is a language used worldwide and is not only used in a standardised British or US-American context, but also in non-standardised varieties. Kachru (1992: 355-356), for instance, suggests a representation of the English language in three circles representing "the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts". The *Inner Circle* defines itself to the traditional bases of English, while the *Outer Circle* embraces countries in which English is

not the native language, but spoken as second or significant language. The *Expanding Circle* comprises countries in which English constitutes a major language as far as culture or commercial is concerned (Kachru 1992: 355-356).

Figure 7: The Concentric Circles (Kachru 1992: 356)



The numerical strength of non-native speakers and the considerable increase of English all over the world, does not allow for a mere focus on British English or American English dialects and accents, but should also take other varieties of English and their dialects and accents into account. Considering the fact that English is employed on a global scale by a substantial number of people, be it Singapore, India, China or Australia, EFL pedagogy as well as EFL materials should raise the learners' awareness of the versatile profiles and with it the abundance of English varieties. Since language and culture are not mutually exclusive, the language learners may apprehend

> what is considered in one culture to be a normal amount of complimenting may seem excessive in another. What may be viewed as accepted topics of phatic communion (i.e., small talk) in one culture may be perceived negatively in another (Meier 1997: 24, quoted in Harwood 2014: 7).

If the aim is then to prepare learners to cope with these varieties, a further step would be the illumination of the rules of speaking (Wolfson 1986: 119) identifying different norms and characteristics of other languages and cultures and thus, calling for intercultural and sociocultural awareness. Even if these varieties are only subliminally touched upon in an EFL context, the language learner's sociolinguistic competences as regards to non-traditional forms of English are at least promoted and allows for a cross-cultural holistic approach towards world English(es) and their distinctive features/peculiarities in both form and meaning.

Drawing the line between the various competences, be it intercultural, sociolinguistic or sociocultural, let us assume that one reason why English is so dominant and Anglo-American models of behaviour are favoured among young people, is said to be the Anglo-American pop-culture and the marketing of this culture (Council of Europe 2007: 29). Even though, from an intercultural point of view, the Anglo-American culture might be a dominant factor in many multicultural English classrooms, it can make room for topical discussions and comparisons of different cultures and customs.

Considering the points of criteria for the coursebook analysis, it seems legitimate to argue that "sociolinguistic competence" puts forward linguistic content. It is however, as one can deduce from the discussion, closely linked to the target language's culture and traits granting and opening up for cross-cultural themes and topics.

The analysis in the following part of the thesis will be based upon the elements discussed in *chapter 3*. Although Ur's (1996) content categories offer clear criteria for thematic content specifications and overlap with some of the domains and competences provided in the CEF (2001), the categorisation used in the CEF will be adhered to. The reason for this option is simply the focus on the dominant European recommendations and terminology.

The question though arises if the CoE and its CEF will still play the key role they are playing now within Europe in the field of language policy in the future. This very much depends on the national governments' agreement to adjust their language policies to the specific Committee of Ministers Recommendation 2008, disseminated by the language division of the CoE to all its member states, on using the CEF (Council of Europe 2008: 1-16). The rationale behind this recommendation at European level is "the aim of the Council of Europe […] to achieve greater unity among its members and that this aim is to be pursued in particular by the adoption of common action in educational and cultural matters" (Council of Europe 2008: 1). The reasons put forward were "[…] the increasing significance of the CEF

as a European standard of reference for language education, the growing value of the CEF as a reference instrument for the initiatives undertaken by the European Commission, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass and the European Indicator of Language Competence […] (Council of Europe 2008: 2). In the course of the *2008 Recommendation* paper all CoE member states are invited to take up measures to implement the CEF as a reference tool by "[…] taking into account all its functions and dimensions […]" (Council of Europe 2008: 3). Particularly striking is that the EU also uses CEF as a reference instrument and recommends its use as "[providing] a good basis for schemes to describe individuals' language skills in an objective, practical, transparent and portable manner (Commission of the European Communities 2003: 11). Austria has decided to follow the Council of Europe's language policy line as we have heard earlier on. If language teachers will use the CEF as a regular reference tool though very much depends on its direct applicability in the classroom otherwise it will hamper its use. As far as thematic content is concerned it is recommended to refer to CEF's explanations and comments on communicative language competences, domains, themes, external situations and general knowledge (CEF 2001).

4. DESIGN OF THE EMPRICAL STUDY

4.1 Research Question and Hypotheses

The main purpose of this research was to answer the research question: To what extent do the English as a foreign language course books *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5* take into account language teaching recommendations as set in the Council of Europe language teaching and learning tool 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' (CEF 2001) with regard to thematic content?

The discussion in *chapter 3*, "Content as Topics and Themes", outlined content-specifications in the CEF. The CEF suggests that FL courses and/or textbook designers implement domains, knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, sociolinguistic competence and intercultural awareness, as well as themes relating to the Threshold Level 1990 (Van Ek & Trim 1991:59). Hence, given these specifications one can assume that Austrian English coursebooks take them into consideration which makes it legitimate and reasonable to presume that the thematic content of the two books investigated relates to a great extent to specific content variables as described in the CEF. It can be expected that the Hypotheses 1 and 3 account for a 100% frequency rate since the texts should refer to one of the *Threshold Level Themes* and since *Knowledge of the World* is either acquired or required within the texts. On the other hand, Hypothesis 2, 4 and 5 are based on a 50% limit. This is due to the assumption that not every text can allude to each of these three categories at once.

<u>*Hypothesis 1*</u> **:** *Due to the Austrian curriculum regulation on EFL to make use of the CEF competence scales the thematic topics in the 2 English school books* Into English 1 and Prime Time 5 correlate *to a high degree with the Threshold Level Themes as recommended in the CEF.*

<u>Hypothesis 2:</u> *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *are closely related to* <u>*knowledge of the world*</u> *as stated in the CEF.*

<u>Hypothesis 3</u>: *"Each act of language use is set within one of the* <u>*domains*</u> *(spheres of action or areas of concern) in which social life is organised" (CEF 2001: 45) According to this statement it can be assumed that most thematic topics in the English books* Prime Time 5 *and* Into English 1 *are set for language use within one of the domains.*

Hypothesis 4: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to intercultural awareness as stated in the CEF.*

Hypothesis 5: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to sociocultural knowledge as stated in the CEF.*

Hypothesis 6: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to sociolinguistic competences as stated in the CEF.*

4.2 EFL Coursebooks

EFL school books "represent for both students and teachers the visible heart" of an EFL programme (Sheldon 1988: 237). Hardly any teacher teaches without an appropriate school book as it is seen as the key material used in the language classroom (Byrd 2001: 415). Language policies and above all syllabi at the core of EFL constitute the importance allotted to school books. If a country establishes a set of aims or objectives to be accomplished for a particular language level, described more detailed by content-specifications, the reliance on textbooks is considerably high (Dendrinos 1992: 25). The Council of Europe language teaching tool CEF offers a basis for the design of syllabi, teaching devices, examinations and textbooks all around Europe (2001: 1). Given the Austrian standardised matriculation (*Reifeprüfung* or commonly named *Matura* in Austria) specifications through responsible foreign language policy makers, one can assume that EFL school books are designed to cover the necessary content to achieve the defined competences. Even though on one hand it is the national syllabus, influenced by Council of Europe's content specifications, that finally states what is to be taught and learned, it is on the other hand – as generally may be assumed -the school book that determines the content to be dealt with in the end. School books or course books

> provide the data with which students and teachers work, and pose the questions that define how the data should be understood. They define the content of instruction and the tasks students are expected to accomplish in the service of acquiring and demonstrating mastery of that content (Sosniak & Perlman 1990: 24).

Hence, school book writers have to adequately select the content of the school books, tasks, texts and activities linked to the latter (Ur 1996: 183). Even more so this applies to the context in which language learners are supposed to put forward 'standardised knowledge', as is the

case in the final standardized *Matura* exam. “Generally, the first area included in textbook analysis is the fit between the materials and the curriculum” (Byrd 2001: 416). This leads us to the forthcoming analysis of the research findings.

The main research purpose arose out of the interest in the field of thematic contents and whether there was a correlation between the thematic content in the EFL school books and the CEF-content specifications. Every year, an ample amount of teaching materials are published. In Austria, there is a high density of authorised EFL school books including such for use on the CEF proficiency level (B1) on the base of which the research was undertaken.

4.3 Methodology and Research Procedure

The following section will discuss the procedure of the empirical study and provide a detailed insight into how the analysis has been carried out. For the research, a type of *internal evaluation (*McDonough, Shaw & Masuhara 2013: 59) was chosen.

With reference to statements in the CEF (2001) on what is needed for gaining competences in a foreign language, it seemed clear that linguistic knowledge is by no means sufficient to carry out a communicative language task competently. With regard to content specifications introduced in *chapter 1* on a European dimension, the purpose of this part of the research is to analyse if the English texts in the two EFL school books chosen for the research, *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5*[12], are closely related to the criterions on thematic content as specified in the Threshold Level 1990 (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 59) and the CEF (2001: 52) respectively. From each of the two EFL coursebooks thirty texts were selected based on the assumption of them containing thematic contents which could be compared with CEF and Threshold Level categories on thematic content (see coding frame in the *appendix*). Thirty texts of each of the two EFL coursebooks were selected based on the assumption of dealing with thematic contents to be compared with CEF and Threshold Level specifications on content. Out of the listed Austrian EFL school books for upper secondary schools *Into English 1, Prime Time 5, Laser B1, Make your way 5, Destination b1, Headway 5, New Opportunities* or *Gateway B1* the eventual decision to analyse *Prime Time 5* and *Into English 1* was driven by the fact that the majority of schools contacted, had reported back to work with the aforementioned EFL books. It is clearly premature to make any hasty assumptions. However, given the substantial number of schools working with these two books might be a

[12] EFL school-books approved by the Austrian Ministry of Education for use in EFL in year 1 of the academic secondary school, upper level

solid proof for their popularity among English teachers who might have chosen these EFL coursebooks on the assumption that they are best suitable for teaching to the test (Standardised Matura-exam). And because – as has been referred to in this thesis before – the standardized final exam at the end of secondary schooling, upper level is to take account of the language competences as described in the CEF (2001: 61-65; 66-96) one might think the Austrian EFL coursebooks also relate to thematic content as suggested in the CEF. After all, language competences include all elements of a language, thematic content knowledge, too.

Since no conceptual research tool for data collection has been developed so far that specialises on and addresses the aforementioned points of interest, a novice framework of analysis was designed containing categories for analysis based on CEF and Threshold Level criteria (see coding frame in *appendix*).

In order to answer the research question and to test the hypotheses, frequency data of texts in the two EFL school books that align with the pre-defined Threshold Level Themes and CEF content areas had to be found. It seems there is a pressing need to mention that CEF itself does not directly refer to the thematic categories used in the present research as "content". It was, however a logical conclusion that had been drawn, as content in the CEF must be seen as closely connected with CEF domains, Threshold Themes, knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competences (CEF 2001:45, 101, 102, 103 & 118).

As the present research is "centred around numbers" the applied methodology is of a quantitative nature (Dörnyei 2007: 32). The frequency (of correspondence between school books and CEF content criteria) however, must be related to categories (Dörnyei 2007: 33). In this research procedure these are categories set up priori to data collection and organized within a coding system with the common features of *'Thematic contents in EFL',* class divided into *CEF domains, Threshold Level Themes, Knowledge of the world, Intercultural awareness, Sociocultural knowledge and Sociolinguistic competences*[13]. Quantitative studies also aim at the relationships between variables (Dörnyei 2007: 33). Hence, the relationship between the thematic content areas above and thematic texts in the school books as 'variables' will be measured according to defined features. As this research is on content the chosen analysis is "content analysis" (Schreier 2012). This method is described as a "research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber 1990: 9). This is why the researcher believes that the content analysis method can detect the frequency of theme based contents in the school books correlating with the coded criteria according to the CEF

[13] see *chapter 3*

and Threshold Level quite efficiently. Through means of an internal "content analysis" which is based upon a quantitative research method, coded data was collected on various variables and different categories of thematic content. From the statistical point of view it was decided upon using the model of descriptive instead of the inferential one (Dörnyei 2007: 209) allowing the researcher to summarise the categorical data numerically and describe – with reference to this research – the characteristics of the school books in terms of *content* after listing the findings in words, such as conformities found between school books and CEF categories of content based elements. This was done by examining the thematic contents in the two school books identifying as to which of the categories they may be assigned (see coding frame in *appendix*).

The texts in the books were analysed according to categories[14] including

- **The Threshold Level 1990 Themes:** personal identification, house and home/environment, daily life, free time/entertainment, travel, relations with other people, health and body care, education, shopping, food and drink, services, places, language, weather (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 59)
- **Knowledge of the world:** knowledge acquired throughout childhood and through formal/informal education and experience (CEF 2001: 101-102)
- **Domains:** language use acts are set within one of the four domains**:** personal (private sphere revolving around home, family and friends), public (member of society and organisations), occupational (job and profession) and educational (learning, that does not necessarily take place within an institution) (CEF 2001: 45)
- **Intercultural awareness:** knowledge and appreciation of similarities and differences between home and target culture; regional and social diversities (CEF 2001: 103)
- **Sociocultural knowledge:** knowledge of the target culture and society such as living conditions, everyday living, interpersonal relations, values/beliefs/attitudes, body language, social convention, ritual behaviour (CEF 2001: 102-103)
- **Sociolinguistic competencies:** knowledge needed to deal with the social dimension of language use such as linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, dialects/accents, register differences, expression of folk-wisdom (CEF 2001: 118)

In order to find out about the occurrence of the above mentioned categories, 30 texts both spoken and written, considered to deal with thematic content, were chosen from each textbook

[14] for a review see *chapter 3*

(*Into English 1* & *Prime Time 5*). Certainly, texts can incorporate many themes and topics (e.g. travelling around the world and having a specific dish in a specific country). However, the analysis only took account of the major themes in every text. Themes within a text merely superficially touched upon were not considered in the analysis. A "text" was considered feasible once it promoted mainly thematic and not linguistic content. All the other texts inextricably linked to linguistic content were deemed irrelevant. *Into English 1* comprises 60 texts, while *Prime Time 5* comprises 49 texts in total promising thematic rather than linguistic content. Thus, the choice of 30 texts in each book accounts to 50% and 61.2% of the books' texts respectively.

After analysing the 60 texts in the two school books with reference to the CEF and Threshold Level categories and collecting the data on the categorized data frame, frequency of matches were established using a type of factor-analysis-output method (Dörnyei 2007: 233) reporting the findings (correlations between school books and CEF/Threshold Level thematic content 'factors') in tables and graphs. Generally speaking, the findings should report whether the aforementioned factors of content are incorporated in the very two EFL school books. Before starting with examining the samples the teacher's and students' books were pre-examined if they had been designed taking account of these categories as stated in the CEF or if general statements about the content were made by the course book authors themselves. Such an evaluation of the table of contents of the EFL school books, their cover pages as well as the introduction of both teacher's and student's book can be described as "external evaluation" suggested by McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013), when "'the 'blurb', or the claims made on the cover of the teacher's/students' book [and] the introduction and table of contents" (2013: 54) are analysed. In McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara's internal evaluation (2013: 59), the

> extent to which the aforementioned factors in the external evaluation stage match up with the internal consistency and organization of the materials as stated by the author/publisher

are analysed. In contrast, the internal evaluation in this research was to illuminate whether the internal content of the very EFL school books was in accordance with the CEF criteria rather than with the actual themes previewed in said EFL school books' own tables of content and teachers' manuals.

The readers of this thesis should know that, since no specific conceptual research tool for this kind of data collection could be spotted in research literature specializing on and addressing the aforementioned research on comparing correlations between content in school

book texts and proposed content areas in the CEF (2001) and Threshold Level 1990 (Van Ek & Trim 1991), a novice framework of analysis for data collection was designed.

Table 1: Extract of Data Collection Frame

Item	Unit/Unit's topic area/page/task Nr./Text type	Topics in Book and Correlating Threshold Level Themes	Content Based on Knowledge of the World	Domains	Content based on Intercultural Awareness	Content based on Sociocultural Knowledge	Content based on Sociolinguistic Competences
1	1/Multicultural society- Best of British /6/1: Survey text. (Li)	Teenagers in Britain Threshold relation: Daily Life	Facts on Britain and people's characteristics/clichés. Facts based on a survey on British teenagers	**Public** (living conditions, routines, hobbies, teenage society)	-	Facts on British society and youth (Everyday living, leisure time, values, family relations)	-
25	8/Moral issues- Good and evil/ Into Culture 112/1a: Article (Rd)	Topic in the book: The Writing's (sic!) on the Wall Threshold related Art : Graffiti as piece of art or crime?	Street art/graffiti/hip-hop Content words to describe graffiti (writer, crew, tag, throw up, burner, style wars etc.)	**Public** (public entertainment, graffiti) **Personal** (hobbies)	-	Arts- visual arts: graffiti, street art ; Hip-hop origins in the USA Values and general attitudes , interpersonal relations	Dialect: occupational group: graffiti jargon ("a tag, burner, style wars, throw up, etc.") American English: subway Informal and familiar language

Table 1 displays the data collection frame containing the categories to be examined and illustrates two findings made within *Into English 1*. The spoken or written texts were analysed according to Threshold Level 1990 Themes, knowledge of the world, the text-inherent domains (not restricted to only one domain), the occurrence of intercultural awareness, sociocultural knowledge and sociolinguistic competences. The findings were then recorded in the frame, counted, the level of frequency captured on tables and bar-graphs and interpreted. The overall findings will be presented in *chapter 5* by category comparing the two EFL school books and their relation to CEF criteria highlighting striking features, differences and/or communalities and the hypotheses will be contrasted with the actual results. A detailed account of the findings can be found in the data collection frame in the *appendix*.

5. FINDINGS

Through the external evaluation of the EFL school books *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* it became evident that the statements made by the coursebook authors overlap with some CEF specifications. The purpose of the data-collection frame[15] is to arrange all findings to do with the variables neatly and to enable the reader to realise that all of these variables are to be seen holistically, all responsible- like a good social network- for making a language performance work.

Since "data never 'speaks for itself'" (Schreier 2012: 2), the meaning of the results shall be deciphered on the basis of interpretations and shall confirm or reject the hypotheses mentioned in *chapter 4.1*.

5.1 External Content Analysis

5.1.1 Prime Time 5

Having a look at *Prime Time 5's* (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlkar 2010a) cover-page, "Sicher und Kompetent zur Matura" are the striking words positioning the school book's line in close proximity to the construct of the standardised Matura exam. In addition to that, some themes and topics are already arranged on the cover page such as "docusoap, poetry slam, heroes, fantasy, outback, tolerance, global and friends". Other than thematic hints, "skills", "fluently" and "experience" are enumerated. Can the latter be perceived as indication for thematic contents on the base of *knowledge of the world*? And is the picture showing four white teenagers, obviously spending a cheerful time together, evidence for a focus on the *personal domain*? Or are they on a family holiday abroad, expanding their *socio*-or *intercultural* awareness?

In the introduction of *Prime Time 5's Teacher's Handbook* (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlkar 2010b: 3-7) the authors enumerate concepts, aims and objectives of the EFL school book at hand. They focus on autonomous and authentic speech act competences, outcome-orientation by providing transparency and on skill-training strategies to equip the learners with the necessary competences the learners will need for a successful pass of the Matura Exam and other standardised exams (Hellmays, Waba & Mlkar 2010b: 4-5).

[15] The data collection frame can be found in the appendix.

As far as thematic content is concerned, the authors promise coverage of appealing, diversified, relevant and sustainable content-matter that is designed according to the needs, interests and problems likely to occur at a learners' age of fifteen or sixteen (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlkar 2010b: 4). Every unit focuses on a specific topic that is further illuminated by means of texts and dialogues guaranteeing a coherent approach towards the content-matter. Interestingly, it is specifically mentioned that the book pursues the specifications, descriptors and frameworks provided by the CEF (2001) which becomes evident in the succeeding description of *Prime Time 5's* content in this thesis. Apart from linguistic content, generating lexical, phonetic and grammatical content, "provided in an authentic context", it is explicitly stated that sociocultural and intercultural competences shall be promoted throughout the EFL course:

> Der soziokulturelle Hintergrund […] spiegelt die Facetten der modernen Gesellschaft wider, […] ihrer ethnischen Vielfalt. Die Units […] haben unterschiedliche Schauplätze und unterschiedliche Themen. Das Fotomaterial soll zudem zum interkulturellen Vergleich anregen. So werden die Schülerinnen und Schüler […] dazu [angeregt] ihre eigene Lebenswelt in der Fremdsprache darzustellen und mit anderen zu vergleichen. Auch kulturelle und situationsgebundene Sprachkonventionen werden angeboten […] (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlkar 2010b: 6).

The ToC is arranged according to *Topic, Texts, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary* and *Grammar* (2010a: 2-5). Contemplating thematic content as main interest within the content analysis, the ToC reveals the following themes and topics:

- The world speaks English
-Australia
-Politics
- Human rights
- Jobs
- Identities- what next?
- Media-mad
- Strange realities
- Music
- Books

(Hellmayr, Waba & Mlkar 2010: 2-5).

The external evaluation of *Prime Time 5* reveals that the individual topics as mentioned above play a central role in the coursebook. In other words, the topics and themes are ranked first within the ToC followed by a list of skills, grammar and vocabulary items linked to the superordinate topic. What is striking is *Prime Time 5's* strong emphasis on preparing students for pedagogic tasks, namely the Matura exams. A teaching to the test is highlighted and the coursebook content be it thematic or linguistic, is considered a fruitful preparation for the standardised exam. In retrospect to the Austrian curriculum (chapter 1.3), its thematic specifications (such as professions, literature, music and media), "Erwerb soziolinguistischer Kompetenzen" (manifested in *Prime Time 5*'s topic "The world speaks English"),

“Interkulturelle Kompetenz” (mirrored in *Prime Time 5*’s topic “Human rights” and “Identities- what next?”) and travelling (represented by the topic Australia) are taken into account.

5.1.2 Into English 1

Into English 1 (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013a) lists neither themes and topics nor any other skills and competencies addressed within the book on their cover page. However, what is fairly remarkable is that the London Skyline is positioned in the middle of the book cover. Can we consider this aspect as a focus on English culture rather than on American culture? Thereunder, similar to the *Prime Time 5* cover, four teenagers albeit not all white like in *Prime Time 5*, are shown. Does this cover picture centre content on *intercultural awareness* and multiculturalism or simply emphasise the *personal domain* of teenagers?

Equivalent to *Prime Time 5*, a reference to the Matura exam can be found on the student’s book: “Kompetenzorientierung gemäß Reifeprüfung NEU” (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013a: 2).

Also similar to *Prime Time 5*, *Into English 1* (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013b: 4) refers to topics that are in accordance with and a preparation for the standardised Matura exam. It is stated that the topics dealt with are all “touched upon in the Austrian Matura exam” and shall offer the necessary terminology the language learners need for the latter (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013b: 4). As referred to earlier in *chapter 1.3.*, the requirements of the final and standardized EFL exam are set at the CEF competence level B2 and students should be capable of expressing themselves in a clear and detailed manner on familiar topics related to the personal domains *family, friends, spare time, public sector such as shopping, travelling, entertainment, school* and *work* (https://www.bifie.at/node/78 4 April 2014). Furthermore, topics are covered that are supposed to be of students’ interest and hence foster their motivation and in-class participation. Adhering to a theory by Kieran Egan (quoted in Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013b: 4), *Into English 1* is said to be influenced by “educational and neurobiological theories”. Hence, the following approach towards a socio-political and psychological content-matter can be deduced:

> If they [the language learners] connect with topics and Coursebook content, their interaction and enjoyment increases. Teenagers are naturally attracted to stories about exotic places and cultures. Most importantly they identify with iconic and heroic

> figures who shop exceptional courage, love, tolerance, loyalty and genius (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013b: 4).

Moreover, it is mentioned that *Into English 1's* content also provides sections on *Culture*, offering cross-cultural information about customs and history, *Music*, providing original songs or videos, *Literature*, putting forward texts from various genres, *Film* and "engaging topics and issues that are simply worth talking about" (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013b: 4).

The twelve units are arranged according to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, listening, writing, speaking, Into Competencies, Into Literature/Into Culture/Into Music/Into Film and Language in use. As far as thematic content is concerned, the following topics can be deduced from the ToC:

- Multicultural Society- best of British	-Communication-ways of talking
- Relationships (1) - a true friend	-Travel (1) - great adventures
-Technology- live forever	-Media- reality TV
- Nature and Environment- campaigning for survival	-Moral Issues- good and evil
-Crime and Punishment- getting into trouble	-Society- two sides to every story
-Travel (2) - mysterious places	-Relationships (2) - love

(Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones & Posser 2013: 3-5).

The external evaluation of *Into English 1* reveals - similar to *Prime Time 5* - that grammar is subordinate to thematic content throughout the EFL course book. In *Into English 1*, too thematic issues are ranked first within the ToC. Even here a strong focus is put on skill training strategies as preparation for the B2 level Matura exams. Even though themes seem to be leading through the book at first sight, activities on linguistic content are put into play. In retrospect to the Austrian curriculum (*chapter 1.3*), the topics in *Into English 1* are in accordance with the suggested variety of thematic areas, however no specific link to CEF or the Threshold Level can be identified, even though *Into English 1*, too works along the CEF's competence scales. It can be assumed that *Into English 1* adjusts their themes to the Austrian curriculum rather than to the CEF or Threshold Level 1990.

5.2 Internal Content Analysis

5.2.1 The Threshold Level Themes

Hypothesis 1 **:** *Due to the Austrian curriculum regulation on EFL to make use of the CEF competence scales the thematic topics in the 2 English school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *correlate to a high degree with the Threshold Level Themes as recommended in the CEF.*

As already stated earlier, a text can contain many themes and topics. One might consider "illnesses" as a topic relating to "Health and Body Care". Certainly, "Health and Body Care" do comprise illnesses and health issues. However, the text (*Into English* 1, p.62/1) focuses on intelligent machines subliminally introducing deafness and "Parkinson's disease" which does not make up for a "Health and Body Care" theme on its own, but rather enumerates illnesses in the course of discussing the main topic- "Technology". The analysis, however, will focus on the predominant theme in every text.

Table 2 and *figure 8* show the fourteen Threshold Level Themes (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 59) and reports their occurrence in either of the two textbooks.

Figure 8: Bar-graph reporting in % the frequency rate of occurrences with regard to Threshold Level Themes in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5*

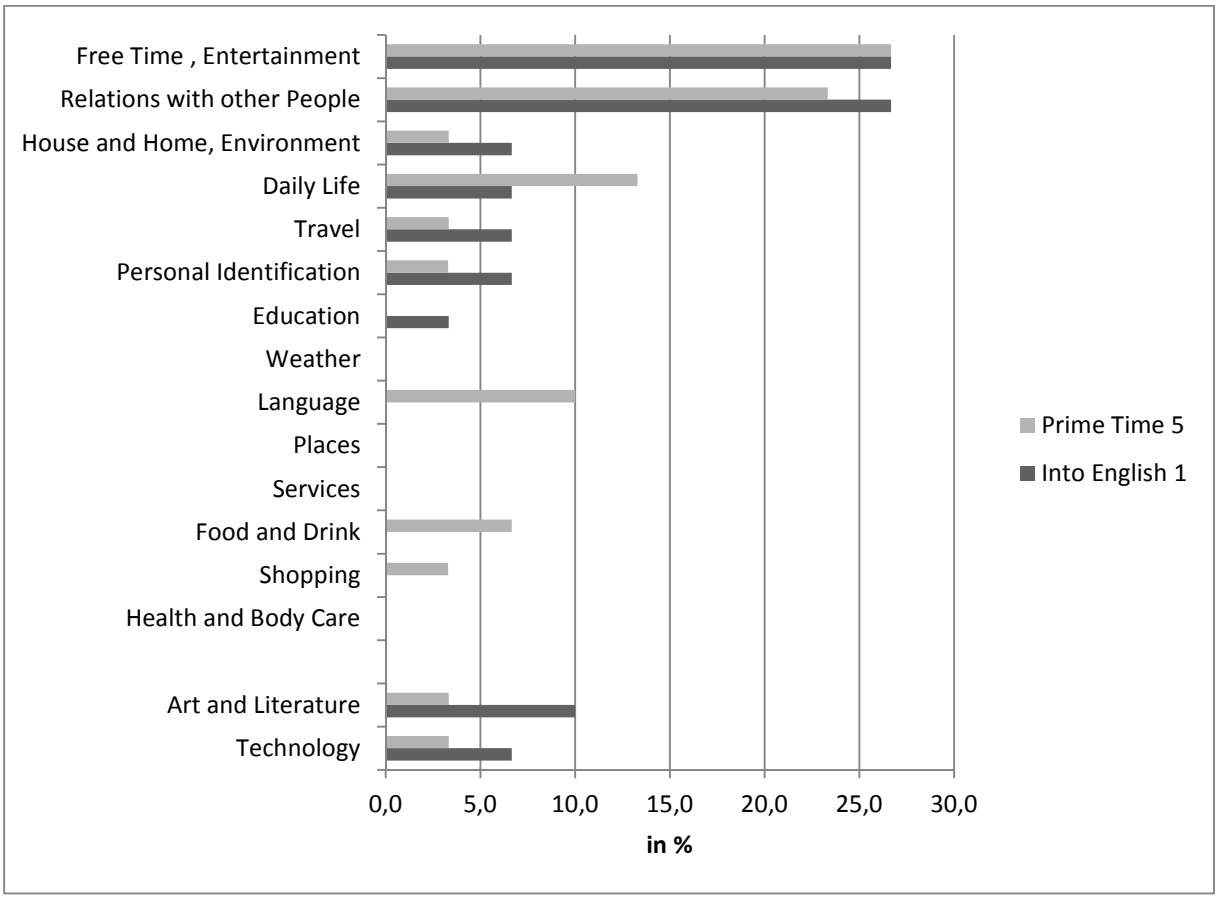


Table 2: Reporting occurrences numerically and in percentage with regard to Threshold Level Themes in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5*

		Into English 1		**Prime Time 5**	
	Recommended Threshold Level Themes as stated in the CEF	Frequency of Threshold Level related themes		Frequency of Threshold Level related themes	
Nr.		Numbers	%	Numbers	%
1	Personal Identification	2	6.7	1	3.3
2	House and Home, Environment	2	6.7	1	3.3
3	Daily Life	2	6.7	4	13.3
4	Free Time , Entertainment	8	26.7	8	26.7
5	Travel	2	6.7	1	3.3
6	Relations with other People	8	26.7	7	23.3
7	Health and Body Care	0	0.0	0	0.0
8	Education	1	3.3	0	0.0
9	Shopping	0	0.0	1	3.3
10	Food and Drink	0	0.0	2	6.7
11	Services	0	0.0	0	0,0
12	Places	0	0.0	0	0,0
13	Language	0	0.0	3	10.0
14	Weather	0	0.0	0	0.0
		Total Frequency: Threshold related 'themes': 25/30	83.3	Total Frequency: Threshold related 'themes': 28/30	93.3
	Additional thematic 'areas' for which there is no Threshold theme available				
15	Technology	2	6.7	1	3.3
16	Art and Literature	3	10.0	1	3.3
		Total Frequency: Threshold related 'themes': 5/30	16.7	Total Frequency: Threshold related 'themes': 2/30	6.7

Figure 8 reports the combined findings referring to the correspondences of Threshold Level Themes (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 59) as recommended in the CEF (2001: 52) to thematic, content oriented topics in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5:* The results show that out of the 60 thematic texts analysed in both books 88 % closely resemble Threshold Level themes, but focusing mainly on a few of them (e.g. Free Time, Entertainment, Relations with other

people, Daily Life) and neglecting quite a few altogether (Weather, Places, Services, Health and Body Care).

Into English 1

Findings tell that the Threshold Level theme "Free Time, Entertainment" seems to be popular, not only among young adults who the themes and induced content are addressed to, but also among the EFL book authors. 26.7% of the Threshold Level themes can be attributed to this topic. The texts affiliated with "Free Time, Entertainment" revolve around hobbies (e.g. sailing), TV (e.g. "Big Brother", reality shows) and film (e.g. "Children of a Lesser God", "Conspiracy Theory") productions, famous characters (e.g. "James Bond") and musicians (e.g. "Ms. Dynamite"). The themes "Free Time, Entertainment" and "Relations with other people" equally represent 26.7% of the texts. It should be noted that in the case of *Into English 1*, the theme "Relations with other People", does not only present stereotypical common relations such as friendships and love relationships (focus on jealousy), but also relations with other cultures (immigrants in the UK), endangered tribes (Jarawa tribe), relations with hearing-impaired people, political slogans and teenage crime. Political slogans belong to the umbrella term "Politics". Since the Threshold Level integrates issues revolving around politics within "Relations with other People" political slogans are attributed to the latter category. Given the themes attributed to "Relations with other People", it is apparent that the latter category comprises a huge variety of topics ranging from friendships, intercultural political affairs to crime and law issues.

The themes "Free Time, Entertainment" and "Relations with other People" are ahead of runner up "Art and Literature" comprising topics such as "'wordsmithery'", good and evil characters in literature, graffiti and street art. The attentive reader will realise that "Art and Literature" and "Technology" are not mentioned in the Threshold Level. The topics however, could not be assigned to any of its suggested themes and thus required an additional categorising code, one emphasising literature and art, the other one technology. Furthermore, considering the 10% and 6.7% share in texts respectively, it is indispensable to mention these amid the Threshold Level themes.

By expressing the findings through a ranking system, five themes, four of which are Threshold Level themes, achieve a good mid-position. "Personal Identification" addressing opinions about England and/or Britain in general", "Daily Life" dealing with Irish or British teenagers' everyday life, "Travel" concerning holidays in Barcelona and tourism and culture

in India and Zimbabwe, and – a newly added theme- “Technology” discussing inventions of ‘brainy’ computers and robots. Similar to “Art and Literature”, it was deemed necessary to adjoin “Technology” as a further theme since some texts addressed this topic and could not be assigned to any of the Threshold Level themes. It should be noted that within the category “House and Home, Environment”, none of the texts examined concerned “House and Home” in particular, but rather “Environment” dealing with environmental issues and unspoilt regions. All of the aforementioned themes amount to a total of only 6.7%. The theme “Education”, discussing students’ attitudes towards school, appears less frequently, too namely only 3.3%.

Prime Time 5

The findings concerning *Prime Time 5* reveal that “Health and Body Care”, “Education”, “Services”, “Places” and “Weather” are nor taken into consideration at all among the 30 investigated thematic texts in the *Prime Time 5.* It can be stated that themes around “Free Time, Entertainment” and “Relations with other People”, accounting for 26.7% and 23.3% respectively, constitute the main core of all the sample texts. Whereas texts on “Free Time, Entertainment” deal primarily with radio and TV (e.g. “The Truman Show”, docusoaps, reality shows), music and music genres, texts on “Relations with other People” mainly focus on social media (Facebook), relations with other people (e.g. Aborigines), British and American politics, civil rights movement and elections. The diversified themes within “Relations with other People” indicate that this is a fairly general and broad category which would allow for a breakdown into many individual categories such as politics, crime and justice, war and peace, personal relations and social affairs.

With a total of 13.3%, “Daily Life” is the third most covered Threshold Level theme whose primary focus lies on job descriptions and job interviews. The theme “Language” amounts to 10% dealing with English as global language/Lingua Franca and manners of conversation. “Food and Drink”, dealing with food orders and food preparation, trails behind “Language” with an amount of 6.7% correspondence to the Threshold. “Personal Identification” (questionnaire), “House and Home”, “Travel” (blog on Australia”, “Shopping” (complaint about a purchase), “Technology” (paperless books) and “Art and Literature” (books) are less frequent, accounting for only 3.3%.

Discussion

Comparing the two books, both discrepancies and congruencies can be recognised. The factor analysis (Dörnyei 2007: 233) implies that not all the texts investigated in the two coursebooks refer to one of the Threshold Level Themes. While the analysis shows that the tested items in *Into English 1* cover 83.3% (25 texts out of 30 could be attributed to the Threshold Level), the texts in *Prime Time 5* have a relation frequency of 93.3% (28 out of 30). The remaining texts could not be attributed to any of the Threshold Level themes and required two additional categories.

It is utterly striking that "Free Time, Entertainment" are the prevalent topics in both books. The target group of the two EFL coursebooks are students aged 15-16.Thus this content area might be considered to be the most motivating and appealing dealing with sub-ordinated themes such as TV, radio, hobbies, music and other sources of entertainment. In addition to that, "Relations to other People" assumes a vital role in both EFL school books. However, one should bear in mind that this category integrates an ample amount of subordinate notions and has turned out to be the second dominant theme in the current analysis. Themes concerned with friendships, love relations, politics, crime, justice, social affairs and government issues can all be allocated to "Relations to other People" despite their vast disparity. On the other hand, no evidence could be found for other themes such as "Health and Body Care", "Services", "Places" and "Weather" which are fairly restricted compared to "Relations to other people". While the latter comprises a huge variety of themes, the aforementioned themes focus on a narrow set of topics. "Weather" for example solely emphasises general talk about the weather. Apart from weather forecasts or personal opinions on the climate hardly any digressions can be made. This might be one of the reasons why "Health and Body Care", "Services" "Places" and "Weather" were not covered at all within the examined items. Another valid reason might be that these topics are dealt with in lower forms as they belong to areas of general communicative competences around A2 level. Within the first years of foreign language instruction, less challenging themes are discussed which enable the language learner to engage in simple rather than academic discussions.

It is noteworthy that *Prime Time 5* covers the theme "Language" accounting to 10%, while one cannot recognise any occurrence in *Into English 1*. *Into English 1* does have sections on language and on pronunciation in particular, these sections however, are not integrated in thematic content-based texts and demonstrate an isolated task on its own, while *Prime Time 5* implements non-isolated language features in written/spoken texts.

16.6% of the investigated texts in *Into English 1* and 6.7% of *Prime Time 5* texts had

no match with one of the Threshold Level themes, but relate to others than Threshold Level themes. As already mentioned, this fact has led to 2 additional categories: “Technology” and “Art and Literature”. Considering this and the irrelevance or rather inadequateness of some of the Threshold Level Themes for students on B1 level, some minor adjustments should be made. In times of technology developing at a fast pace, there certainly needs to be a category addressing this subject matter.

Concluding, one can say that there is neither a significant difference between what kinds of Threshold level related themes the books are dealing with, nor how often these topics are dealt with. Nearly all themes covered in the two books have a very close relationship to one or the other of the Threshold Themes, but leave out on quite a few themes.

Answer to Hypothesis 1**:** Even though nearly all texts investigated in *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* correspond to a high degree with the Threshold Level Themes as recommended in the CEF, the hypothesis is not confirmed, because an average of 6 Threshold Level themes has not been incorporated into the thematic content.

5.2.2 Knowledge of the World

Hypothesis 2: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *are closely related to knowledge of the world as stated in the CEF.*

As clearly elaborated in in *chapter 3.4.1.1.1*, knowledge of the world is acquired through childhood and further developed in formal and/or informal education and through experiences. Hence, every input we receive, be it written/spoken texts and other sources of information, contains knowledge of the world to a certain extent. The knowledge one acquires is closely connected to one’s mother tongue, L1, and thus to its grammar structures and vocabulary (CEF 2001: 101). In the process of learning a new language, the language learner on one hand accumulates new knowledge and gains new insights and factual know-how while on the other hand prior knowledge is activated and made use of.

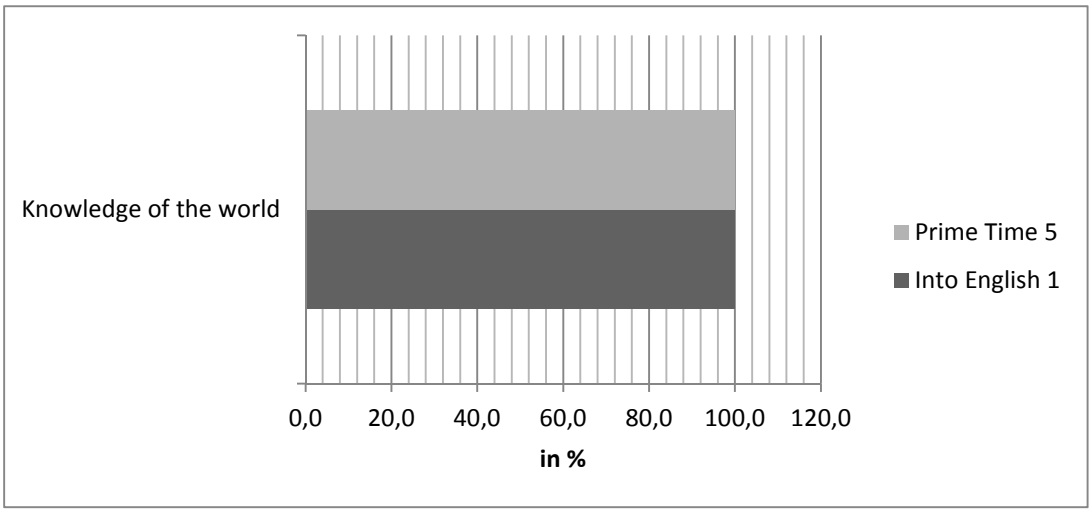
Therefore it comes as no surprise that the frequency, as to how much content of the tested 60 thematic texts is based on knowledge of the world, accounts to a total of 100%. However, for an external researcher analysing the two EFL school books *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5* unaware of the students’ prior knowledge capacity, it is not possible to

determine whether the thematic contents of the tested texts introduce new or expand on prior knowledge of the world.

Table 3: Frequency rate of Knowledge of the World occurrence *in Into English 1 and Prime Time 5*

	Into English 1		Prime Time 5		**IE1 + PT5**
	Numbers	% (Total of 30 texts)	Numbers	% (Total of 30 texts)	**Data Points**
Knowledge of the world	30	100,0	30	100,0	60

Figure 9: Bar-graph showing frequency rate of Knowledge of the World occurrence *in Into English 1 and Prime Time 5 in %*



Thus, all 60 texts in both coursebooks incorporate knowledge of the world in one way or another. Factual knowledge is presented about languages, England and/or Britain in general, different countries, history, geography, media, politics, human rights, music development, job interviews, book genres, musicians, and must-know characters and persons, illnesses and entertainment programs. A 100% match might seem trivial at first glance and makes you wonder why the CEF category of knowledge of the world has been tested in the first place if one could expect such a match. From the researcher's point of view, however the high score referring to knowledge of the world has proved very valuable for future design of EFL language teaching. The results confirm, in fact that language teaching and learning is no longer centred around a mere linguistic content, but around a knowledge based thematic content in accordance not only with the CEF but also with OECD's 21st century learning directions. As we are all part of a knowledge-oriented society we all "need to learn integrated

and usable knowledge" (OECD/CERI 2008: 2). It is in this context that we should read the results presented above and acknowledge that knowledge of content based EFL is committed to this objective.

Answer to Hypothesis 2: All of the topics investigated (100%) in the two EFL school books *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* are closely related to knowledge of the world as stated in the CEF.

5.2.3 Domains

Hypothesis 3: *"Each act of language use is set within one of the domains (spheres of action or areas of concern) in which social life is organised" (CEF 2001: 45) According to this statement it can be assumed that most thematic topics in the English books* Prime Time 5 *and* Into English 1 *are set for language use within one of the domains.*

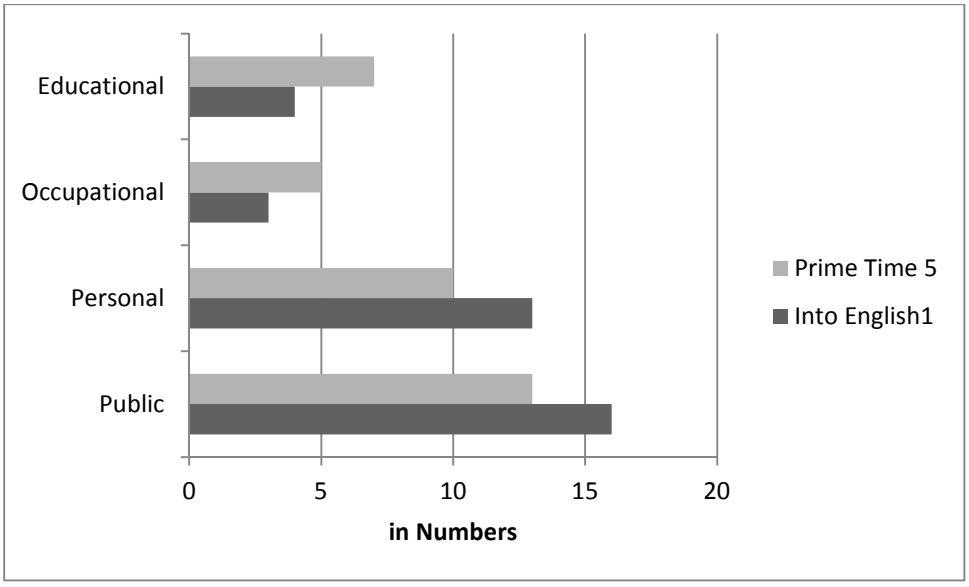
Every language activity is set within one of the four domains suggested by the CEF (2001:46). The personal domain revolves around family matters and private life, the public domain embraces social life, the occupational domain refers to people's occupations and the educational domain is concerned with learning and acquiring knowledge which must not necessarily take place within an institution (CEF 2001: 45).

Reviewing the results concerning the Threshold Level themes with "Free Time, Entertainment" and "Relations with other People" as the dominant themes, one can assume that the domains suitable to these themes must undoubtedly be *personal* and *public*.

Table 4: Frequency of occurrence of CEF domains in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5*

	Into English 1		Prime Time 5		**IE1 + PT5**
CEF Domains	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	**Data Points**
Public	16	44.4	13	37.1	**29**
Personal	13	36.1	10	28.6	**23**
Occupational	3	8.3	5	14.3	**8**
Educational	4	11.1	7	20.0	**11**
Total	36	100.0	35	100.0	**71**

Figure 10: Bar-graph reporting the frequency rate related to CEF Domains



The results show that within the 30 analysed thematic texts of *Into English 1*, a total of 36 domains appear. This is possible due to the fact that some texts can be related to more than one of the domains. This can – so the CEF (2001: 45) – be regarded as normal: "It should be noted that in many situations more than one domain may be involved. […]For a teacher, the occupational and educational domains largely coincide". Here is an example to illustrate this point: It is the text about a graffiti artist who describes his passion. While on the one hand, graffiti and street art are part of the public sphere for public entertainment, the text also outlines personal incitements and information on the artist's hobby (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks, Lewis-Jones 2013a : 112/1).

In *Into English 1*, the data evidence proves that 16 texts (44.4%) adhere to the *public* domain, followed by 13 (36.1%) *personal*, four *educational* (11.1%) and only three (8.3%) *occupational* themes. Hence, the initial assumption that public and personal domain might be the predominant domains, proves to be right.

The findings referring to the other EFL school book, *Into English 1*, show a similar relation between domains and topics to *Prime Time 5* where 35 occurrences aligned to the four domains can be counted within the 30 texts. Similar to *Into English 1*, more than just one domain is covered in some of the texts. For instance, "Mr. Truman's" personal habits, his daily routine and emotions' are described, while on the other hand his entire life is secretly broadcasted as a TV series. This is where personal domain converges with the public domain. Ascertaining the facts, most of the topics of both books can be assigned to the *public* domain (13 times, 36.1%) followed by the *personal* domain (10 times, 28.6%). The lowest degree of correlation was found between the *educational* domain (7 times, 20%) and the *occupational*

domain (5 times, 14.3%), again similar to *Into English 1*.

As regards the results, the question arises why the educational domain occurs four times in *Into English 1* and seven times in *Prime Time 5,* when in retrospect to the Threshold Level Themes, the theme "Education" was only covered once (3.3%) or not at all *in Prime Time 5*. The topics referring to the educational domain were concerned with the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge not necessarily within formal education. For example, getting to know what film-scripts look like and how to compose them or reading about the must-know classics in literature (e.g. Faust) can be attributed to "Free Time, Entertainment" and "Art and Literature" respectively rather than to "Education". The latter - according to the Threshold Level 1990 - is meant to be more concerned with school subjects, qualifications and types of education (Van Ek & Trim 1991: 75).

All examined texts in both EFL coursebooks can be ascribed to one of the four domains. The data points in *table 3* reveal the total amount of either domain in both course books together. One has to bear in mind however, that every piece of content, every text, be it written or spoken and every act of language is clearly either of personal, public, occupational or educational nature. It is not a question of whether the acts of language use are set within one of the domains, but rather in which of the domains.

Answer to Hypothesis 3: The results report that all 60 texts investigated in the English books *Prime Time 5* and *Into English 1* integrate the topics into one or even more of the four CEF domains. Hypothesis 3 can thus be confirmed.

5.2.4 Intercultural Awareness

Hypothesis 4: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to intercultural awareness as stated in the CEF.*

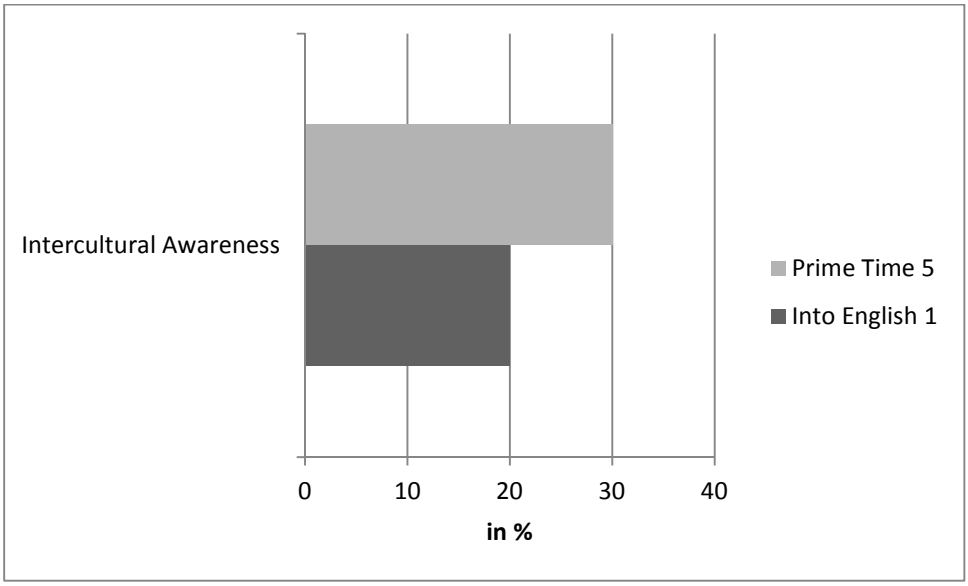
Both CoE and EU language policies emphasise (see *chapter 1.1* & *1.3* respectively) the importance of intercultural awareness throughout their specifications. Not only does it foster plurilingualism, but also enhances language learners' acknowledgement of various cultures and traditions. The criteria upon which a text was seen to be of intercultural value were: Is the text likely to raise awareness of the relation between home and target cultures? Can the text be used for developing an appropriate intercultural competence? Does the text provide an insight into regional and social diversity in both worlds (CEF 2001: 103.104)? Given the

advantages linked to this field, one might assume that a reasonable amount of intercultural topics are dealt with in any of the many EFL school books. The results however, report that the supposition is mistaken.

Table 5: Frequency in numbers and % of occurrence related to Intercultural Awareness in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5*

	Into English 1		Prime Time 5		**IE1 + PT5**
	Numbers	% (Total of 30 texts)	Numbers	% (Total of 30 texts)	**Data Points**
Intercultural Awareness	6	20	9	30	15

Figure 11: Bar-graph reporting results on Intercultural Awareness in *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5 in %*



In *Into English 1*, only six out of 30 texts (20%) are linked to intercultural awareness, which does not even account for a 50% mark. Examining the existing intercultural content it becomes evident that the comparisons drawn within the texts are all related to at least one English-speaking country. English stereotypes are compared to Italians, proverbs from all over the world are presented, US-American perceptions about a film set are opposed to those of Thai people, developments and communalities of various countries, such as Britain, Japan, France, Poland and Italy are discussed.

Prime Time 5 displays a higher number of intercultural topics, but with only nine out of 30 texts (30%), does not cross the 50% mark either. Intercultural content appears in the comparison of UK and USA's music development, UK and USA's literary publications, the

political system in Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland, the role of English among other languages, brief comparison of Australia and Europe through highlighting some stereotypes (such as the bad weather in Britain or the existence of kangaroos in Australia), the attitudes towards the EU of different European countries (e.g. Sweden, Greece, Spain etc.).

An explanation for the low degree of intercultural-based topics certainly is the sociocultural category. While the CEF distinguishes between intercultural knowledge and sociocultural awareness, the investigated EFL books do not give it a clear-cut as to which content belongs to intercultural knowledge or sociocultural awareness. Intercultural and sociocultural competences are difficult to separate as they pursue the same objective, enhancing cultural understanding and appreciation, either with comparison (intercultural) to other cultures or emphasising specific features of only one culture (sociocultural). Taking a close look at the content based on intercultural awareness, the Anglo-American culture dominates in both books.

Answer to Hypothesis 4: Only 20% and 30% respectively of the thematic texts investigated in *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* show close connections to intercultural awareness as stated in the CEF. Thus, the limit of frequency set at 50% (at least more than 50%) has been reached by neither of the two EFL school books. Hypothesis 4 cannot be confirmed.

5.2.5 Sociocultural Knowledge

Hypothesis 5: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to sociocultural knowledge as stated in the CEF.*

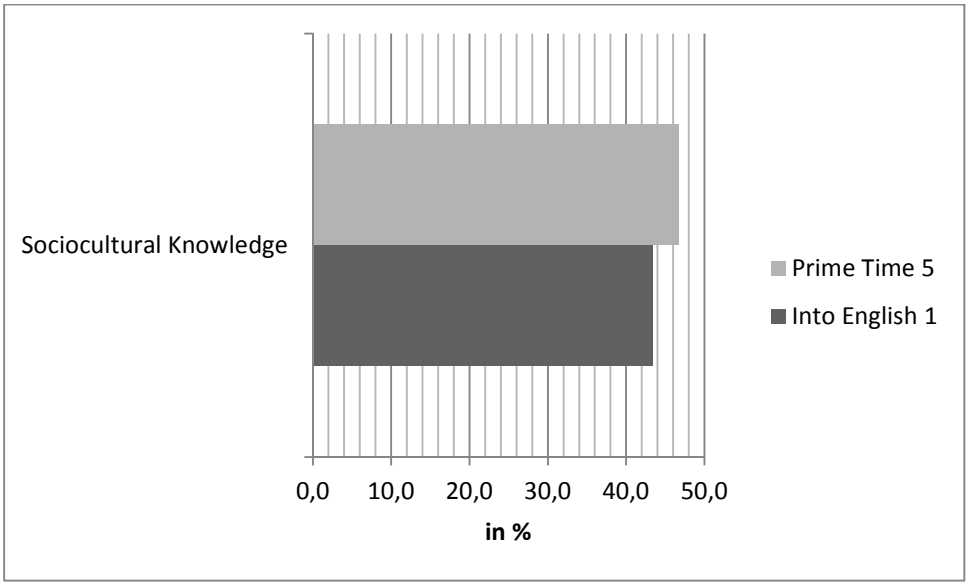
As is stated in the CEF (2001: 102), sociocultural knowledge is one element of knowledge of the world. Nevertheless, it is also mentioned (2001: 102) that the features of the target language society and its culture deserve an individual examination and discussion.

In other words, sociocultural knowledge takes students' minds into the countries of the target language English. On taking a close look at the two EFL school books in question, there is a slightly higher frequency traceable than with regard to intercultural awareness.

Table 6: Frequency in numbers and % of occurrence with regard to Sociocultural Knowledge

	Into English 1		Prime Time 5		**IE1 + PT5**
	Numbers	% (Total of 30)	Numbers	% (Total of 30)	**Data Points**
Sociocultural Knowledge	13	43.3	14	46.7	27

Figure 12: Bar-graph reporting results on Sociocultural Knowledge relations



Into English 1 displays 13 out of 30 texts, whereas in *Prime Time 5* 14 texts incorporate sociocultural content. Among these texts, knowledge on immigration facts in the UK or the USA, individual research activities on culture and the presentation of popular immigrants can be identified. Interpersonal relations between immigrants to the UK and local people are described, immigrant's attitudes and beliefs concerning the host country, social and behavioural conventions- do's and don'ts- in a host country, daily routines and living conditions of British teenagers, the Jarawa tribe and living conditions in India and Zimbabwe, values and attitude towards street art (implying interpersonal relations between opponents and proponents of this type of art), address sociocultural features within *Into English 1*.

Prime Time 5's cultural knowledge related content deals with living conditions of a socially disadvantaged boy in New Mexico, minorities, everyday living and interpersonal relations in Australia, British attitudes towards Europe, political attitudes, civil rights movement in the USA, US-American music (Christina Aguilera, Green Day), British singers and songwriters (The Beatles, Lily Allen, Arctic Monkeys), interpersonal relations in work

situations and social conventions in job interviews.

The comparison reveals that *Into English 1* provides a diversified approach towards sociocultural knowledge. This means that apart from English-speaking countries other cultures are taken into account, too. By contrast, *Prime Time* 5 mainly highlights Anglo-American societies and cultures and specifically puts the USA and England in the spotlight.

Answer to Hypothesis 5: Both school books, *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* have not reached the limit of frequency set at 50% necessary for a close connection to sociocultural knowledge in their 60 school book texts which this study was based on. Thus, hypothesis 5 cannot be confirmed.

5.2.6 Sociolinguistic Competence

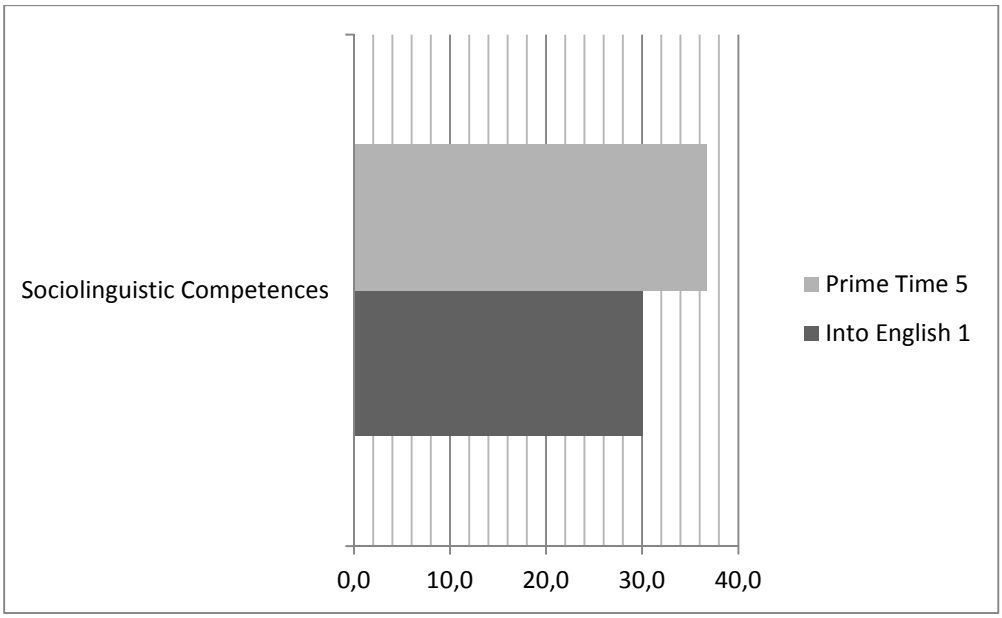
Hypothesis 6: *At least 50% of the texts investigated in the two EFL school books* Into English 1 *and* Prime Time 5 *show close connections to sociolinguistic competences as stated in the CEF*

Sociolinguistic competence comprises linguistic markers of social relations, politeness conventions, expression of folk wisdom, register differences and dialect and accents. Other than that, the discussion in chapter 3.4.1.2 emphasised the necessity to incorporate various world Englishes in the foreign language classroom. A mere focus on English varieties belonging to the inner circle (Kachru 1972) is not sufficient regarding our multifaceted society and the ever-growing mobility. The stress on plurilingualism within European dimensions reinforces the view on promoting various languages and "Englishes". Hence, it is utterly interesting to find out whether Austrian EFL coursebooks implement a variety of Englishes (a variety of other languages other than English is certainly not suitable in an English coursebook).

Table 7: Numerical and percentage share of frequency of occurrence with regard to Sociolinguistic Competences

	Into English 1		Prime Time 5		**IE1 + PT5**
	Numbers	% (Total of 30)	Numbers	% (Total of 30)	**Data Points**
Sociolinguistic Competences	9	30.0	11	36.7	20

Figure 13: Bar-graph reporting the frequency rate of occurrence in %with regard to Sociolinguistic Competences



What the results report in *figure 13* is a correspondence rate of 36.7% (11 out of 30 texts) in the case of *Prime Time 5*, as opposed to 30% (9 texts) in *Into English 1*. *Prime Time 5* implements linguistic markers of social relations such as turn-taking conventions and the use and choices of greetings ("Morning"), dialects and accents, such as "dag nabbit" (~ God damn it!), "Oz" (~ Aussie, Australian), register differences, such as "weird, huh?", "yummy" and "mikes" (~ microphones), politeness conventions, such as impoliteness in "what the hell" and "send one of your idiots".

Into English 1 introduces the learners via listening to regional dialects and its reading texts incorporate body language, sign language and occupational dialects (shots in a film, graffiti jargon such as "a burner"), expressions of folk wisdom linked to proverbs ("A word is medicine to the wise") or politeness conventions expressing frankness as in "Don't be stupid". As one can see, both books cover a variety of sociolinguistic elements. What they neglect, however, are varieties of English of the "Outer Circle" or "Expanding Circle" (Kachru 1992, see *chapter 3.4.1.2.1*) such as Indian English or China English respectively, or even West African Pidgin English, Jamaican Creole or new standards of English in Australia, Europe and South Asia (Mesthri 2006: 381-390) since all the examined text items displayed either Australian, British or American English which all belong to the inner circle.

Hypothesis 6: Both school books, *Into English 1* and *Prime Time 5* have not reached the limit of frequency set at 50% necessary for a close connection to sociolinguistic competences with regard to their 60 school book texts which the research was based on. Thus, hypothesis 6 cannot be confirmed.

5.3 Summary of Findings

In the course of this thesis, research hypotheses have been formulated that contain the researcher's predictions arising from theory based findings. These hypotheses are based upon the conceptual part, namely the CEF suggestions as to what types of content (Threshold Level Themes, domains, knowledge of the world, sociocultural, sociolinguistic and intercultural awareness) should be addressed in an EFL context. CEF criteria were chosen as all Austrian FL curricula are based on CEF recommendations on objectives and language learning content.

Thus, it was expected that the 60 texts investigated would incorporate the aforementioned elements to a certain extent. As already mentioned earlier in this thesis, Knowledge of the World and the Threshold Level Themes were considered to be covered in every text within the two coursebooks as knowledge is either acquired or activated and a specific topic is addressed. On the other hand, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence were expected to account for at least 50% within the texts since it was assumed that none of them can be covered in every single text.

Answers to confirm or not confirm the hypotheses have been presented. Only two out of the six hypotheses could be confirmed which means that unlike the researcher's prediction four of the CEF categories on thematic content factors (Threshold Level Themes, knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence) are not present in the 60 investigated school book texts to the extent determined in the hypothesis (50%). As stated in *chapter 4.3*, an internal "content analysis" was applied based on a quantitative research method. Coded data were collected on multiple variables and different categories of thematic content. Above, detailed results on each individual coded category with regard to the investigation of 60 thematic texts were reported in graph-bars and the findings were interpreted. At the beginning of this diploma thesis the researcher has specified this research question:

To what extent do the English as a foreign language course books *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5* take into account language teaching recommendations as set in the Council of Europe language teaching and learning tool 'Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' (CEF 2001) with regard to thematic content?

Figure 14: Graph-bar reporting the overall frequency level of common features with regard to all CEF categories in %

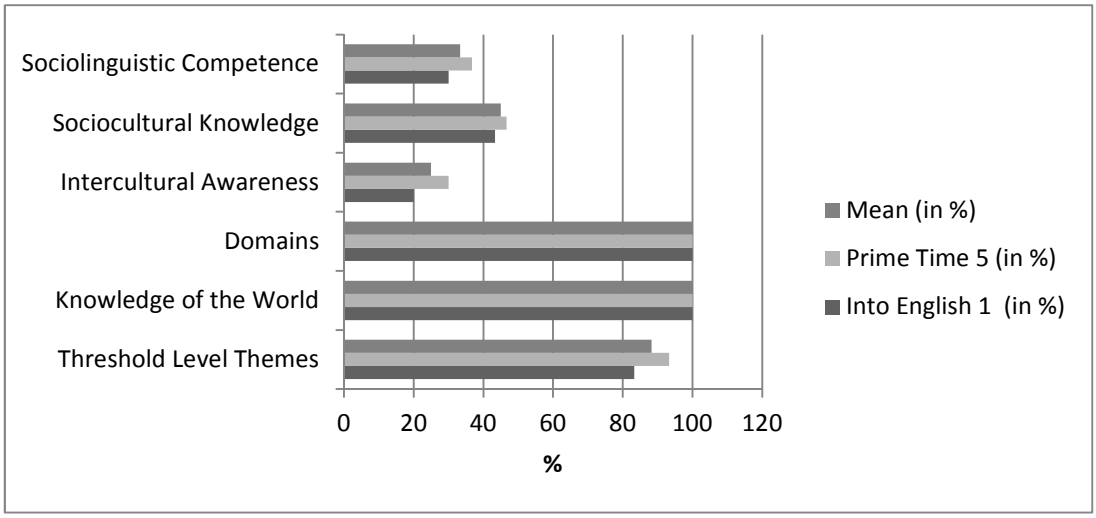


Table 8: Overview of Mean reporting the overall frequency level of common features with regard to each of the CEF categories in %

	Into English 1 (in %)	Prime Time 5 (in %)	Mean (in %)
Threshold Level Themes	83.3	93.3	88.3
Knowledge of the World	100	100	100
Domains	100	100	100
Intercultural Awareness	20	30	25
Sociocultural Knowledge	43.3	46.7	45
Sociolinguistic Competence	30	36.7	33.35
Mean (M) Total:	62.8	67.8	65.3

Figure 14 and *table 8* give an overall view of the findings made throughout the empirical analysis. The occurrence of the six CEF criteria within the two coursebooks is indicated in terms of percentage; the mean is also given in percentage. The percentages attributed to the

individual coursebooks precisely indicate the occurrence of each CEF criterion. The mean shall serve to answer the research question on a more general note combining the results of both coursebooks and yielding the average amount of occurrences of content criteria.

As the research question has been drawn up on the base of a broader spectrum than the succeeding hypotheses, the focus of which was specifically put on each of the thematic content oriented CEF categories, the answer to the research question is as follows: By combining all results of the study, a frequency of 65.3 % (means/M =65.3 %) in terms of identified content specifications recommended by the CEF can be recognised. Leaving aside the mean, in sum, *Prime Time 5* matches 67.8% and *Into English 1* 62.8% of the CEF criteria.

Both EFL books, *Into English 1 and Prime Time 5,* do very well (100%) in incorporating contents that relate to knowledge of the world and CEF domains (100%). Both EFL books lack intensity in the areas of intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competences, are highly focused on themes similar to the CEF (but neglect, as we have previously heard, quite a few out of the Threshold Level list) and they deal surprisingly regular with *sociocultural topics* (43.3 % versus 46.7 %, M= 45%) . Striking differences between both books can only be made out in the Threshold Level sector. *Prime Time 5* seems to be more aware of 'themes' as the basis for teaching thematic content. Notably, on reading *table 8* above, is that *Prime Time 5* has more matches with CEF criteria in 4 categories. If this is the case, because *Prime Time 5* authors are more aware of CEF's suggestions, it cannot be seen from the data, but may be disclosed by a follow up study.

The research is far from being of statistical significance due to missing control groups (e.g. previous research findings on other EFL books based on the same research question and hypotheses). That is why the research findings are not generalizable (Dörnyei 2007: 210), however they may make the book authors of the EFL school books involved in this research aware of the quality of their school books as far as the adoption and integration of CEF criteria is concerned. As Dörnyei (2007: 96) states, it is not necessary to investigate the whole population, which in this case would be all EFL books on the market as it "would in fact be a waste of resources. By adopting appropriate sampling procedures to select a smaller number of [EFL books] […] we can […] still come up with accurate results" (Dörnyei 2007: 96). As great effort was taken to analyse the books in line with a profound data frame of thematic CEF criteria to guarantee an appropriate sampling, thus the results are usable and are a suitable basis for designing future EFL books and teaching to the CEF.

6. CONCLUSION

Reviewing the thesis and its development, it is not a 'Look-Back-in-Anger' feeling, by no means; I have no regrets over my choice of topic, but there is that personal feeling deep in one's inner self to have withstood the challenge of elaborating a topic that – even though dedicated to from first thought of choosing it – leads you through a tangle of diverse sights as if you were chopping your way through the undergrowth. The decision to choose the topic of *Content in EFL* with reference to European dimensions was made on realizing that Austria's national curriculums for EFL, the Educational Standards E8 and the standardized matriculation (Reifeprüfung) all seem to bet on the most 'future-ready horse' in form of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEF 2001). And because of the CEF's goals on language competences being incorporated in the curriculum, the intention grew to research another main aspect of upper secondary EFL course books besides looking closely into academic theory and the role of European institutions that deal with language policies. Briefly reviewing bullet points, and trying to avoid repeating exactly what has been written in the preceding chapters, let me take you back to decoding the concept of content in EFL. From the outset, it was understood to focus on content based on a thematic approach and not on linguistic content, even though it turned out impossible to ignore the role that grammar still plays even in communicative oriented language situations. However, it has been shown in many expert articles that a shift of paradigm has been going on. The trend to content teaching based on themes, from form-focused towards message-focused, from *how* towards *what.* Related to the topic of the thesis the role of the 'big language players in Europe, the CoE and the EU' was examined as well as their recommendation as far as content is concerned. It became obvious that the CEF has gained increasing significance of becoming the reference tool for language teaching and testing in Europe, including Austria. We learned that CEF (2001) shows various ways of looking at content and its approach leads one across CEF's themes based on the Threshold Level 1990, domains, competences, knowledge areas and awareness of multiculturalism which the succeeding research is based on. It was new to me that EU' language policy is very active with effect on its member states. What seemed especially noteworthy was its key competences as stated in its European framework reference for foreign languages (European Communities 2007: 5). Few impulses as to thematic content were identified when researching diverse language learning approaches and methods, but two impulses most national and

European curriculums and of course language teachers align themselves to, the communicative approach and the task based method, both of which focus on topics, functions and notions and real life tasks. As the importance of the CEF became even more obvious in the course of the thesis, it was decided to carry out the research based on CEF's thematic categories. Two EFL course books on competence level B1 were selected on the basis of their frequency of use in academic secondary schools, upper level and 60 texts with thematic context were examined quantitatively in relation to CEF thematic categories. The results reported enough frequencies of correlation between CEF's thematic criterions and the thematic texts examined to confirm the research question of both books. However, the results also showed that, analysed at an individual level, topics on sociocultural awareness and sociolinguistic competences are undervalued to a great extent, and so are Threshold Themes, some of which are completely ignored in the EFL books examined.

My personal recommendations for similar future projects are to investigate the reasons and to examine in more depth if all EFL teachers and EFL book authors are aware of the decisive role of the Council of Europe and of the necessary implications of the CEF for language tuition and learning. In order to enable similar data to be generalised, all EFL course books in Austria should be researched on their thematic content and their communicative devices.

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APPENDIX

Data Collection: Analysing the English book **Prime Time 5** with regard to 'thematic content' on the base of 'Threshold' themes, CEF domains, world- and sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness and sociolinguistic competence.

Item	**Unit/Unit's topic area/page/task Nr./Text type**	**Topics in book & correlating Threshold level themes**	**Content Based on Knowledge of the World**	**Domains**	**Content Based on Intercultural Awareness**	**Content Based on Sociocult Knowledge**	**Content Based on Socioling uistic Compete nces**
1	1:The world speaks English/9/1/Database (Rd)	Topic in book: English as a global language Threshold related: Language	How English became dominant	**Educational** (debates and discussions)	The role of other languages but English	-	-
2	1: The world speaks English/9/2/interview (Li)	Topic in book: English as a lingua franca Threshold related: Language	Facts on English as world language and other main languages	**Educational** (debates and discussions)	Main languages world wide	-	Linguisti c markers of social relations: informal, conventio ns for turntakin g and politenes s
3	1/ The world speaks English/10/4:Radio interview (Li)	Topic in book: A pizza call centre Threshold related: food and drink;	Facts: Where is New York? Where's Bangalore?	**Public**: (restaurant, entertainment);	-	Interpersonal relations: US American and Indian	Markers of social relations ("Mornin g"), politenes s conventio ns ("I'd like…")
4	2/Identities-what next ? 16/1 : Questionnaire (Rd)	Topic in book: Questionnaire: How I see myself / Characterisation s Threshold related: personal identification	Personal interests, can dos, know-how, strengths, weaknesses	**Personal** (Routines, hobbies)	-	-	-
5	2/ Identities-what next ? 21/2: Novel extract (Who is Jesse Flood ? by Doyle M.) (Rd)	Topic in book: Now that's what I call living! Threshold related: House and home;	Stages of a personal educational career. US topography. State of living of -unprivileged Americans.	**Educational (**Debating: helping the poor) **Personal** (career stages)	-	Diversity of living standards in New Mexico, USA, welfare arrangements (e.g. charity and fundraising)	Linguisti c markers: dialect and accents ("dag nabbit")
6	2/ Identities-what next ? 24/1: Computer screen text (Rd)	Topic in book: About Facebook and social networking Threshold related: Relations with other people	Social networking on the internet. Functions and historical facts of Fb.	**Personal** (social networks, persons involved in Fb)	-	-	-

7	3/Australia 30/1&2: Quiz/Apology text (copy) of Australian PM (2008) (Rd)	Topic in book: Australia. Threshold related: Relations with other people (e.g. Aborigines)	Facts on AUS (history, geography, societal data, native AUS etc)	**Educational** (Holidays and excursions, wild animals)	----------	Facts on society, culture and geography of Australia (holidays, ethnic minorities, relations, etc.) ; Attitudes and values	----------

Item	Unit/Unit's topic area/page/task Nr./Text type	Topics in book & correlating Threshold level themes	Content Based on Knowledge of the World	Domains	Content Based on Intercultural Awareness	Content Based on Sociocultural Knowledge	Content Based on Socioling uistic Compete nces
8	3/Australia 38/1: Social network text (Rd)	Topic in book: First time in Oz Threshold related Travel:	Aspects, clichés and don'ts arising from the text	**Personal** (Holidays & excursions. Wild animals. Meals)	Brief comparison between Australia and Europe (esp. Britain)in terms of weather Stereotypes (kangaroo, crocodile, emu and roo as dish)	Everyday living (food, drink) in Australia Values, beliefs, attitudes (history, events)	Register differenc es: informal and familiar language ("Weird, huh?", "yummy") Dialect: "Aussie", "Oz" instead of "Australi an" and "Australi a" respectiv ely
9	4/ Media-mad 46/1+2: film-script (Rd)	Topic in book: The Truman Show- Fake world: Threshold related: Entertainment (Radio and TV)	Power of media (personal experiences) Types of reality shows	**Personal** (living routines) **Public** (entertainment)	-	-	Politenes s conventio ns: impoliten ess ("Leave her alone!")
10	4/ Media-mad 46/3:film-script (Rd)	Topic in book: The Truman Show- Reality or fiction? Threshold related: Entertainment (Radio and TV)	Types of films/books Synopsis of film, part 2	**Educational** (learning from books and films) **Public** (entertainment)	-	-	Register differenc es: Informal language (How about some viewers' calls now?)
11	4/ Media-mad 49/2: Explications (Rd)	Topic in book: Docusoaps- It's real- isn't it? Threshold related: Entertainment (Radio and TV)	"Docusoaps": Knowing docusoaps	**Public** (entertainment)	-	-	Register differenc es: Neutral language
12	5/ Politics 60/1: Statement strips (Rd)	Topic in book: From the people for the people Threshold related: Relation with	Facts on GB/USA: American/ British symbols, historical	**Public** (Political bodies, public authorities)	Differences of political systems in UK/USA, flags, parliament	-	-

		other people	facts				
13	5/Politics 65/5: Fact based text (Rd)	Topic in book: Different parliaments for different people Threshold related: Relation with other people	Facts on how the UK is governed. Historical timeline on Scotland's elation to England	**Public** (Political bodies)	Brief comparison of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland's parliament	-	-
14	5/Politics 67/1: Statistic data	Topic in book: British attitudes towards the European Union Threshold related: Relation to other people	Reasons for Britain's apathy towards EU→ Statistic data on bar graphs, table or pie charts	**Public** (Political bodies)	The percentage of different European countries in favour of the EU (e.g. Sweden, Spain, Greece, etc.)	Values, beliefs and attitudes (politics, national identity)in the UK towards the EU	-
15	6/ Strange realities 79/2: Anecdote (Rd)	Topic in book: Story: Deportation at breakfast Threshold related: Food and drink,	Facts on US currency Interior/food of a fast food restaurant (menu, food, counter, bar, mugs, etc.) Story conten.t	**Public** (restaurant, breakfast, meals)	-	-	-
16	6/ Strange realities 82/1: Interview (Li)	Topic in book: Really strange- strangely real? Reality shows Threshold related: Entertainment (Radio and TV)	Reality shows we know/heard of. Characteristic s of reality shows	**Public** (entertainment)	-	-	Linguisti c markers of social relations: informal ("Mom!")
17	7/ Human rights 95/1 Government report	Topic in book: Heroes- The power of pictures Threshold related: Relation with other people	Civil Right movements in the USA. Goals, prominent figures (Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks etc.	**Educational** (school, students)	-	Civil Rights Movement in the USA Interpersonal relations: race and community relations	-
18	7/ Human rights 94/5: Letter of complaint (Rd)	Topic in book: A letter of complaint: Complaining with respect Threshold related: Shopping	British/Ameri can sizes of clothing and shoes, colour and material expressions	**Public** (online shop) **Occupational** (Shop, clients, customers, sales operations)	-	-	Linguisti c markers of social relation: informal (no address form) Politenes s conventio ns: impoliten ess→ strong complain t, asserting superiorit y ("And what the hell […]",

							"too many Hispanics […]", Send one of your idiots […]")
19	8/ Music 2 99/1& 2: Technical descriptions (Rd)	Topic in book: What music means to you Threshold related: Entertainment, leisure;	Sound recording expressions (in air, in stone, noise, tune, pitch, volume etc.) Music styles	**Personal** (personal identification)	Popular pop musicians around the world	Well known English speaking pop musicians Values, attitudes, beliefs towards music in the UK/USA etc.	-
20	8/Music 100/1+2: Pragmatic text (Rd)	Topic in book: Producing your own music Threshold related: Entertainment	Music production in a studio room: Interior of a studio. From the idea to put the song online on Social networks	**Personal** (DIY, recording)	-	Values, beliefs and attitudes: music (British singer/bands: Lily Allen, Arctic Monkeys)	Register differences: familiar ("mikes" instead of "microphones", "make it really big […]")
21	8/Music 106-108: Biographical text (Rd)	Topic in book: A history of rock and pop music Threshold related: Hobbies, entertainment	A timeline of pop music since the 1950ths. Music styles. Popular pop/jazz/blues etc artist.s	**Public** (entertainment, performances, society)	Music timelines in USA and UK	Values, beliefs and attitudes: music (enumeration of must-knows of the music business)	-
22	9/Jobs 113/2: Short descriptive statements (Rd)	Topic in book: Unusual jobs Threshold related: -- Treshold Level : Daily Life	Unusual jobs, skills one needs to have to carry them out Various jobs with future; Characteristics of various professions (students are interested in)	**Occupational** (job description)	-	Everyday living: working practices (unusual jobs: "toothpaste-tester", "actor for a haunted house")	-
23	9/Jobs 120/1: Job descriptions (Rd)	Topic in book: Working environments Threshold related: Daily Life	Job descriptions: (e.g. Vets, meteorologist).	**Occupational** (job description	-	-	-
24	9/Jobs 122/2: Rules (Li)	Topic in book: Making a good impression at a job interview Threshold related: Daily Life	Dos and don'ts at a job interview	**Occupational** (employer, employees)	-	Body language. Values, beliefs and attitudes: occupational groups. Interpersonal relations: relations in work situations.	-
25	9/Jobs 123/3: Email text (Rd)	Topic in book: Something went wrong in the interview Threshold related: Daily	Criterions of a bad job interview	**Occupational** (employer, employees)	-	Knowing social conventions and cultural basics for job interviews in	-

		Life				the UK, body language	
26	10/ Books 126/1. Book reference (Rd)	Topic in book: Don't judge a book by its cover! Threshold related: Literature	Best-selling books/favourite books (on genre, price, etc) Knowing details for introducing books (author, title, novel, fiction, poetry, play, publisher, plot, topic etc.)	**Personal** (reading, novels)	Knowing writers and books from USA and Britain	-	-
27	10/Books 136/1-3: Technical descriptions (Rd)	Topic in book: The paperless book- Reading through various channels Threshold related: Technology	Facts on alternative reading sources (electronic via laptop, smart phone, tablet, audio-books etc) Facts on ebooks, purchasing procedure, advantages, updates; Facts in favour of printed books	**Educational** (books, computers, computer screen text) **Personal** (reading)	-	-	-
28	4/ Media-mad 48/1: Internet report (Rd)	Topic in book: The Baby Borrowers Threshold related: Entertainment	Brief summary of content of article	**Public** (entertainment, programme)	-	-Pregnancy rate among teens in Britain	-
29	5/ Politics 72/3: Research report (Rd)	Topic in book: UK 2005 election statistics Threshold related: Relations with other people	Know how: Transferring research data on graphs	**Public** (political parties, political bodies)	-	Latest distribution of parliamentary seats in the UK	-
30	7/Human rights 93/1: Conversation (Li)	Topic in book: Who should respect whom? Threshold related: Language	(Im)politeness in conversations	**Personal** (friends, acquaintances, incidents,	-	-	Register differences: informal and familiar Negative politeness : expressing regret Impoliteness ("Who the hell do you think you are, lady?" "I'm gonna kill that bitch")

Data Collection: Analysing thematic content in the English book **Into English 1** on the base of 'Threshold' themes, 'CEF domains', World- and Sociocultural Knowledge, Intercultural Awareness and Sociolinguistic Competences.

Item	**Unit/Unit's topic area/page/task Nr./Text type**	**Topics in Book and Correlating Threshold Level Themes**	**Content Based on Knowledge of the World**	**Domains**	**Content based on Intercultural Awareness**	**Content based on Sociocultural Knowledge**	**Content based on Sociolinguistic Competences**
1	1/Multicultural society-Best of British /6/1: Survey text. (Li)	Teenagers in Britain Threshold relation: Daily Life	Facts on Britain and people's characteristics/clichés. Facts based on a survey on British teenagers	**Public** (living conditions, routines, hobbies, teenage society)	-	Facts on British society and youth (Everyday living, leisure time, values, family relations)	-
2	1/Multicultural society-8/4d: Fact based short text. (Rd)	Teenagers in Ireland Threshold relation: Daily Life	Facts on young people in Ireland. Factual knowledge about teenagers in Ireland	**Public** (teenage society, living conditions, routines, hobbies,)	-	Facts on everyday living of teenagers (Everyday living, leisure time, values, internet habit)	-
3	1/Multicultural society-9/5:Interview text. (Rd)	What do you think about England? Threshold relation: Personal identification	New insights, new opinions about England	**Personal** (living routines/ encounters in England). Educ. (lessons, A-level exam; IELTS tests, food)	Similarities/differences, England vs. Italy-stereotypes (fish and chips vs ice-cream)	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to a foreign country	Dialect ("mates")
4	1/Multicultural society-9/6: Interview text (Li)	Foreigners in Britain Threshold relation: Personal identification	New insights, new opinions about Britain	**Personal**: e.g. impressions on something typical British (food, weather, fashion etc.)	-	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to a foreign country	-
5	1/Multicultural society-12/11: Fact based text. (Rd)	Cultural influences Threshold relation: Relations with other people	Multicultural influences in A Facts on immigration and countries of emigration; new music styles;	**Public** (immigrant artists, entertainment) Personal (family, origins) **Occupational** (musical artists)	-	Knowledge on immigration facts and outcomes ; interpersonal relations of power; solidarity (immigrants as artists) in Britain	-
6	1/Multicultural society-13/b Into communication: (Rd)	Statistics: (rank/countries/%, average) Threshold relation: Education	Countries, numbers, rd. statistic graphs in L1; Knowing to read/interpret statistic figures on a bar graph(of students disliking school)	**Educational** (attitudes towards school)	Comparison of attitudes towards school between a variety of countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Japan)	-	-

7	1/Multicultural society- 16/Into competencies .: biographical text (Rd)	Book's Title: Explosive message. Short biogr. of a music star (Mc Lean-Daley) Threshold relation: Entertainment	Facts on Miss Dynamite More biographical facts (music prizes, awards, racial commissions, place of birth; boroughs of London,)	**Public** (entertainment) **Personal** (biography of a black singer in Britain)	-	Alternative arts and music styles, race, Living conditions in London (ethic variations)	-
8	2/Communication- Ways of talking/ 21/2: Communication with a deaf person (Rd)	Topic in book: Sharing Silence. Means of communication between deaf people Threshold relation: Relations with people	Secret codes, means of sign language; Knowing the sign alphabet	**Personal** (living routines of deaf people)	-	Welfare an arrangements for deaf people in California	Linguistic markers (body language, sign language)
9	2/Communication- Ways of talking 24/5: Personal letter	Topic in book: My friend Rebecca. Threshold: Relations with other people: About friendship and having things in common	How friendships develop, what is friendship?	**Personal** (friends, leisure time)	-	-	-
10	2/Communication- Ways: of talking/Into Culture 28/	Topic in book: Word-smithery Threshold relation: Art and Literature	Facts on what "wordsmiths, word buffs, workaholics" are.	**Educational** (writing, word-creations,)	Comparisons of proverbs concerning "words" (China, Bulgaria, Norway, Spain, etc.)	-	Expressions of folk wisdom (proverbs + idioms: "The poison of a word is a word". "A word is medicine to the wise".)
11	2/Communication- Ways of talking. Into Film 31: Initial Abstract. (Rd)	Topic in book: Children of a lesser God (1980) Threshold: Entertainment: Different Film shots	Some good films Facts on awarded films;	**Personal** (entertainment, film, relationship)	-	-	Dialect-occupational group: different kinds of "shots" (long shot, close-up, mid shot, etc.)
12	3/ Relationships- A true friend 34/1d: Story extracts (Rd)	Topic in book: A true friend Threshold: Relations with other people: Friends	Stories/Shows on/with pets as friends	**Personal** (family, pet, favourite dish)	-	-	-
13	3/ Relationships- A true friend 40/6: Narrative personal text (Rd)	Topic in book: Hugs Threshold: Relations with other people:	Reasons for separations	**Personal** (relationship, jealousy)	-	Social conventions, behaviour	Politeness conventions (expressions frankness

		Jealousy					, e.g. Don`t be stupid! Don`t spoil it! Let's just be friends")
14	4/Travel-Great adventures/ 48/1	Topic in Book: Britain's Solo Sailor Threshold: Free time (hobbies and interests: sailing)	Extreme sports. Map: topography, geography (Africa, South America, Antarctica, Europe, oceans)	**Personal** (hobbies, leisure→ sailing) Public (famous person) **Occupational** (professions)	-	-	-
15	4/Travel-Great adventures 55/2: Email text. (Rd)	Topic in the book: Postcard from Barcelona Threshold related: Travel (Reporting about one's holiday in Barcelona)	E-mails, Barcelona	**Personal** (letter to a friend, holidays in Barcelona + Madrid)	-	-	-
16	5/Technology /Live forever/ 62/1: Descriptive text. (Rd)	Topic in the book: Intelligent Machines 'Brainy computers and robots' Threshold relation: Technology	Knowing diseases such as Parkinson's disease, deafness, etc.) Areas of use of intelligent machines	**Occu-pational** (industrial machinery, scientists, machine development) **Personal** (people having disabilities)	-	-	-
17	5/Technology /Live forever 68/7.Technical description (Rd) Main focus: L & Test str.	Topic in the book: Will computers ever be more intelligent than people? Threshold relation: Technology	Computer intelligence. Areas future computers could help	**Occupational** (business machinery and computer operation	-	-	-
18	6/Media/Reality TV/ 76/1: Fact based report. (Rd)	Topic in the book: Reality TV- A real problem? Threshold: Entertainment	Reality shows Types of reality shows in various countries	**Public** (entertainment, contests, programmes)	Comparison of reality shows in Japan, USA and UK	Views, attitudes, beliefs towards reality Knowing Reality TV in USA, Britain and Japan	-
19	6/Media/Reality TV/ 80/5: Interview. (Li)	Topic in the book: A Psychologist about reality shows Threshold: Entertainment.	Reality shows What are they about?	**Public** (entertainment, programmes, contests; public health, psychologist)	-	-	Dialect-occu-pational group: meta-lang

							uage of psyc holo gist
20	6/Media/Reality TV/Into Culture, 84/a: Fact based report. (Rd)	Topic in the book: Big Brother-Worldwide Threshold: Entertainment. (Big Brother)	Reality show: Big Brother	**Public** (entertainment, programmes, contests)	Comparisons of various Big Brother programmes Variations of the show all over the world (e.g Italy, Denmark, Poland etc.)	-	-
21	7/Nature and Environment-Campaigning for Survival 90/1: Fact based report. (Rd)	Topic in the book: Tribes in Danger Threshold related (Relations with other people):The Jarawa tribe	Topology, geography (Andaman Islands) Factual knowledge about tribes, organisations, problems, protection initiatives by 'Survival'	**Public** (societies, tribes, campaigns,) **Personal** (living routines of the tribe)	-	Everyday living, living conditions, interpersonal relations, values, beliefs, attitudes (tradition, minorities, etc.)	-
22	7/Nature and Environment-Campaigning for Survival/ 95/7d: political campaign poster (Rd)	Topic in the book: Election campaign Reasons to vote for … Threshold relation: Relations to other people	Political parties	**Public** (politicians, political parties, public services)	-	-	-
23	8/Moral issues- 104/ 1: Short literary texts (Rd)	Topic in the book: Good and evil/ Threshold related Art and Literature: Good and Evil in literature	Books on good and evil Broaden one's kn. on theme based writing	**Educational** (readers, library)	-	-	-
24	8/Moral issues- Good and evil/ 109/7b: Fact based text (Rd)	Topic in the book: Good guys and bad guys Threshold related (Entertainment): Good and bad characters in films.	James Bond/ Freddy Krueger/ Count Olaf/ Mephistopheles/ Dr. No. Types of films/books	**Public** (actors/actresses, film figures, TV series, films, characters in literature and films)	-	-	-
25	8/Moral issues- Good and evil/ Into Culture 112/1a: Article (Rd)	Topic in the book: The Writing's (sic!) on the Wall Threshold related Art : Graffiti as piece of art or crime?	Street art/graffiti/hip-hop Content words to describe graffiti (writer, crew, tag, throw up, burner, style wars etc.)	**Public** (public entertainment, graffiti) **Personal** (hobbies)	-	Arts- visual arts: graffiti, street art ; Hip-hop origins in the USA Values and general attitudes , interpersonal relations	Dialect: occupational group: graffiti jargon ("a tag, burner, style wars, throw up, etc.") American English: subway Informal

							and familiar language
26	9/Crime and Punishment- Getting into trouble 124/10a: Brief newspaper info text	Topic in the book: Young people and crime Threshold related Relations with other people; Teenage crime- reasons for	Letters to the editors; Teenage Crime	**Public** (law, police, security, law-suits, youth centres, sport centres)	-	Interpersonal relations (police officers and public)	-
27	10/ Society- Two sides to every story/ 132/1: Fact based text (Rd)	Topic in the book: The making of "The Beach" Threshold related Environment	Synopsis of film/book; actors/actresses of the film; The original book by Garland. Topography (Thailand- Phi Phi Lei Island)	**Public** (actors, members of public = locals of Phi Phi Lei Island)	The US-American film crew and Thai people's points of view on making the film (different perspectives and perceptions)	-	-
28	10/ Into Culture: 140/1a/b:	Topic in the book: Tourism and culture Threshold related (Places): Travel	Popular holiday places students know of Effects of tourism; types of tourism Facts on Operation Campfire/GOA in India	**Public** (GOA place of worship? Tourists abroad)	-	Knowing language, cultural heritage of India, Zimbabwe. Fats on consequences of tourism in GOA/on wildlife in Zimbabwe; everyday living and social conventions	-
29	10/ Into Competencies : 142: Film review text	Topic in the book: Film: Conspiracy Theories Threshold related Entertainment : Film reviews	Popular actors, well known US films	**Public** (celebrities, actors, cinema programmes)	-	-	-
30	11/ Travel (2)- Mysterious Places/ 146/1: Holiday brochure text (Rd)	Topic in the book: No one knows why they're there Threshold related Environment: Man-made places of interest	Historical places made by man Topography and facts on Statues of Easter Island, the lines of the Nazca Desert in Peru	**Public**	-	-	-

ABSTRACT ENGLISH

This thesis deals with the ambiguity of the term “content”. It will not just point towards this ambiguity, but also discuss the concept of “content” from a foreign language didactical, linguistic and language policy oriented perspective. Over the past several decades there have been considerable changes of paradigm in foreign language teaching and learning. Thus, it is no surprise that the term “content” has undergone major shifts in meaning, too. In foreign language teaching, the focus is no longer only on the description of language on the basis of linguistic elements, but especially on language competency as a main goal, including thematic content without which real life language use would not be successful. Thus, this thesis investigates whether or not upper secondary level English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) coursebooks take ‘thematic content’ into account and if there is a European language policy that not only has effects upon Austrian foreign language curricula, foreign language course books and classroom teaching, but also on the choice of “content”. Hence, the theoretical part of the thesis will deal with the dimension of European language policy, with content related recommendations that are manifested in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF 2001) and with the European Language Reference Framework **(**European Communities 2007: 5) and their impact on the national Austrian language policy, syllabi and curricula respectively. A close and verified look will be also be taken into theoretic literature which mirrors language experts’ recommendations on content within an EFL context; ‘content’ from the point of view of popular teaching approaches and methods will be introduced. Furthermore, this thesis will discuss shifts in notion of the term "content“. The Threshold Level (Van Ek & Trim 1991) and the CEF (2001) both contain suggestions for topics and content categories and adhere closely to European language policies. Both sources will serve as the basic conceptual tools for the subsequent empirical study on the Austrian EFL course-books *Prime Time 5* (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlakar 2010) and *Into English 1* (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks & Lewis –Jones 2013). The content analysis, based on a quantitative research method, will focus its investigation on CEF content categories such as Domains (CEDF 2001: 14-15), Knowledge of the World (CEF 2001: 101), Intercultural Awareness (CEF 2001: 103-104), Sociocultural Knowledge (CEF 2001: 102-103) and Sociolinguistic Competence (CEF 2001: 118). The utmost goal, language competence, is the sum of such characteristics and thus highlights their importance in foreign language teaching (CEF 2001: 9). Hence, both theory and research in this thesis will centre upon the CEF content categories.

The research findings of the course-book analysis will be the basis for answering the research question and confirming the hypotheses that thematic content aspects of the CEF and Threshold Level 1990 have made their way into the Austrian EFL course books albeit with various limitations. The final results will show differences between the two EFL books in regard to frequency levels of thematic content related texts.

ABSTRACT GERMAN

Die Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit der Ambiguität des Terminus „Inhalt“. In der Arbeit geht es nicht nur darum auf diese Doppeldeutigkeit hinzuweisen, sondern auch den Gehalt des Begriffs ´Inhalt´ aus der Sichtweise der Fremdsprachendidaktik, der Linguistik und Sprachenpolitik zu erörtern. Durch die Jahrzehnte ergaben sich im Bereich des Fremdsprachenunterrichts und des Erlernens von Fremdsprachen beachtliche Paradigmenwechsel. Deshalb verwundert es auch nicht, dass auch der Begriff ‚Inhalt‘ wesentliche Bedeutungsveränderungen durchlebte. Der Schwerpunkt liegt nicht länger nur auf der Beschreibung von ‚Sprache‘ auf Basis linguistischer Formen, sondern auf der Grundlage von Sprachkompetenzen als oberstes Ziel. Dieses inkludiert auch thematische Inhalte sowie deren Kenntnisse ohne die lebensechte Sprachhandlungen nicht durchgeführt werden könnten. Deshalb werden die Fragen behandelt, ob und inwiefern österreichische Schulbücher an der Oberstufe der AHS für den Fremdsprachenunterricht Englisch ‚thematische Inhalte‘ berücksichtigen und ob es eine Art europäischer Sprachpolitik gibt, welche nicht nur Auswirkungen auf Lehrpläne, fremdsprachliche Schulbücher und den Sprachunterricht, sondern auch auf die Auswahl von Inhalten hat. Der theoretische Teil der Diplomarbeit befasst sich folglich mit der europäischen Dimension der Sprachenpolitik, mit inhaltlichen Empfehlungen seitens des Gemeinsamen Europäischen Referenzrahmens für Sprachen (GERS 2001), mit dem ‚EU Referenzrahmen für Schlüsselkompetenzen, im Besonderen für Fremdsprachen (Europäische Gemeinschaft 2007:5) und deren Auswirkungen auf die nationale Sprachenpolitik in Österreich sowie seiner Lehrpläne. Die Diplomarbeit wird auch ausgiebig und nachweislich einen Einblick in theoretische Fachliteratur gewähren, welche ‚inhalts- und Englisch-als-Fremdsprache -bezogene Vorschläge von Expertinnen und Experten widerspiegeln sowie die Inhaltskomponente aus der Sicht populärer Lehransätze und –Methoden beschreiben. Anhand des Threshold Level (van Ek & Trim 1991) und des GERS (2001), welche beide Vorschläge zu Themen und inhaltlichen Kategorien beinhalten und sich der europäischen Sprachenpolitik verschrieben haben, werden als Grundinstrumente für die nachfolgende empirische Studie über die Englisch-Schulbücher *Prime Time* 5 (Hellmayr, Waba & Mlakar 2010) und *Into English 1* (Puchta, Holzmann, Stranks & Lewis-Jones 2013) dienen. Die Analyse fokussiert sich auf Inhalts-domänen[16], Weltwissen, interkulturelle, soziokulturelle und soziolinguistische Aspekte und ist auf Grundlage einer quantitativen Untersuchungsmethode konzipiert. Die Summe all dieser Charakteristika führt zum obersten

[16] domains (GERS/CEF 2001: 48)

Sprachlernziel, der Sprachkompetenz, weshalb diesen CEF bezogenen Inhaltskomponenten im Sprachunterricht eine große Bedeutung beigemessen werden muss und sowohl im theoretischen Teil und im Forschungsteil dieser Diplomarbeit in den zentralen Mittelpunkt gestellt werden. Die Beantwortung der Forschungsfrage sowie die eventuelle Bestätigung der Hypothesen erfolgen auf Grundlage der quantitativ erfassten Ergebnisse der Schulbuchanalyse. Vorwegnehmend kann gefolgert werden, dass GERS und Threshold Level bezogene Themen und Inhaltskomponenten in österreichische Lehrbücher für Englisch als Fremdsprache an der Oberstufe der AHS implementiert worden sind, wenn auch mit diversen Einschränkungen. Die Endresultate zeigen auch Unterschiede zwischen den beiden analysierten Englisch-Lehrbüchern mit Bezug auf ihre Inhaltsbereiche auf.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Persönliche Daten:

Name:	Gritsch Jennifer Anna Maria
Staatsangehörigkeit:	Österreich
Geburtsdatum:	7. November 1985
Geburtsort:	Bregenz
Muttersprache:	Deutsch

Ausbildung:

1992- 1996	Volksschule Lochau
1996- 2004	Bundesgymnasium Gallusstrasse Bregenz
09/2012- 12/2012	Erasmus Studienaufenthalt an der Manchester Metropolitan Universität (England)
2004- dato	Studium an der Universität Wien, Lehramtsstudium Englisch und Französisch

Auslandsaufenthalte:

August 2001	Sprachreise Miami (Florida, USA)
Juli 2002	Sprachreise Nizza (Frankreich)
August 2006	Sprachreise London (England)
August 2008- April 2009	Sprachassistenz an der IUFM St. Germain-en-Laye und Cergy (Versailles, Frankreich)

Sonstiges:

2001/2002:	„Public Service“, ehrenamtliche Tätigkeit, Lernhilfe an der Volksschule Augasse Bregenz
seit 2002	Lernhilfe für Französisch und Englisch
Mai 2008	Teilnahme an wissenschaftlicher Studienreise der Romanistik Wien nach Tunis (Tunesien)
Mai 2014	Präsentatorin bei der 6. ÖGSD Konferenz für Sprachendidaktik