PROMOTING TOLERANCE

ENCOUNTERS OF EDUCATION, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Edited by:

Andrea Puskás – Melinda Nagy

Promoting Tolerance:
Encounters of Education, Literature and Culture

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Introduction

In an era where prejudice and societal divisions are increasingly part of everyday life, tolerance, empathy and cooperation have emerged as crucial values for nurturing healthy and cohesive communities. The key words in the call for papers when designing this project and the present volume included promoting tolerance in various fields of research, forms of tolerance and intolerance, accepting and handling different opinions and worldviews, teaching tolerance in education, forms of otherness, promoting the culture of peace and acceptance, building partnerships, improving cooperation, and ways of coping with injustice, just to mention a few.

The edited volume *Promoting Tolerance: Encounters of Education, Literature and Culture*, brings together a diverse range of perspectives and examines how education, literature, linguistics and culture can foster understanding, respect and empathy across diverse groups in diverse environments. The volume embraces eighteen papers written by twenty-eight authors from three countries, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. The authors come from nine institutions, namely Benkő István Reformed Primary and Secondary School, Hungary, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, University of Debrecen, Hungary, Óbuda University, Hungary, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, Faculty of Technical and Human Sciences Targu Mures, Romania, Gyula Szabó Primary School with Hungarian Language of Instruction, Slovakia, J. Selye University, Slovakia and Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Papers are grouped into three main sections, each including six texts. The first section, *Inclusion, differentiation, and cooperation in education* focuses on different practices in education aiming to improve cooperation and tolerance, and examines processes of inclusion and differentiation in the classroom in various subjects, English as a foreign language, music, informatics and religious education.

The second section, *Language, culture and otherness in literature and linguistics* includes papers investigating forms of otherness in Dark Academia and campus novels, children's literature, various understandings and encounters, language identities, language choice and code switching, and finally, cultural competence.

The third section, *Higher education challenges* deals with the various forms of promoting tolerance, inclusive education, teacher motivation, cooperation and reflective thinking in literature courses, volunteering, social responsibility and practice-oriented education in higher education.

This collection does not simply offer theoretical perspectives, it offers practical ideas and solutions for integrating tolerance into the heart of society and addresses issues of identity, diversity, inclusion and otherness. It provides readers with a multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach to understanding how tolerance can be both improved and taught and how each individual can take part in fostering a more inclusive, respectful, and compassionate world. By offering these papers and thought-provoking topics, we hope to inspire our readers to build bridges across differences in order to create settings and environments, where being different or 'other' is safe, where individuals have the right and liberty of disagreeing, and where tolerance is not merely a word or a theoretical assumption, but a live reality.

Andrea Puskás, Melinda Nagy

1.

Inclusion, differentiation and cooperation in education

Improving cooperation in the English as a foreign language classroom

Beatrix CSÉFALVAY[1]

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the improvement of cooperation in the English as a foreign language classroom. The main aim is to find methods, techniques, and approaches to teaching English as a foreign language that improve one of the most important skills and competences of the twenty-first century. Special attention is paid to the application of cooperative learning methods in the language classroom. The paper deals with the theory and practice of improving cooperation. It lists the most important methods and techniques that can help EFL teachers and also gives some concrete examples, activities and tasks that teachers can use when they want to improve learners' cooperative skills.

Keywords: cooperation, English as a foreign language, primary school, methods of cooperative learning, activities

Introduction

Nowadays, it is often claimed that schools should prepare students for real life, different situations, social interactions, and problems. Employers want their workers to be good at as many things as possible, workplaces became more skills oriented. The improvement of these most important skills can already be started during early school years. The paper focuses on the improvement of cooperation in the English as a foreign language classroom. The main aim is to find methods, techniques, and approaches to teaching EFL that improve this important skill and

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competences of the twenty-first century. Today we live in the century of technology, multicultural societies, mobility, global communication, social networking, innovations, creativity, and inclusiveness. In order to prepare our twenty-first-century students for everyday life, we need to develop their necessary twenty-first-century skills (including cooperation) in school as effectively as possible.

1. The six Cs of education

Nowadays we can often hear about "the Six Cs" in connection with teaching English as a foreign language. English teachers need to realize that teaching the language is not just about learning from coursebooks – of course they can be helpful – but there are a lot of different and more efficient ways of teaching and learning a foreign language more easily and effectively. It is often claimed that education is old-fashioned and it should keep up with the rapid changes in our twenty-first century society, both technologically and socially. Scholars are trying to create new learning methods and strategies that are more connected to the real world and help to solve problems in a real-world context.

Teachers have started to highlight the value of some educational skills that can help students to prepare for real life (e.g. Puskás, 2023). Brian S. Miller (2015) was one of the first scholars who started to work with the 6 Cs in education. He argues that apart from critical thinking, cooperation, and creativity there are some more skills that are important: culture, communication and connectivity.[2]

Michael Fullan and Geoff Scott (2014) are writing about the Six Cs as Deep Learning initiative and according to them these are: character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking (Fullan & Scott, 2014: 6-7).

2. Cooperation

As this paper focuses on the improvement of cooperation, it is important to summarize what it means and why it is important. It is essential to start to improve cooperation in school, because children and adolescents learn from each other

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2   Miller, Brian S. The 6 C's Squared Version of Education in the 21st Century. (2015). Retrieved from: https://www.bamradionetwork.com/the-6-c-s-squared-version-of-education-in-the-21st-century/ Accessed: 25 June 2024

in a lot of formal and informal situations, for example: meetings with friends, at skateboard parks, and even on the beach or a ski slope. In formal settings, young people often must work and learn together, maybe in smaller or larger groups during different tasks in school. It is also possible to improve cooperation in the EFL classroom. In this paper, the term cooperation and not collaboration is used, because there is a small difference between them. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, cooperation means "association of persons for common benefit"[3] and from the definition of collaboration the common benefit is missing. In the classroom, there is usually a "common benefit" of students who are working together – this can be for example: solving a problem together, finding a solution or getting a good grade.

2.1. Cooperative learning

In the field of education there is a student-centred approach, which is based on cooperation, that is Cooperative Learning. During the history of education there was a stage, when teachers stood in the centre, but it was recognized that a change is necessary, this is the reason why student-centred approaches started to spread in education.

When talking about cooperative learning, it is essential to mention Social Interdependence Theory. It is connected with Lewin's theory which says that "a person's behavior is motivated by states of tension that arise as desired goals are perceived and that it is this tension that motivates actions aimed at achieving the desired goals" (Gillies et al., 2008: 11). Later, Lewin's student, Deutsch extended this idea. Deutsch added further elements to the relationship that occurs between the goals of two or more individuals. His idea led to the birth of Social Interdependence Theory, which can be regarded as the basis of cooperative learning (Gillies et al., 2008: 11).

The two types of social interdependence are important, too. The first is positive interdependence which means cooperation, and negative interdependence, which means competition. In connection with cooperative learning, positive interdependence has a major role. In this case, individuals have to realize that they can reach their goals if and only if the others they cooperate with also reach their goals (Gillies et al., 2008: 11).

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3   Merriam-Webster Dictionary Retrieved from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cooperation Accessed: 25 June 2024

Arató and Varga (2015) examine 'cooperative learning' and models of cooperative learning structures. They claim that these are models that promote learning together for the sake of organized learning. And these structural principles need to be integrated when organizing the learning and teaching process – these are called cooperative principles (Arató & Varga, 2015: 8):

- *Flexible and open structures built on cooperation*: the focus is on the way of organizing learning and think in cooperative structures. Everyone must get attention and the structures must be flexible, so that each student can obtain content which are suitable for them personally and tasks which improve them.

- *Personally inclusive parallel interaction*: the interactions need to be personal (micro-groups of 2-4) and involve every participant of learning. This principle counts the personal interactions between participants of the group and observes how many personal interactions take place within a given period.

- *Constructive and encouraging interdependence*: if teachers want students to turn to each other and engage in conversation connected to learning, they must create positive interdependence and inspire them by structures in which they only can solve problems together, in which they cannot be successful without groupmates, because everyone's knowledge and work is necessary in order to make the learning process efficient; every person's knowledge is built upon everyone else's knowledge.

- *Equal access and participation in learning processes*: Equal access is a basic democratic right; everyone needs to be granted to be able to give their voices. It is important to decide who does what, and each child must have access to the collective knowledge or take part in learning directly.

- *Personal responsibility and individual accountability*: The role of the individual is crucial in co-operative learning. Each member of the micro-groups needs a role within the group to promote the process of development.

- *Critical and reflective publicity provided step by step*: each student's knowing or not knowing is public within the micro-group. Publicity is a conditional part of co-operative learning. Step-by-step documentation is a tool for the publicity of access.

- *Consciously improved personal and social competencies*: the development of children's self-understanding, confidence, conscience and co-operative skills consciously.

- *Conscious development of cognitive and academic competencies; setting academic goals*: co-operative structures are of help in practicing and developing cognitive and academic competencies. Have and set conscious and concrete goals in cognitive areas and in the areas of learning and build structures on these goals. (Arató & Varga, 2015: 9-33)

Zhangh (2010) summarizes the benefits of cooperative learning in the foreign language classroom. These benefits are the following: providing the chances of input and output, creating effective climate, increasing a variety of language functions, and fostering learner responsibility and independence (Zhangh, 2010: 82-83).

2.2. The teacher´s role

Firstly, it is important to clarify that the personal presence of the teacher and an authentic interest in his own professional field are essential elements of successful learning. Arató and Varga point out that if the teacher is not interested in assisting essential learning, if she does not consider it important to be sincerely aware of himself and of his professional interests, then the teaching-learning process will be a failure (Arató & Varga, 2015: 56).

Cooperative learning can be utilized to any lesson in any subject for any age of learners. It is the use of small groups, where students work together in order to maximize their own and each other's learning (Gillies et al., 2009: 26).

Rogers explains that the teacher's most important task is to accept, because if a student is accepted (and in this acceptance there is no judgment, only compassion and sympathy), the student is able to develop the courage to give up his defences and face his true self and this is essential in cooperation, too. Rogers emphasizes that a cooperative teacher needs to be able to show unconditional acceptance towards students, because they experience and express real problems. He provides a chance to students to not know something, to determine topics alone, to solve problems, to ask questions and to have emotions against learning. The teacher organizes the process of development on the basis of the actual emotional and intellectual state of the students (Rogers, 1995: 255-267).

According to Gillies et al. (2008), if we put students to groups, nothing surprising can happen: students can compete with each other, they can work individually while ignoring others, or they can work cooperatively with groupmates. And if teachers want to structure cooperative learning effectively, they have to understand some conditions:

- how to create the positive interdependence,
- individual accountability,
- promotive interaction,
- appropriate use of social skills,
- group processing into learning situations. (Gillies et al., 2008: 33)

Arató and Varga (2015) present three new roles of the teachers: monitoring, intervention and correction. During the implementation of cooperative learning structures, what the teacher does, is mainly monitoring. Through monitoring s/he firstly examines whether everyone has the opportunity to take part in cooperative learning and pays attention to detect whether the devised academic aims and learning tasks are indeed in place. Intervention means that the teacher interferes the learning process only when s/he sees that the principle of equal opportunity or cooperation is violated and intervenes in a way that sets an example. Teacher does a cooperative correction if unpredictable and unexpected needs and wants emerge during the cooperative learning (Arató & Varga, 2015: 55).

3. Working forms of cooperative learning

Cooperative Learning is a special method, where students work in small groups to achieve a common goal in their learning process. During the application of cooperative learning the teacher gives advice and works as a consultant.

Arató and Varga (2015) list three basic cooperative structures. These structures are the following:

a) *Student quartet (or trio, or quintet)*
   The basis of this form is a task that needs to be solved by the micro group. The task is considered finished only when each student in the group is able complete the task individually, too. The teacher can check this easily, by picking individuals randomly and asking them about the task. Students are learning spontaneously and thinking together within the group. The teacher lets group members to think about the solution and take notes together. In the end, the teacher checks whether the outcome is clear for everyone. (Arató & Varga, 2015: 61-76)

b) *Round Robin and its variations*: window, roundtable, group Round Robin
   The word 'goes round' the members of the group, as long as everyone can have their word within a regulated framework. Each person takes his or her turn within the micro-group. If all this happens in written form, it can be the structure of a window or a roundtable.

   - *Window*: It is a geometric shape, which is divided into as many parts as the number of group members. They have to number the divisions and put the collected items in them according to how many people have collected the same. If two people, then in segment number two, if four, then into number four, etc. At the beginning it is better to use square or round windows, later only the creativity of participants limit the shape.
   - *Roundtable*: It is the written form of Round Robin. An important principle is, that the person who is presenting something cannot write at the same time.
   - *Group Round Robin*: In this case word goes round between micro-groups. Groups express themselves one by one, by way of their representatives (present a result or data or the group's work, etc.). In its written version each small group can know about the work of the others', and this must happen in parallel interaction, this means, there will be no passive audience. (Arató & Varga, 2015: 61-76)

c) *Group jigsaw*
   Everyone in the group gets a different task based on their abilities, but the tasks are complementary within the group. Each member works on his own task or segment. When they are finished, they all teach, one by one, the groupmates their own segment or the most important knowledge related to the task. This is a structure within the group in which the subject materials, textbook, references, learning aids, ways of learning, etc., are received by the group members in pieces. The students´ task is to put together the available information or materials like a jigsaw puzzle. (Arató & Varga, 2015: 61-76)

Besides these three main structures, they also give some other ideas on how to improve cooperation in the English as a foreign language classroom:

- Paper and scissors:

It is one of the simplest cooperative forms that symbolize constructive and encouraging interdependence. Each group gets one sheet of coloured paper (each group gets a different colour) and one pair of scissors. The group's task is to cut

the sheet of paper into as many pieces as the number of people in their group. An important rule is that the one who has the scissors cannot touch the sheet and the others, must move the paper together, and they cannot let it go. Groups make as many pieces of paper as the number of their members.

- *Pair of pairs*:

The teacher forms pairs within group and the pairs are given one task each, or individual tasks. If they are working in pairs, they have to start working on it together and in case of individual tasks, they work on their own and then they are checking and learning both topics in together. In any case, the concluding step is to present their topic to each other, because they need to check if they are able to explain it to their peers as well. The next step is changing pairs. The pairs have to teach each other on their topics. When all two or four topics have gone round, they have to change pairs again. Their task is easy: each student questions the other one on their own topic. If the topics have gone round in the group between the pairs, we will get the result: that all group members know each topic. (Arató & Varga, 2015: 61-76)

4. Improving cooperation – practical activities and tasks

a) Activity 1 - Who´s the best detective?
Time: 15 minutes
Organization: group work
Aids: worksheets and an alphabet placed on the board
Description: Each group gets a worksheet, and the teacher places a big alphabet on the board. In the alphabet each letter has got a number. The worksheet includes numbers. The learners' task is to decode the secret message with the help of the alphabet. They have to take turns to run to the board and find the numbers. One student can decode one number in one turn. The student runs to the board and shouts the letter to the others, then s/he runs back, and another student takes turn from the group. The groups are racing with each other. The winner is the group who decodes the secret message firstly. The winners can get a small prize from the teacher.
The secret message: LEARNING NUMBERS IS FUN.
Possible problems: The race can increase noise level and lead to discipline problems. The teacher has to monitor the students' work, and disciple them if it is necessary.
Aim: The main aim of the activity is to practice the numbers from 1 to 50, the spelling of the alphabet, and to improve cooperative skills.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
15	3	20	44	50	9	10
H	I	J	K	L	M	N
32	26	4	19	49	37	5
O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
41	28	10	30	16	34	1
V	W	X	Y	Z		
48	22	8	40	11		

Fig. 1. Activity 1 handout

49 50 15 30 5 26 5 10

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
34 32 50

_ _ _
5 1 37 3 50 30 16

_ _ _ _ _ _ _
26 16

_ _
9 1 5

_ _ _

Fig. 2. Activity 1 handout

Sit down.	Stand up.
Go to the board.	Come here.
Give me your book, please.	Say "Good Morning".
Read.	Don´t read.
Listen.	Don´t listen.
Pick up your pencil.	Put down your pencil.
Open your book.	Close your book.
Draw.	Look at the picture.
Open the door.	Close the door.
Open the window.	Close the window.

Fig. 3. Activity 2 handout

The family is eating breakfast.
The family is sleeping.
The family is in the car.
The family is on the beach.

Fig. 4. Activity 3 material

b) Activity 2 - Can you guess?
Time: 20 minutes
Organization: group work
Aids: cards with different instructions
Description: The teacher creates groups of four or five. Each group gets an envelope with cards including instructions. Someone starts the activity by picking up a card. The others cannot see what is on the card. The student has to act out the instruction on the card. The one who guesses comes next.
Possible problems: The game can increase noise level and lead to discipline problems. To prevent it, the teacher must monitor the students' work, pay attention, and warn them if it is necessary.
Aim: The main aim of this activity is to practice the given instructions from the previous activity. The activity improves students' creativity and cooperative skills.
Tips: If the teacher creates the groups, discipline problems and quarrels can be avoided.

c) Activity 3 - Frozen image
Time: 12 minutes
Organization: group work
Aids: cards with instructions
Description: each family gets a card with an instruction. Their task is to make a frozen image based on the instructions. The other families/groups have to guess what is depicted by the frozen image.
Aim: The main aim of the activity is to improve students' cooperation, creativity and imagination.

Conclusion

Non-traditional and even unusual teaching methods and strategies can make our students more cooperative. They can become more extroverted – enjoy working with each other, come up with more new ideas, start to share their opinions and enjoy getting out of their comfort zone.

Cooperative structures help learners to accept each other, and they can understand that it is not a shame to ask for help and to give help. Cooperative learning can also help students to speak English without fear, come up with new ideas, share their opinions and problem solving can be easier if they work together.

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Nurturing talent and skill development through inclusive and intercultural music education

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ABSTRACT

The term intercultural education first appeared in the United States in the 1920s. Intercultural education has had a similar meaning to multi-ethnic education since the 1960s, while multicultural education has become an increasingly common term since the 1970s. Their basic characteristic is that they are based on education free from racism and discrimination, and teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge and competence in dealing with pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds (Torgyik, 2008).

According to D. J. Elliott's (1989) dynamic model of multiculturalism, in music education there is a need for interaction and representation of different musical genres in the classroom. The teacher's task is to strengthen the musical individuality of the students and to explore the cultural background of the music with the students (Buzás, 2017).

In our paper, we present the possible connections of inclusivity with the music educational concept of Zoltán Kodály, which is generally applied in Hungarian schools. We also introduce some methods to reduce disadvantage and support children living in poverty and deprivation through participation in music ensembles. The long-term goal of these music programs is to reduce school drop-out rates and to increase motivation and achievement in the learning process (Szűcs, 2023).

Keywords: art education, music pedagogical programme, intercultural education, inclusion, talent development

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Introduction

Intercultural dialogue and understanding of cultural diversity have become increasingly important issues in recent times. New concepts have come to the fore, such as cultural awareness, sensitivity or cultural competence, which can be effectively developed in educational settings through inclusive education. Research on inclusive education initially focused on special educational needs and disabilities, but later expanded to include many other fields such as sociology, psychology, philosophy or pedagogy, as well as other aspects in education, such as teachers' attitudes, the development of inclusive school environments, the orientation of school curricula, developmental science or educational technology (Quian & Rong, 2023; Márová, 2016). Although inclusion is a critical area of contemporary educational discourse, there are neither comprehensive studies nor concrete recommendations in the field of art education.

Art is a natural medium for the free expression of imagination and ideas, where every pupil has the freedom to be different and unique. Visual and performing arts activities (music, dance, theatre, puppetry, etc.) meet a variety of learning needs and provide learners with an alternative means of expression, where they can explore and experience a subject in more depth without the pressure to perform, resulting in joyful learning (Surbhi & Sharma, 2023). In their research Bredács and Kárpáti (2012) used the Psychological Immune Competence Questionnaire among 14-16-year-old students (N=300) who were interested in arts and crafts, music, dance and drama, and were involved in some form of secondary art education. Scores on personality traits such as goal orientation, optimism and outlook on life, sense of control or self-efficacy, and mobilisation of social resources were higher in the arts students than in the control group of average learners. Brown and Sax (2013) examined the emotional expression and regulation of low-income children attending an arts-integrated preschool (N=205). They claim that arts-based school programs are associated with more positive emotions in school for young children with special educational needs and that the use of music, dance, and visual arts instruction (which occurred daily) helps to promote social-emotional readiness in economically disadvantaged students. A study of 310 preschool children from economically disadvantaged families found that including music, dance, and visual arts lessons in the curriculum helped to reduce stress (Society for Research in Child Development, 2016).

The benefits of collective musical activities extend beyond the group and can resolve conflict and develop empathy between different groups (Clift et al, 2010). The Singing with Additional Needs (SWAN) project, funded by the EU Creative

Europe program, aims to benefit amateur and professional singers with additional needs, choral conductors and organisers of future initiatives. The project draws on best practice from different European countries in involving people with additional needs in community singing and aims to develop digital tools and technologies to support the needs of participants. In Hungary, the Baltazar Theatre, whose members are actors with intellectual disabilities. Since its foundation in 1998, the aim of the theatre has been to bring disabled and non-disabled people in the society closer together. In our study we present the characteristics of inclusion in music education and some successful Hungarian music pedagogical methods related to inclusion.

1. Educational equity and inclusion in education

According to Brussino et al. (2021), "diversity has important implications on education systems and conversely, the potential role education systems play in shaping these trends and building more sustainable and inclusive societies for tomorrow". Education policies require openness and interaction between different systems and their environments and are influenced by economic, political, social and technological trends. The school environment highlights many differences between children, with students spending a significant amount of time together in the classroom working on the same tasks (Goudeau & Cimpian, 2020).

The Index for Inclusion is a resource to support inclusive school improvement, detailing how to reduce barriers to learning and participation for every student. The model includes three interrelated dimensions of school improvement: creating inclusive cultures, creating inclusive policies and developing inclusive practices (Figure 1).

Each dimension of the index is divided into two parts and contains five to eleven indicators (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The Inclusive Culture dimension is about creating safe, accepting, collaborating, stimulating and inclusive communities where everyone is valued. Producing Inclusive Policies supports the development of schools for all and the organisation of support for diversity. Developing Inclusive Practices, the third dimension of the model, aims to develop curricula for all pupils where themes and content are organised in a transdisciplinary way. This dimension develops school practices that reflect the inclusive cultures and policies of the school, where teaching is responsive to the diversity of learners.

Fig. 1. The three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002:7)

Positive attitudes and motivation towards inclusive education are an important prerequisite for its successful implementation in the educational process. Ruijs et al. (2009) conclude that promoting inclusiveness has positive effects on both students' academic performance and their social competence. Despite these benefits, teachers usually face several difficulties that prevent them from fully embracing inclusive policies (Desombre et. al., 2018). The study by Saloviita and Schaffus (2016) surveyed teachers' opinions about inclusion in Finland (N = 298) and Brandenburg, Germany (N = 163). The researchers chose two education systems that, compared to other countries, have a particularly high number of students moving to segregated special education. Their results showed that Finnish teachers were more positive about inclusion than German teachers who were particularly concerned about the extra work that inclusion required. This concern was probably related to the different structure of the school system and the organisation of education. Finnish teachers had easier access to additional support services than their colleagues in Brandenburg. Teachers' concerns should therefore be addressed in order to promote inclusion in schools.

2. Promoting inclusion through culture and arts education

2.1. Musical interculturality

The term intercultural education first appeared in the United States in the 1920s. It has been used as a similar term to multi-ethnic education since the 1960s, and to multicultural education since 1970, and to the increasingly common term of global education. Their basic characteristic is that they provide a basic education which is free from racism and discrimination. They are also based on the principle of pluralism, diversity of ethnicity, language, race, religion, gender or disability (Torgyik, 2008).

According to Gruhn (2018) "Modern societies and educational philosophies tend to strengthen individuality, namely the learners' individual demands on musical experience since each of the multicultural and social aspects of music and music making claims for its own right in a globally interconnected world. Therefore, we need to rethink school education and to take into consideration the social and cultural changes caused by technological and multicultural developments that have affected all dimensions of our lives" (Gruhn, 2019: 48).

The teaching and learning of music is currently characterised by a socially and culturally determined shift from the objects of education to its subjects, from content to action, and from an orientation towards the traditional values of works of art to an understanding of music as an action in social practice that offers the possibility of participation rather than a demand for factual knowledge (Table 1).

Elliott's dynamic model of multiculturalism in music education is based on the combination of a wide range of cultural heritage, different types of music and a worldview of musical concepts. In addition to developing learners' ability to identify and appreciate differences and similarities between musical cultures, a dynamic music curriculum can also foster an understanding of *multi-musicality*. It offers the opportunity to develop appreciation and new patterns of behaviour, not only in relation to different types of music, but also in relation to the peoples of the world. Based on the dynamic model of multiculturalism in music education, the interaction of different musical genres and their representations in the classroom would be necessary. In his view, it is the teacher's responsibility to strengthen the musical individuality of the pupils and to explore with them the cultural background of the music as cultural heritage. Dance, drama and costumes are integral parts of music education. Music education must also deal with historical and contemporary practices and their relative positioning between the extremes of identity and diversity in different regions of the world within formal, non-formal and informal contexts of music learning (Buzás & Sagrillo, 2020).

UNIVERSAL CONCEPTIONS	INDIVIDUALIZED CONCEPTIONS
Consistent philosophy of music education at large that governs all actions based on social consensus about functions and intentions of education.	Orientation on the individual learning process based on students' potential and cognitive development that directs all educational decisions.
homogeneous society	multicultural society
tradition determines **cultural values** relevant to education → shift →	globalization determines **musical identity** in Communities of Practice; music as social praxis
education based on contents (objects)	education based on individual potential **(subjects)**
goal: contents and values	goal: **action and participation**
Learner adopted to the CONCEPTION	**Conception adopted to the LEARNER**

Tab. 1. Schematic confrontation of the core elements
of an epistemological paradigm change (Gruhn, 2018:50).

Singing is a central part of music education, and songs can play an important role in the development of identity, including musical, social, ethnic, racial and cultural identity. Singing songs from different cultures can develop learners' musical, linguistic and cultural competences; improve their singing and speaking skills; enhance their social skills in a multicultural and global society, while developing a strong sense of self-identity and understanding of others, and increase their emotional expressiveness (Ilari et al., 2013). All these elements together are likely to enhance learners' well-being, as shown in Figure 2.

2.2. Talent development

There is no clear and universal definition of talent, and the concept has changed from time to time. In general, it depends on the social and cultural circumstances and the needs of a particular period. According to Gyarmathy (2006), talent means *an intrinsic force* that can provide opportunities to improve social performance. Czeizel (1997) defines the components of talent based on Renzulli's model. As a source of the emergence of talent, the model includes 4x2 components: general intelligence, specific mental talents, creativity and motivation and four environmental factors: family, school, contemporary groups, and general social environment, and the last factor is the so-called fate factor.
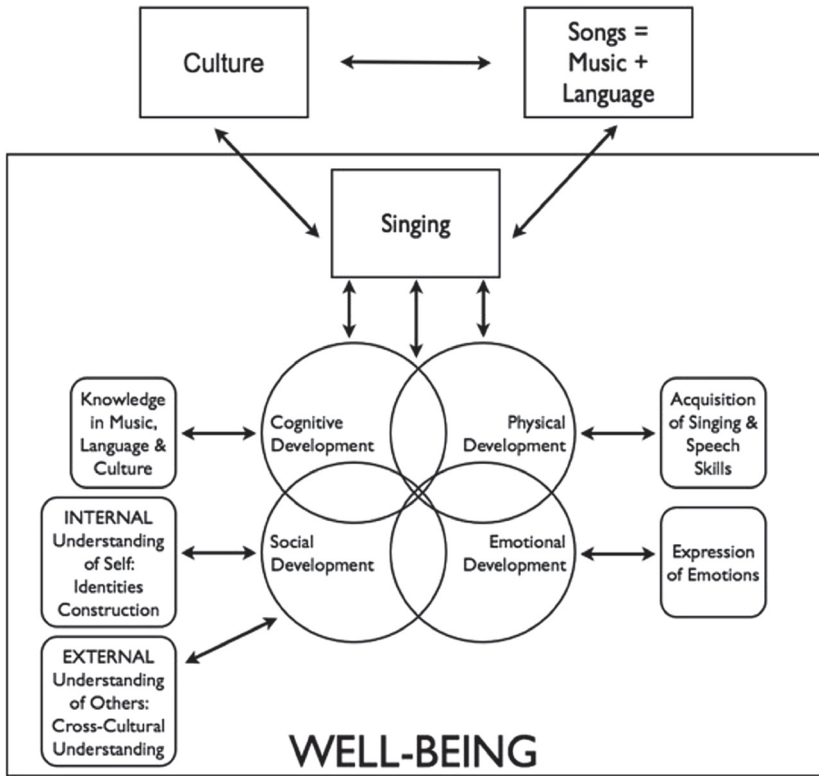
Fig. 2. Schematic representation of the potential of singing multicultural songs
in music education (Beatriz et al., 2013:204)

The development of individual talent is a long process that begins at a very
young age. At the micro level, Terlouw and Pilot (2010) argue that the teacher
plays a crucial role in stimulating the learner's curiosity, requiring commitment,
perseverance and self-discipline from the learner, and motivating the learner to
invest time in learning. At the meso level, the focus is on the organisation and
management of the school curriculum. The conditions for talent development
include the inclusion of additional optional teaching elements that respond to the
different interests of pupils, opportunities for deepening and broadening, and the
possibility of using extracurricular activities. At the macro level, training and work
opportunities are key. It is therefore a question of an education policy that focuses
on links with educational institutions before and after school.

Primary schools focus on identifying musical talent and developing programs for gifted children in general, but this process requires complex professional and collaborative work. Researchers agree that there is no universal definition of musical talent, as musicians, students and composers have different aspects of musical talent, such as performance, playing an instrument, singing, composing or the ability to emotionally receive and own music. Recognising and measuring musical talent in people with different disabilities can help to provide alternative methods based on observed musicality, which is in line with Kodály's idea that quality music education is accessible to all (Tiszai, 2016).

2.3. The Kodály concept

Music education in Hungary is based on the concept of Zoltán Kodály, who is universally recognised as one of the greatest figures in music education and whose principles of music education have had a major international impact. Research by Bácskai et al. (1972) has shown that intensive music education based on the Kodály concept can compensate for disadvantages in socio-economic status and also help to promote social mobility. The Kodály pedagogical principle aims to give every child the chance to achieve cultural fulfilment and, as a result, to live life as a more sophisticated and empathetic member of society. The importance of the Kodály approach lies in its positive impact on both personal development and overall academic achievement. Research by Barkóczi and Pléh (1977) shows that music education based on the Kodály concept is an effective means of compensating for social disadvantage and reducing school drop-out rates.

Gönczy (2009) highlights the principles that define the essence of Kodály's ideas. All children should be involved in musical education from an early age; the human voice and singing are the foundations of musical education. To provide students, regardless of their social background, with skills and musical experience to develop their whole personality, with non-musical benefits and transfer effects. These principles can be understood in several categories and in a hierarchical relationship to each other. Figure 3 illustrates this model.

According to Kodály, singing in a group is one of the most natural ways of making music together. His writings stress the importance of musical education, the preservation of cultural heritage and the idea of collective singing. Kodály states that singing in a choir can be a real community-building force. It was in England in 1927 that Kodály first experienced the socially inspiring power of the choir to create a harmonious, joyful community through the arts, which he proposed as an ideal means of solving social problems in Hungary (Smuta, 2012).
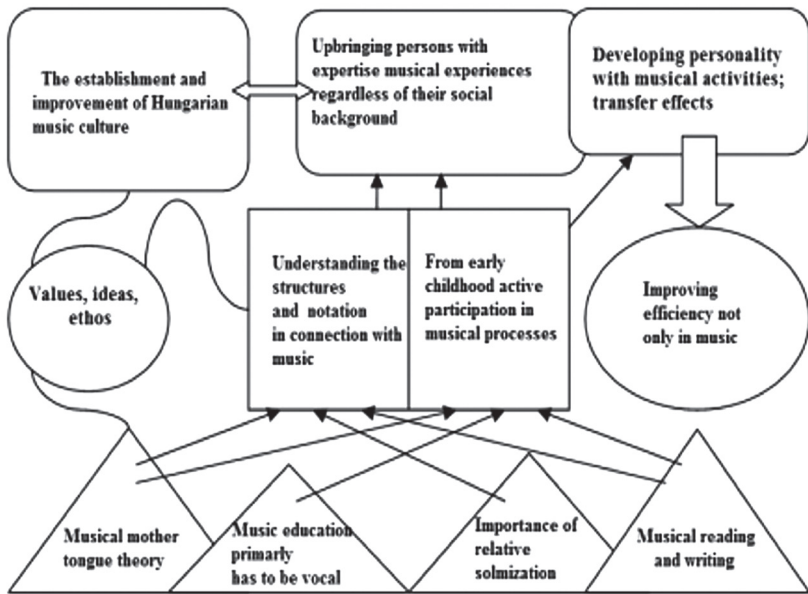
Fig. 3. The hierarchical illustration of the main elements
of the Kodály Concept (Gönczy, 2009:172.)

Kodály wrote about this in 1935: "There are certainly social conditions for the organisation of a choir: first of all, there must be a group of people who respect each other, who are socially equal, where no one wants to be different from the others. This is why it is so difficult to organise choirs in our fragmented civil society. (…) Even if it is true that advanced choral singing is only possible in a society with a high degree of solidarity, it is also undoubtedly true that choral singing develops social solidarity. It breaks down the barriers between classes".

Kodály's students initiated the Singing Youth Movement in the 1930s. In the first decade of its existence, almost 50,000 choir members joined the movement. Buzás and Maródi (2015) aimed to study the effects of choir singing in Hungarian music students (n=57, mean age: 21.20). They conclude that choir singing can alleviate symptoms of depression or stress, and improve physical and mental well-being. Choirs provide a supportive environment for their members to develop their social skills. Bailey and Davidson (2005) examine four interacting areas of the transfer effects of choral singing: 1. health therapeutic benefits, 2. group/community: social and community benefits, 3. positive cognitive processes,

4. affective aspect - benefits from the relationship between choir and audience. The conceptual framework for music, health and well-being was constructed by McDonald et al. in 2012 (Figure 4). The psychological benefits of music education overlap with those of music therapy. Music education focuses on the development of musical skills, but the intervention (which is social, enjoyable and rewarding) has other non-musical benefits. There is considerable interest among educational researchers in how music can have a positive impact on health and well-being in the context of 'everyday music making'.
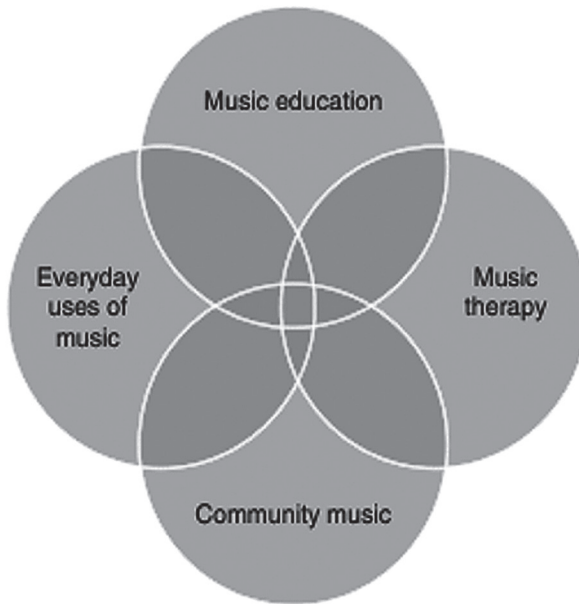
Fig. 4. Conceptual framework for music, health, and wellbeing (McDonald et al., 2012:8.)

3. Alternative music teaching methods in Hungary using orchestral work

Kodály's idea of making music accessible to everyone inspired many musicians and music teachers to introduce music to children with special needs. In the last decades more and more musicians and music teachers started to teach disabled children. They used, for example, the Ulwila method, which has the main goal of improving children's musical and cognitive development (Tiszai, 2016). Including bands, ensembles, choirs or orchestras in school music programs can increase overall participation in school music education and support children living in poverty and deprivation through participation in musical ensembles. Providing appropriate music learning opportunities for those children who face multiple forms of discrimination, who are disadvantaged or multiply disadvantaged, is a real social challenge today.

Disadvantaged, physically, sensorially and mentally handicapped and autistic students can attend primary art schools free of charge in Hungary. However, statistics show that few disadvantaged children take advantage of this opportunity. The Symphonie program has its roots in Venezuela's El Sistema, which focuses on joyful group music-making as a tool for social development. It aims to reduce school drop-out rates among participating children and to increase motivation and performance in the learning process (Szűcs, 2023).

In addition to the musical activities, intensive social support is provided to participating children and their families. The Symphony program takes place in places where there are many children in difficult circumstances: in segregated urban areas, in impoverished small towns, in schools, in children's homes and in institutions for children with special educational needs. Apart from musical activities, individual and group discussions, games, self-awareness or thematic activities (e.g. drug prevention, career guidance, sex education and family life education) are the main elements of the program. Not only music teachers but also social workers are involved in the program. The children make and learn music mostly in groups. Musical education begins with rhythmic and singing games. Then simple stringed, wind and percussion instruments are used and smaller groups (soloists) are formed. The musical aim of the program is to run a concert-ready, regularly performing orchestra that is responsive to the needs of its members and provides an enjoyable performance. The concerts give the children an opportunity to demonstrate their skills to their peers, teachers, families and friends. They can also experience a sense of achievement and appreciation. (The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta - Symphony program).

The main aim of the Snétberger Music Talent Centre is to visit disadvantaged areas of Hungary and provide musically talented young people aged 12-24 with the opportunity to study music. The core element of the program is a 12-week intensive, personalised music training course led by internationally renowned teachers, including Ferenc Snétberger, the founder of the program. Students perform many concerts each year, not only in Hungary but also abroad. The program is highly successful, with 90 per cent of students continuing their studies and a quarter of them studying music at college or university (Snétberger Music Talent Centre).

The educational method, called Consonante, was developed by Luca Tiszai in Ipolytölgyes, in the Szent Erzsébet Home, a nursing home for people with severe mental disabilities. The orchestra is modelled on the Hungarian zither ensemble. Modified orchestra work allows the participants to overcome their behavioural and psychiatric problems. Musical performances and concerts allow the musicians to experience that their talents and efforts are highly valued, leading to increased self-esteem (Tiszai, 2016).

Conclusion

In today's global society, understanding and interacting with people from different backgrounds and with different needs, including identities and abilities (e.g. gender, age, place of residence, poverty, disability, ethnicity, language, religion, migration or displacement status, or sexual orientation) is essential and positive, innovative approaches to inclusion are needed.

All pupils and teachers are important members of the school community, where inclusion is a process that reflects and then leads to an approach based on recognition, understanding and respect for diversity. Making music together can reduce symptoms of depression or stress and improve physical and mental wellbeing. A choir, band or orchestra can provide a supportive environment for its members to develop their social skills. Singing or playing an instrument is a mentally complex process that requires a high level of concentration. The impact of collective music making can therefore also improve the academic performance of its members. Therefore, children in mainstream or special schools should be encouraged to participate in a variety of musical ensembles - choir, orchestra or band - to create a creative and enjoyable musical process characterised by inclusion, cooperation, mutual understanding and a positive atmosphere among participants.

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Enhancing cooperation: The complex instruction program (KIP) in the EFL classroom

Orsolya KISS[7]

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the benefits of the Complex Instruction Program (KIP) in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. KIP is a modified method of Stanford University's Complex Instructional Method, which was originally designed to manage student status, thus enhancing students' performance and motivation. Currently, the KIP method is widely used in Hungarian schools with fewer or no students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The paper first presents the KIP method and discusses its specific rules. We explore the general structure of the method, as well as the steps involved in creating the lesson plan. In the second part of the paper, we provide a KIP lesson plan that has been used in an EFL classroom and discuss the method's benefits. By presenting the lesson plan, we also demonstrate how it is implemented in the classroom. Finally, we summarise its impact on cooperation, communication and motivation in the EFL classroom.

Introduction

Cooperation and collaboration are key competences that can be developed in the EFL classroom, enhancing language acquisition and creating a supportive learning environment. By implementing cooperative and collaborative techniques, teachers encourage students to build social and communicational skills, while developing their critical thinking and problem solving. By integrating cooperative methods, teachers can create an interactive learning environment that improves language proficiency and prepares students with social skills for real-world situations.

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There are many methods that promote collaboration; however, in this paper we will introduce the Complex Instruction Method (KIP) by Emese K. Nagy. The general aims of this method include managing student status, fostering cooperative learning, developing social skills, increasing student engagement and motivation, and preparing students for real-world challenges.

In this paper, we will introduce the KIP method and its basic structure. Then, by providing a concrete lesson plan, we will demonstrate the structure of a KIP lesson. In the final part of the study, we will focus on the positive effects of the KIP method in the EFL classroom.

1. General aims of the KIP method

The Complex Instructional Model, originally developed by E. Cohen and R. Lotan at Stanford University, was adapted by Emese K. Nagy to create the Complex Instruction Program (KIP) in Hungary. Her aim was to implement a method that would "help children from disadvantaged background lagging behind in school" (K. Nagy, 2022: 121). In addition to increasing children's knowledge, the KIP method emphasizes the development of their social skills (K. Nagy, 2022: 121). Today, hundreds of schools have integrated the method into their daily teaching practices to enhance collaboration and cooperation among students.[8] The KIP method has evolved into a broader framework named Complex Basic Program (KAP).[9]

The KIP method renews the teacher's role in the classroom. As Emese K. Nagy emphasizes, in a teacher-centred lesson, students' effort to perform the given task decreases. If the teacher is the sole centre of leadership and guidance, students' motivation to collaborate, argue, and participate decreases. When implementing KIP, teachers are encouraged to hand over this leadership, promoting peer-to-peer interactions and increasing student engagement and motivation (K. Nagy, 2022: 121).

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[8] Find the list of participating schools here: https://komplexinstrukcio.hu/index.php/resztve-vo-iskolak Accessed: 27 June 2024

[9] For more information and details see: https://komplexinstrukcio.hu/index.php/english Accessed: 27 June 2024

2. The principles of the KIP method

The method has several principles that must be followed when planning and executing a lesson plan. First, students work in groups of six and each group receives a unique task. Second, each student has a specific role within the group, and their work is controlled by rules and standards. These rules facilitate motivation, collaboration, and student participation in engaging activities.

2.1. Group tasks

As mentioned above, each group receives a different open-ended task designed to promote creativity, debate and social skills. While working on the group's task, students must interact with one another and share their ideas. They must collaborate to reach a conclusion and solve the given problem together. These tasks provide opportunities for students to ask questions, examine issues from different angles and to think about possible solutions.

Teachers should organize the topic and the tasks around life-like problems that students can relate to, drawing on their previous experiences. This deepens their knowledge and makes schoolwork more relevant and meaningful to them.

The goal when compiling these tasks is to develop thinking, to approach, understand and process a topic from multiple perspectives, and to successfully create an end product. The exercises should be diverse and complex enough so that no one is able to complete it alone, ensuring that all members participate in the task. By creating different group tasks, competition between groups is eliminated and cooperation is promoted (K. Nagy, 2015: 20).

2.2. Roles

Within the group, students are assigned a specific role and "these roles rotate so that eventually each and every student plays each and every role" (Brody, 1998: 126). The most common roles are facilitator, reporter, writer, materials manager, and harmonizer (Brody, 1998: 126). Depending on the task and the group, other roles might be included such as time checker or safety officer (K. Nagy, 2015: 20).

- The facilitator ensures that everyone understands the task and is the only one who can ask for the teacher's help.
- The reporter presents the group's work to the class.

- The writer takes notes during the group's discussion and creates the group's written work.

- The materials manager provides and gathers additional sources (e.g., dictionaries, articles).

- The harmonizer resolves conflicts within the group and encourages all members to participate in the group's work. (K. Nagy, 2015: 20)

In some cases, students might have more than one role.

By assigning different roles, students are required to take responsibility for their work and their peers. These roles must be accepted by the group members, and students must develop skills necessary to maintain their roles effectively. Each position has its own rights and certain behaviours are expected from students. The performance of the group highly depends on whether the members of the group accept the rules that dictate what can be expected from them and what they can expect from each other. The main goal is for all students to accept these roles and norms so that the group is able to work without teacher supervision (K. Nagy, 2015: 20-21).

2.3. Norms and rules

Students are expected to follow certain norm and rules, as this is how their work is monitored. In order to achieve cooperation, the following norms should be adhered to (K. Nagy, 2015: 20):

- Everyone has the right to ask for help from anyone within the group.
- Everyone has the duty to help anyone who asks for help.
- Everyone should help others, but should not do the job for them.
- Everyone should finish their task.
- When the task is ready, everyone should clean up after themselves.
- Everyone is expected to perform the assigned role in the group.

These norms are posted on the classroom walls to remind students of the principles of group work. When following these norms, students have the opportunity to monitor each other's behaviour (K. Nagy, 2015: 20).

3. The structure of a KIP lesson

When it comes to KIP, preparation is the key word. The KIP tasks are suited for a forty-five minute-long lesson and are based on the course syllabus. It is recommended to choose suitable topics at the beginning of the school year. For English, topics such as animals, holidays, or free time activities can serve as good bases for a lesson plan.

When preparing the lesson plan, it is important to follow the rules of KIP. The group tasks must be open-ended, and each group must receive a different task. The differentiated individual tasks have to be based on the group task, ensuring that everyone is equally involved and motivated to finish the task. Since preparing a KIP lesson is demanding, it constitutes a maximum of 20% of the annual lessons (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 196-197).

In this part of the paper, we will present a lesson plan that demonstrates the parts of a lesson and how a KIP lesson is structured.

3.1. The 'big idea', objectives and roles

The first part of the KIP lesson includes discussing the 'big idea', setting objectives and reviewing the roles and norms. Each lesson has a central theme that is articulated in the 'big idea'. This is usually a catchy phrase that draws students' attention to the lesson. A good 'big idea' motivates students and sparks their imagination that results in action. It is also important to explain what the 'big idea' includes. It can be done by writing a short explanation, showing a picture, video or poem; the key is that it must be engaging. Students can read the 'big idea' anytime they want as it is part of the given task, but it is beneficial if we write it on the board for easy access (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 198).

Yours sincerely, Animals

Dear Students,
Every year, we go on an adventure and visit different animal habitats around the world. This year, we invite you to join us on this spectacular journey.
We hope that you will have an amazing time with us.
Yours sincerely,
Animals

After discussing the 'big idea', we need to set the objectives by informing the students what is expected from them. We can also observe specific roles and certain rules during the lesson, but it is important to let students know that (e.g. observing the facilitator). Lastly, before beginning the group work, we should review the roles and norms. This can be done by asking questions, creating a Kahoot quiz, or by simply reading the cards on the wall. These three activities should take three to five minutes (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 217).

3.2. Creating and presenting the group task

Each group task must be based on the 'big idea' and have to correspond with the general rules. A good task is open-ended, requiring students to draw from their previous experiences and knowledge. Each member should be able to contribute to the solution and no one should be able to do the task alone within the time available. A good open-ended task is interesting, motivating and allows students to use different skills and abilities. The group work and their presentations should take twenty-five minutes in total, though this can be slightly longer if there are no more than three groups (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 201-205, 209).

While the students are working on their tasks, the teacher's task is to observe the interactions and manage status by highlighting and acknowledging students' strengths, encouraging them and providing reinforcement. The presentations begin after the given time is up and everyone pays attention to the reporters. The product of the group is presented by the reporter, with the entire classroom focusing on the presentation. After each presentation, the teacher's task is to give positive feedback and, if possible, personalized assessment. It is crucial to give genuine praise, otherwise the feedback loses its significance (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 218-219).

1. Group task: Design a Zoo
You visited the animals in the Zoo, which was a great experience for you.
But the Zoo was small for everyone, so you decided to build a new one with place for everyone.
When designing the zoo, keep in mind that:
- You should choose at least 2 animals from each continent.
- You should choose both carnivorous and herbivorous animals.
- Draw the zoo!

2. Group task: Life on safaries
Safaries are dangerous places, not just for people, but for animals, too.
This is the last stop on your journey with the animals, so you try to capture the life on the safaries by drawing and writing a comic.
When making the comic, keep in mind that:
- You should include at least 5 animals in the comic
- You should choose both carnivorous and herbivorous animals.
- You should capture the daily life on the safari.
- Draw the comic and don't forget the thought bubbles.

3.3. Individual tasks

In the second half of the lesson, students engage in individual tasks. These tasks must be directly linked to the group task, which means that they cannot be solved without using the group task, ensuring that each student participates in the working process. These individual tasks allow teachers to differentiate, since students should be given tasks that match their abilities. These tasks can range from open-ended to close-ended activities; including completing the group's task, forming opinions, answering question, or even drawing or preparing something creative; the possibilities are endless (Nagy & Révész, 2019: 209).

When students complete their tasks, they present their answers. If there is no time to listen to everyone, the teacher can choose a specific role, preferably one that does not have many opportunities to speak during the lesson (e.g. materials manager). These tasks can be assigned as homework or continued during the next lesson. Ten to twelve minutes should be spent on the individual tasks (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 219).

Individual tasks (1)

S1: Choose 2 animals from the zoo and write down the route from animal A to animal B. Use the terms: turn left/right, go straight on, etc.

S2: Choose 5 animals from the zoo and describe their positions in the zoo by using the phrases: next to, behind, in front of, between, opposite etc.

S3: Describe your favourite animal in the zoo. How does it look like? What does it do?

S4: How would your day look like if you were one of the animals in the zoo? Use the second conditional.

S5: Choose 3 animals from the zoo and compare them by using the following adjectives: fast, far, dangerous, ugly.

Individual tasks (2)

S1: Make two groups from the animals in the comic, divide them based on what they eat – meat or plants, and write a sentence with them.

S2: Write an alternative ending for your comic.

S3: Choose 3 animals from the comic and compare them using adjectives and adverbs.

S4: Design an award and give it to one of the animals. Why does it deserve it?

S5: Put the main actions of your story into the past simple.

3.4. Assessment

In the final minutes of the lesson, the class summarizes the lesson in connection to the 'big idea'. If there was a role or norm being observed during the lesson, the teacher evaluates it. The most important thing is that a KIP lesson cannot be graded, and students cannot be punished. K. Nagy and Révész emphasize that assessment must be personal, developmental and positive. If there is nothing to be positively evaluated, the teacher should discuss future opportunities for improvement and ask how tasks could be approached more effectively in the future (K. Nagy & Révész, 2019: 216).

This approach ensures that feedback is constructive and fosters a growth mindset among students, encouraging continuous improvement without the pressure of traditional grading.

Cooperation, motivation and the KIP method

In his book, *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom* (2001), Zoltán Dörnyei argues that motivation is a key term when it comes to foreign language teaching and learning. He states that even bright students may not remain persistent if the foreign language lesson lacks motivation, despite their cognitive skills. Only a learner with sufficient motivation and enthusiasm can achieve language proficiency (Dörnyei, 2001: 5).

Dörnyei also provides a long list of strategies that can be followed to create a motivating environment. These strategies support the basic concept of the KIP method. In this study, we highlight a few selected strategies (Dörnyei, 2001: 136-142):

- Promote group cohesiveness by using small group tasks where students can mix and promote cooperation and interaction.

- Provide learning with regular experiences of success.

- Build your learners' confidence by providing regular encouragement.

- Help diminish language anxiety by avoiding social comparison.

- Allow learners to maintain a positive social image while engaged in the learning tasks.

- Increase student motivation by promoting cooperation among the learners.

- Increase student motivation by actively promoting learner autonomy.

- Promote effort attribution in your students.

- Provide students with positive information feedback. (Dörnyei, 2001: 136-142)

A lot of studies have been conducted on cooperative learning methods and their effect in learning English as a foreign language. These studies show that incorporating cooperative methods improve learners' language skills and increase motivation. Talebi and Sobhani (2012) studied the impact of cooperative methods on speaking proficiency. Their findings revealed that the speaking proficiency of the experimental group was higher than the proficiency level of the control group. Ning and Hronby (2010) conducted a study on Chinese EFL learners. They observed listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, as well as students' competence in vocabulary. Their results show that cooperative methods mainly

developed learners' listening, speaking and reading skills. Ning (2011) conducted an experimental study that aimed to improve learners' fluency in communication skills. This study, again, supports the positive effects of using cooperative methods. The participants' speaking, listening and reading skills improved by the end of the study.

Originally aimed at reducing knowledge gaps and managing status among students, the KIP method is now widely applied in schools to enhance cooperative skills. Studies demonstrate that cooperative methods significantly boost motivation and communication in learning English as a foreign language. The KIP method offers an alternative solution, since it implements all the above mentioned positive strategies.

The Benkő István Reformed Primary and Secondary School in Budapest (Hungary) started to implement the KIP method in 2019 to provide children with competitive education.10 The KIP method is suitable for preparing learners to be able to solve a task in a team. It also encourages independent and creative thinking. Students learn to argue in a civilized manner, while accepting other opinions. It becomes natural for them to help others and also to ask for help. They become aware that everyone is valuable and everyone is needed in a team. It develops their sense of duty and responsibility and it increases their self-confidence. Finally, KIP makes lessons more experience-oriented.

In EFL classrooms, KIP lessons visibly increase student motivation, enjoyment in collaborative problem-solving, and provide a supportive environment for English language use. These lessons give students the opportunity to learn from each other. Each group is created on the basis of students' varying abilities, creating a dynamic learning setting, Moreover, the method helps uncover students' hidden talents and supports the management of disruptive behaviour.

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10   The description of the school's application of KIP is available here: https://benkorefi.hu/kip-a-ben-koben/ Accessed: 27 June 2024

Conclusion

Cooperation is a key competence that highly affects motivation and language proficiency. This study introduced the Complex Instruction Method by Emese K. Nagy, originally aimed at managing status and reducing knowledge gaps among students. Nowadays, hundreds of schools apply this method to foster cooperation and cultivate creative thinking.

The first part of the paper presented the general aims and basic principles of the KIP method. We explored the general structure of the method, discussed essential rules and norms such as open-ended tasks and individual tasks linked to group tasks, and highlighted that different roles rotate throughout the year. It must be emphasized that students cannot be graded during a KIP lesson; instead, they receive positive reinforcement.

In the second part of the paper, we presented extracts from a KIP lesson plan that was used in an EFL classroom and discussed the method's benefits. Through this example, we illustrated how it is applied in the classroom.

Finally, we explored strategies that impact motivation and reviewed studies that have been conducted on cooperative learning methods and their impact in learning English as a foreign language. KIP can serve as a good alternative to cooperative methods, since it includes all positive strategies and methods necessary for learners' needs. By implementing the KIP method, teachers can create an interactive learning environment that improves language proficiency and equips students with social skills for real-life situations.

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Possibilities of inclusive education in teaching of programming and 3D model processing in primary and secondary informatics

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the role and importance of activating methods in teaching Informatics with special attention to the inclusive education at primary and secondary schools. The basic aim is to provide all pupils and students without distinction an adequate and the best possible level of education, taking into account their individual possibilities and needs. A condition for an inclusive environment at school is the acceptance that every child is a benefit to others. Each of them is, by their difference, an enrichment not only for education, but also for preparation for life in today's information society. The primary aim of the paper is to present teaching methods and specific activities that the teacher can use within the subject of Informatics, which ensure discovery, experiential learning and the development of learners' responsibility and self-control.

Keywords: Informatics, activating methods, STEAM education, project based learning, experiential learning

Introduction

Correct pedagogical communication and student motivation is an essential component of every lesson. If we want to provide all pupils and students without distinction with an adequate and the best possible level of education while taking into account their individual possibilities and needs, it is necessary to accept that each child is a benefit to others due to their differences.

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We have reserved separate chapters for teaching methods, techniques and specific activities that the teacher can use in practice (by focusing on the teaching of the subject of Informatics).

The major goal of the present paper is to highlight the opportunity of STEAM education by using activating methods with the potential of providing space for students' creativity. Teaching methods such as Problem Based Learning (PBL) and Project Based Learning can be effectively used in tasks based on algorithmic problem solving. Within the content of the subject of Informatics, we have the opportunity to solve the given type of tasks, especially in the field of programming. We will focus mainly on the area of robotics, virtual programming environments and 3D model processing. So far, our practical experience proves that these areas of Informatics offer a wide range of possibilities for applying modern teaching approaches and methods by focusing on the student, using modern means that are sufficiently motivational for them.

1. Inclusive education in schools

Education should lead to the full development of each child's personality, to the deepening of friendship, understanding and tolerance. Education should contribute to cohesion and cooperation among students in the classroom. In its essence, inclusive education does not concern only some specific groups of students. It concerns all students who are part of the education process. Inclusive education seeks to fully develop the potential of each individual. It is the school that should accommodate the students to the maximum extent so that they can apply their specific developmental needs. It is important that each participant at the end of the educational process has such competences that will enable him/her to take part in the life of the given society successfully. (Bagalová et al., 2015)

1.1. Learner-centred teaching methods and STEAM education

Inclusive education enables the use of teaching methods based on discovery, experimentation and experiential learning called 'learning by doing'. An inclusive environment provides students with the opportunity to make friends in the classroom. In this way, they acquire social skills for independent existence and functioning in society, with the feeling that they are part of a common community (a class). As active participation in the educational process (working in a group) is

required from the student, it strengthens the individual's self-confidence. It is this fact that opens up space for us to apply activating methods in teaching, such as PBL and the project based learning (Végh, 2023).

The need for sophisticated problem-solving skills grows constantly, therefore we recommend the application of activating methods and STEAM tools during the teaching of programming in school Informatics. Learner engagement is one of the key things we want to meet in the classroom. Teachers should create opportunities for creative thinking and meaningful discoveries to give a chance to learners to join group work and to communicate with each other. It has a significant impact on the social climate in the classroom (friendships, cooperation, caring for others, solving problems, conflicts, etc.). In addition to the opportunity of acquiring quality education, their personality and social relationships are also developed (Bagalová et al., 2015).

Project method and PBL create space and opportunities for modern learning processes, while appropriately chosen educational tools and teaching aids can add fun and motivation to the learning process. Both methods are based on the child's active learning. They are dominated by their own activity, where the child learns and creates products. Emphasis is on thinking and problem solving. These methods make it possible to create meaningful situations for learners, in which they get a new experience based on previous experiences (Paksi & Csóka & Annuš, 2022).

Group work provides opportunities for mutual exchange of opinions, building good interpersonal relationships and effective cooperation between learners. They learn to understand each other, and to have an empathetic and tolerant relationship. Learners involved in the project are required to have life skills such as cooperation, organization, initiation, creativity, making suggestions and taking responsibility for completing the task (Czakóová & Csóka, 2022).

2. Possibilities of inclusive education in teaching programming

The amusing educational robots and programming microworlds might be suitable for different age categories with different skills and experiences. Learners play and solve meaningful problems by developing programming ideas. They are motivated to learn. Learners work in groups (homogeneous or spontaneous groups, formed according to the students' interest or in a random way), while solving a given algorithmic problem. They need to make problem analysis, and propose the

interactive implementation of a solution. The teacher is in the role of a mentor. The task of the teacher is to offer a problem and motivate learners to solve it based on their own experience and knowledge. During solving the tasks, the teacher is an observer. With targeted questions, s/he encourages students to think about the process – the path that will lead them to the result. They are emotionally involved in the process of knowledge acquisition, make their own decisions, experiment, and investigate the presented problem. The experience is created by the balanced cooperation of both parties involved. Their relationship is based on partnership. During the solution of the project, the students take partial responsibility for the learning results (Annuš, 2023).

Based on our rich practical teaching experiences, we recommend designing short-term school projects either designed by the teacher or in combination (joint design of the students and the teacher). From the point of view of learner involvement, we recommend a collective form of projects, and from the point of view of purpose – problem based, constructive and practice projects.

In the following chapters we recommend a few programming activities, for each age category of learners at primary and secondary (high) schools in favour of inclusive and STEAM education in the subject of Informatics.

2.1. Learning activities using programmable robots

In primary schools, we suggest using programmable STEAM robots for learning activities within the framework of Informatics. Learners are guided by the project method, which is characterized by the cooperation of two or three group members working on a common task. Learners are guided to process the given programming topic independently and gain practical experience in controlling the robot.

Most educational robots use a wide range of inputs and outputs, which allows to create more complex programmes by using symbolic notation of instructions. For our activity, we chose the programmable robotic toy Ozobot Evo. It is a funny little robot that opens the door to fun and playful programming. Parallel execution of the programme helps to visualize the individual stages of problem solving. Learners can plan their own actions and also equip the robot with different behaviours and activities, considering the curriculum (Table 1).

Tab. 1. Content of the curriculum of programming in primary school Informatics –
focusing on the Ozobot Evo robot controlling (based on ISCED 1 and ISCED 2)

	Grades 3 and 4 of primary school	Grades 5 and 6 of primary school	Grades 7 and 8 of primary school
Programme structures to control the robot	– Series of simple commands – Sequences.	+ For loop.	+ Variables. + Loops and conditions.
Ozobot Evo environment to use	– Ozocoding by colours, – OzoBlockly programming in level 1 (use symbolic language), – Ozobot Simulator.	– OzoBlockly programming in level 1-2.	– OzoBlockly programming in level 3-5.

The miniature (weight: 17 g, size: 2.5 cm x 2.5 cm) programmable robot Ozobot Evo is controlled by the dedicated mobile (as well as PC) application. The robot can follow drawn line while executing commands by colour codes. It has its own intelligence based on random decision making (how to proceed). A few sensors, motors, buttons and colourful diodes are available to control and move the robot. The operating time of the robot is approximately 45 minutes. It can be recharged quickly via a USB port (it takes approximately 20 minutes) (Czakóová & Csóka, 2022).

At a basic level, the robot can be used directly in control mode without the need of writing instructions. This way of programming is usable even for younger learners. Instructions are based on the combination of four colours (black, red, blue, and green). The colours control the following attributes: direction, speed, timing, special movement and commands to stop the activity. The combination of colour-based commands (Ozocoding) has no limits (Figure 3). Learners can plan their own actions and also endow the robot with different behaviours and activities (by completing the missing instruction or changing the command according to the desired result).

Ozocoding offers interesting activities with just four coloured felt-tip pens and white paper. As an implementation of solution, the robot can be controlled with a series of appropriately selected commands (by colour sequences) for an interactive game.

2.2. Design of Robotic Activity by Ozocoding

Teaching method: *project based learning.*
Organizational form of education: *teamwork* (it develops joyful and stress-free collaboration).
Didactic tools: Ozobot Evo, four coloured felt-tip pens and white paper, a set of colour codes of commands.
Final product: *the correct route plan* – problem solving by robot controlling.
The end result presentation: presentation of the result solution – the route plan and live demonstration of robot controlling.
Teaching time length: 1-2 lessons (45-90 minutes).

Description of project-work 1: Learners are divided into groups of 2-3 members (it is recommended to create heterogeneous groups in terms of knowledge level). We distribute a pre-defined (drawn) track to the groups, which contains both defined color-coded (instruction) parts and blank parts, which must be completed by the learners according to the goal and must be presented as a project in the end.

Description of project-work 2: For this task type, learners are also divided into groups of 2-3 members (it is recommended to create heterogeneous groups in terms of knowledge level). We divide a pre-defined (drawn) track into several parts (it is recommended to think in regular shapes – square, rectangle, polygon). These cut-up track sections, each of which has a colour code for a given command with a black track section, are distributed among the groups. According to the goal, learners try to use the given track parts to create the playing field and present the solution as a project in the end (see a possible track in Figure 1).
Description of project-work 3: Learners are again divided into groups with smaller number of members (the creation of heterogeneous groups in terms of knowledge level is recommended). We distribute pre-defined (drawn) track to the groups. Each of these describes a different route for controlling the robot. The task of the learners is to decipher the mission of the given playing field (what the robot is instructed to do by the colour codes drawn in the field) and when the game ends. The solution is presented as a project in the end.
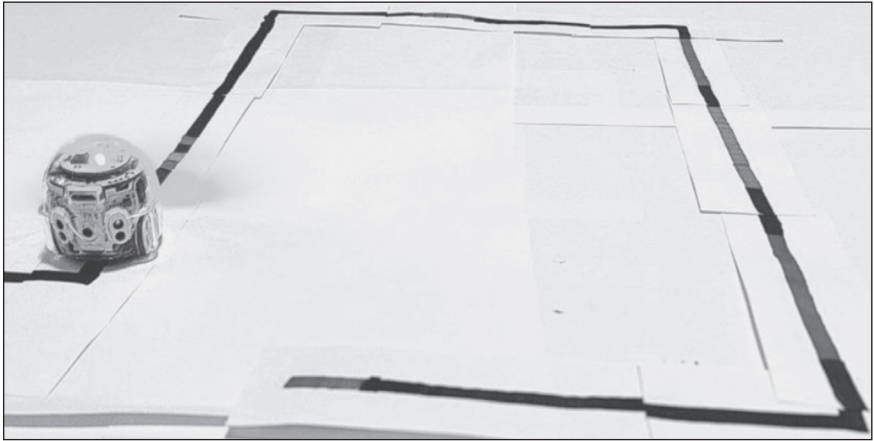
Fig. 1. A possible track – solution with used all elements (Czakóová, 2024)

Group members discuss possible good solutions with each other, design the correct programme codes and test them with the help of the robot. If they get stuck, they can consult the teacher, who will provide guidance on how to solve the problem. The teacher monitors the work of the groups and intervenes in the work process only when s/he sees a wrong or passive attitude in order to guide the learners' thinking in the right direction or to motivate them to active participation.

2.3. Design of Robotic Activity in OzoBlockly Programming Environment

Teaching method: *project based learning.*
Organizational form of education: *teamwork* (it develops joyful and stress-free collaboration).
Didactic tools: Ozobot Evo, OzoBlokcly application (level 1-5), mobile device or PC device.
Final product: *the correct route plan* – problem solving by robot controlling.
End result presentation: presentation of the result solution – the route plan and live demonstration of robot controlling.
Teaching time length: 1-2 lessons (45-90 minutes).
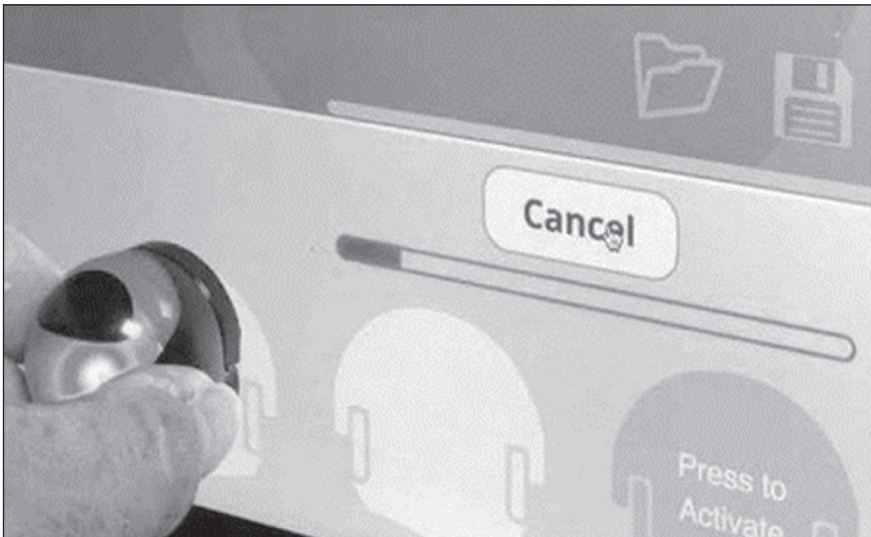
Fig. 2. Process of loading the programme code into the robot (Czakóová et al., 2023)
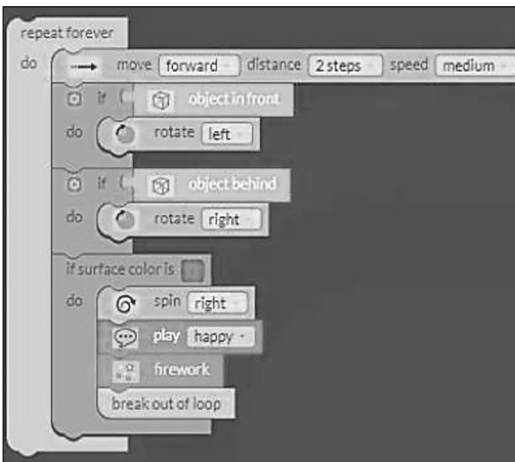
Fig. 3. Programming in level 3 – use of block-based commands (Czakóová et al., 2023)

Description of project-work: Learners are divided into smaller groups (it is recommended to create heterogeneous groups in terms of knowledge level). The groups work on a given task (problem). The aim is to provide a correct algorithm written by block-based commands for the robot. In order to complete the task successfully, the programme code must be loaded into the robot device (Figure 2 illustrates how this is done).

Learners present the solution as a project in the end. Figure 3 illustrates the solution for the next task description. "Guide the Ozobot with your hands to reach the specified destination (blue finish line)! Once it's done, let the robot sing while flashing!" (Czakóová et al., 2023)

Based on our rich practical experience, we recommend other programmable robots for creating projects within the programming content (Table 2).

Tab. 2. Other recommended programmable robots for project work.

	Grades 3 and 4 of primary school	Grades 5 and 6 of primary school	Grades 7 and 8 of primary school	Grade 1 of secondary school (high school)
Programme structures to control the robot	– Series of simple commands – Sequences.	+ For loop.	+ Variables. + for-Loop and conditions.	+ While loop. + Do-While loop. + Procedures and Functions. + External input and output data processing.
Dash robot application to use to control the robot	– Go application.	– Wonder application.	– Blockly application.	– Blockly application.
Edison application to use to control the robot	– EdBlocks application. – Barcodes for interaction.	– EdWare application.	– EdScratch application.	– EdScratch and EdPy application.

3. Possibilities of inclusive education in 3D model processing

The attractive and illustrative representation of spatial objects as well as the possibility of their simple manipulation support and increase learners' interest in Informatics and computer graphics. Modern methods and digital technologies are useful and helpful in solving many tasks in this area. Students learn by actively participating in solving partial problems, which represents a real problem from everyday life (Nagy et al., 2021).

A very important aspect is that learners work in groups to solve a project. Activating methods create space for the modern constructivist learning process and develop the ability to collaborate. Students develop critical thinking and decision-making as well as creativity and other higher cognitive functions. Above all, they develop their cooperation and communication skills (Czakóová & Takáč, 2020).

In the next chapter, we present an activity on image processing and creating a real model.

3.1. Student Activity on Creating a Real Model

Teaching method: *project based learning.*
Organizational form of education: *teamwork* (it develops joyful and stress-free collaboration).
Didactic tools: small object, camera (mobile), Pix4Dmapper Pro (software for creating a 3D model, computer (requirements: 12 core processor, 32 GB RAM).
Final product: *3D model of a selected real object* – in a digital form.
End result presentation: presentation of the created 3D model in a digital form.
Teaching time length: 4 lessons (2 x 90 minutes).
Description of object capturing (first working phase – 2 lessons): At first, learners need to capture (a simple square) object by creating a video at a slow pace. During the shooting session, we advise setting the autofocus as well as image stabilization. That solidly eliminates distortions, at least the worst ones. The object must be visible from all sides while capturing. We can move around the object from the side and from the top at an angle of 45 degrees (Czakóová & Takáč, 2020).
Description of 3D model creating (second working phase – 2 lessons): In the following work phase, learners need to use the appropriate software to create a 3D model of the captured small object. Learners need to import the video to the software (Pix4Dmapper Pro) and set a number of images which the software selects

Fig. 4. A model created from 250 photos (on the left) and the modified model
(on the right) (Czakóová & Takáč, 2020)

from the video automatically based on the fps. The software makes Point Clouds from Tie Points. The model of the object is prepared by using Triangle mashes. To be perfect, it often needs to be adjusted by manual intervention (via removing the Tie Points and re-mashing). It must be pointed out that significant trimming of Tie Points can lead to the loss of the integrity of the object (Czakóová & Takáč, 2020). Our practical experiences show that for smaller objects (like a size of a small box) it is sufficient to set the number of photos in the range of 500-250 to ensure good quality, and still the time for image processing will not take more than 80 minutes. (Czakóová & Takáč, 2020)

Conclusion

The paper offers a possible solution for teaching programming and 3D model processing to learners in favour of inclusive Informatics education. The recommended programming activities in this paper are based on our rich experiences from teaching practice. Colour-based and block-based programming introduces algorithmic thinking to learners and shows how to solve complex (STEAM) problems via experiential learning. While learners are playing with a robot, the difficult side of programming is hidden from them. In addition, we shared our positive experiences with students' activities on image processing. Learners are motivated by the project from real life and work in groups. During the activities, they have space for cooperation and collaboration. Providing space for visual feedback during interactive programming and 3D model processing highly supports mastering the curriculum.

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Forms of otherness

Erika BERTÓK[13]

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the forms of otherness and its aim is to introduce and examine the concept of othering. The word othering describes the process of how someone recognises and labels someone else as different. There are several forms of otherness such as race, gender or religion. Segregating people by a judgemental view is the part of everyday life. The paper examines how the forms and acceptance of otherness influence a person's identity. The first part of the paper contains the introduction, description and analysis of the forms of otherness. The investigation of the categories of otherness also contains a description of various types of othering and it deals with the notion of belonging – the opposite of otherness. The second part of the paper examines some types and examples of otherness and it highlights the reasons why it is important to deal with this topic.

Keywords: otherness, race, gender, religion, segregation

Introduction

To understand identity formation, cultural interactions or social dynamics, it is crucial to understand the concept of otherness. The notion of "the other" is genuinely rooted in different disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and even literature. The treatment and perception of a person or a group is radically different from how individuals understand themselves.

Historically, otherness has been a form for identifying boundaries among groups of people. It was not only connected with the borders set by it, it also represented how otherness was used to legalize social hierarchies and power imbalances. The various forms of otherness include racial and ethnic otherness, gender and

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sexual otherness, disability and health-related otherness, religious otherness, socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic otherness. Perhaps, the most recognizable form of otherness in today's society is racial and ethnic otherness. This form of otherness has historically led to racism, social segregation and ethnic cleansing in some places. Differences in physical characteristics such as skin colour or cultural habits could lead to an 'us against them' mentality. Social norms and expectations are the base of gender and sexual otherness. Gender roles and sexual orientation in modern society are also very sensitive questions. The members of the LGBTQIA+ community fight not only for acceptance of equal rights, but also the elimination of their marginalized positions. Those living with some kind of physical or mental disabilities or some kind of a health condition, often face discriminatory societal norms that prioritise able-bodied individuals. The marginalization of individuals living with disabilities limit their opportunities to blend into employment practices.

Religious otherness includes the differentiation of individuals based on their religious beliefs. Religious otherness is many times connected with a kind of demonization of individuals or groups, while it is also fuelled by historical conflicts.

Huge differences between the wealthy and the poor can lead to the concept of socioeconomic otherness. It is based on the differences in social classes and economical status that maintain social inequality. When differences in language, traditions or culture are emphasized, it leads to cultural and linguistic otherness. Many refugees and immigrants are exposed to the dangers of this type of otherness and discrimination and it can quickly lead to loss of identity or intergenerational problems in families.

The present paper explores the multiple forms of otherness. It examines how they are manifested in society, and their implication on individual and collective identities are outlined.

1. Forms of otherness

The concept of otherness refers to the understanding, recognition or approach of an individual or a group as different from others or the majority. Otherness can be used as a tool for setting boundaries between groups of people and individuals. However, these invisible boundaries can have a crucial effect not only on those who are considered as 'others' but also on people who maintain the idea and define the principles of otherness. People who are marginalized by the idea of otherness live through many different feelings, day by day. Isolation is one of the most

important factors that can lead to depression and even suicidal thoughts. People who are perceived as 'others' can experience identity crises and it is common for them to try to suppress their true selves. Without the help of their loved ones, families and friends or professional help, many individuals can feel lost, which can lead to fatal consequences such as complete isolation from society, living a harmful lifestyle (using alcohol or drugs), clinical depression or even suicide (Kristeva, 2024: 178-180). People who perceive others as different highly contribute to social conflicts and disintegration. This kind of attitude towards people that are seen as 'others' is based on lack of understanding and empathy. To live in a tolerant and well-functioning society, where lots of people come from different backgrounds with different beliefs or sexual orientation, it is vital to promote accepting others regardless of whether differences are understood or not. Approaching others with tolerance can save us many negative thoughts and emotions, while it can also save lives in extreme cases; (Levinas, 1987: 39-44).

The concept of 'otherness' has always been a part of human society. Throughout history, societies have continually strived to define themselves but the forms of this varied fundamentally across different historical periods and cultures based on distinct political and social conditions. The ancient Greeks and Romans differentiated themselves by geographical and cultural differences. They categorized different tribes as 'barbarians', which was based on the belief in the superiority of their culture, laws and governance. Religious otherness also had a significant role in ancient civilizations. Some cultures with polytheistic beliefs placed themselves higher than the groups practicing monotheism (ancient Egyptians and the Roman Empire are a good example of this) (Levinas, 1987: 153-155). The medieval period is defined by conflicts connected with religious otherness. Although, mostly these centred on the disagreements between Christians and Muslims, the social exclusion of Jews in the Middle Ages must not be forgotten. Due to their religious otherness, the Jewish community was the subject of violence and prejudices because of which they became marginalized. Strict class structure and hierarchical system based on the difference of serfs, peasants and nobility also questioned the worth of individuals and created social and economic otherness. European colonization and the Industrial Revolution introduced an advanced aspect of racial and cultural otherness in almost every continent (the slave trade of Africans, and forcing Native American tribes to move to reservations and then massacring them are just some examples of dehumanization and racial superiority). During the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, due to the rise of national identity and nationalisation, ethnic minorities and immigrants that could not fit in the national norms were

often subjects of exclusion or marginalization. The pseudoscientific theories of race led to racism on a scale never seen before (systematic racism toward African Americans in the USA must be mentioned here, which lead to much violence and segregation). Today, the issues of race, gender, sexuality and religion are brought closer to us through globalization and global migration. Social movements dealing with civil rights, LGBTQIA+ rights or the rights of women have sought to challenge norms and the structures and definitions of otherness and emphasize the value and importance of diversity (Levinas, 1987: 153-155).

1.1. Racial and ethnic otherness

Racial and ethnic otherness are concepts that focus on the differences between various racial and ethnic groups. Those who are perceived as 'others' have often been the targets of discrimination or marginalization. The roots of discrimination based on racial and ethnic otherness are deeply embedded in history. The colonisation of non-European geographical locations and areas carried the domination of European people above other cultural and racial societies. Classifications that were based on perceived racial and cultural differences were used to justify this dominance. Just to mention a few examples, the systematic violence and racism towards Native Americans and African Americans in the USA from colonisation, through slavery and enforcing people into reservations, until today sets a rigid racial hierarchy in American society. European history also includes a long list of similar incidents and events.

Discrimination and prejudices are often formed about various racial and ethnic groups as a manifestation of stereotypes. Another form of discrimination is structural inequality that affects mostly racial and ethnic or cultural minorities in societies. These inequalities can be present not only in employment but also in education and housing, and in extreme cases in healthcare as well. The so-called Critical Race Theory (CRT) suggests that prejudice and racism are embedded in laws and policies rather than in individuals themselves. CRT explores the ways how racial categories are socially maintained through legal, political and economic systems of society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2021). Postcolonial Theory emphasizes that colonialism is in fact the shaper of ethnic and racial stereotypes. Scholars examining this topic are convinced that through history European societies marginalized non-European cultures and they criticize their toxic approach towards them (Elam, 2019).

The lack of positive representation and underrepresentation of racial and ethnic groups in the media can reinforce harmful stereotypes. Negative or zero portrayal of these groups in the media plays a significant role in marginalizing them.

To promote inclusion and equality, comprehensive policy changes and antidiscrimination law are required and are essential for promoting social justice. A society that values the diversity of its members regardless of racial, ethnic or cultural background, understands that promoting equity policies is vital in order to combat inequalities and injustices. Racial and ethnic otherness is a complex issue and discrimination based on these must be eliminated completely in contemporary society.

1.2. Gender and sexual otherness

Gender and sexuality otherness may be one of the most critical crucial topics in contemporary socio-cultural discourse. Gender and sexuality otherness not only challenge conventional norms, they also provide a more inclusive understanding of diversity.

In social and cultural constructs, gender is associated with being male, female or non-binary. Identities that deviate from the binary understanding (being male or female) is what defines gender otherness. The idea of sexuality includes a range of attractions and identities that relate to someone's sexual and romantic emotions. Gender and sexuality otherness include LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, etc.) identities, but are not limited only to these. Societies have always had some kind of approach towards individuals who deviated from heterosexual and cisgender norms. Certain forms of homosexual relationships and gender variance were historically accepted, while others were rejected.

In the shape of personal and collective identities, gender and sexuality otherness play a crucial role. The fear of discrimination, rejection and homophobia/transphobia make the process of coming out (the term describes the process when an individual confesses about their gender and sexuality otherness) way harder than it should be for individuals living with this type of otherness. For the members of the LGBTQIA+ community, the process of coming out is crucial not only for identity formation, but also for their lifestyle in general. This process also cherishes self-acceptance and fosters a sense of community belonging. Individuals of gender and sexuality otherness can find a more supportive environment in several ways.

Online platforms and communities offer these individuals help and support. Online space and supporting communities are vital for them in order to feel seen, be understood and not isolated (Beasley, 2005: 12-14).

The legal recognition of LGBTQIA+ rights have been a significant question globally because many of the topics raised challenge the traditional structures of heteronormativity and patriarchy.

Gender and sexuality otherness definitely challenge societal norms and expand the understanding of human diversity. The recognition of the rights of individuals with such type of otherness is a key step towards a world where everyone can feel seen and accepted, regardless of their gender or sexuality preferences, where everyone can live without fear and prejudice (Beasley, 2005: 117-127).

1.3. Disability and health otherness

Disability and health otherness involves disabilities and certain kinds of physical, mental or chronic health conditions. However, this type of otherness is rather built by policies or societal attitudes. Throughout history from the time of ancient societies, people living with disabilities were not only marginalized but often left to die. Children born with clearly visible physical disabilities were often left alone or even killed, because they were considered as useless for families and societies. Many times, people born with disabilities were also viewed as the manifestation of unholy display. The lucky ones who made through childhood and lived through adulthood, were fully excluded from society. The rise of medical science during the Enlightenment outlined disabilities as something that needs to be cured. Civil rights movements came hand in hand with the disability rights movement in the middle of the twentieth century. The integration of disabled people into society became the central part of this (Katsui and Shuaib, 2020: 24-46).

There are a few theoretical frameworks that explain disability and health otherness. The biopsychosocial model acknowledges that health and disabilities are influenced by medical factors, individual experiences and social factors. It accommodates biological, psychological and social factors in understanding this type of otherness (Marschall, 2023). The social model of disability indicates, that disability comes not only from the impairment (physical or mental barriers) itself but societal limitations and attitudes (Marschall, 2023). Intersectionality focuses on how marginalization and discrimination affect the individual's experiences. This concept was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (Marschall, 2023).

Inequalities and the discrimination of people living with disabilities or certain health conditions are present in almost every area of life including education, housing, employment or healthcare. Compared to able employees, individuals living with disabilities are more likely to experience unemployment or underemployment (Katsui and Shuaib, 2020: 24-46). People living with this type of otherness are often perceived as helpless or dependent, and they can easily become the centre of pity. People living with chronic health conditions live in an even bigger social exclusion and discrimination. The portrayal of people living with disabilities in the media has a significant role in broadcasting images that combat stereotypes.

International efforts emphasize the promotion of equal rights and the inclusion of disabled people. By respecting the diversity of individuals and promoting inclusive policies, disability and health otherness can be understood more. (Katsui and Shuaib, 2020: 24-46, 145-163).

1.4. Religious otherness

Religious otherness refers to the differentiation and many times marginalization of individuals or groups based on their religious beliefs or religious practices. It is often connected with social, political, and economic exclusion and discrimination. Violence is often used against those whose religion does not comply with the majority. The spread of world religions throughout history together with the development of societies resulted in the marginalization of certain religious groups not falling under dominant religions. There are several examples of how polytheistic religious groups shifted towards monotheism, and how different groups treated each other after the emerging of monotheistic faith (the ascension of Christianity, Islam, the Reformation movement, the Crusades and the Inquisition are perfect examples here).

Belonging to certain groups including religious groups forms individual identity. This group membership can lead to in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination. Social Identity Theory provides a structure for understanding how this religious otherness works (Ellemers, 2017). Postcolonial Theory highlights that religious otherness is deeply rooted in colonial histories and criticizes the discrimination of non-Christian religions through history (Elam, 2019).

The discrimination of various religious groups is common in contemporary societies. Many religious groups and individuals face violence and hate crimes due to their religion. Religious otherness many times goes hand in hand with systemic

violence such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. Stereotypes of religious groups can lead to prejudiced attitudes. To promote religious freedom, nations and states need to follow certain laws and policies. Anti-discrimination policies may help to eliminate religious discrimination in various areas such as employment or education. To protect religious diversity, global cooperation is needed. The promotion of tolerance is crucial, and addressing all the challenges by international efforts may be the key to weaken the hate towards different religious groups (Levinas, 1987: 166-173).

1.5. Socioeconomic otherness

The differentiation of individuals or groups based on their economic status, occupation or education is the leading principle of socioeconomic otherness. People and societies have arranged themselves around wealth and power. Rigid class structures in Europe throughout history divided populations into different groups such as nobility, the clergy or peasants. This social, political and economic separation led to certain limitations for different groups. Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution led to the emergence of new economic classes, such as the working class or the bourgeoisie. All these above-mentioned phenomena helped the rise of socioeconomic otherness.

Some ideologies reinforced socioeconomic otherness. Socioeconomic inequalities are examined by Social Reproduction Theory. The role of social institutions like family and education are highlighted as an individual's socioeconomic status is based on quality education. Marxist Theory focuses on class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. According to this theory, economic inequality and socioeconomic otherness are formed by the capitalist system (Bhattacharya, 2013). Limited access to opportunities and resources for people of lower socioeconomic background results in inequalities in education and employment. From this perspective, the access to quality healthcare is cumbersome due to the aggravating factors, such as high costs in healthcare, lack of insurance coverage or inaccessible services. In many countries, people considered as socioeconomic 'others' start with a disadvantage in public health services, and the private sector is unreachable for these groups. Housing discrimination and segregation is also a very up to date phenomena nowadays due to the same disadvantages.

For the reduction of socioeconomic disparities, societies need to challenge negative stereotypes and raise awareness on this issue. Promoting positive representation of this kind of diversity in education, policies and the media may be the key in the battle.

1.6. Cultural and linguistic otherness

Cultural and linguistic otherness is based on cultural practices, languages and values, factors that are often the reason of marginalizing and discriminating certain groups. Its deep historical roots have been implanted through colonization, migration and globalization. A large sphere of aspects is encompassed here including traditions, language, ethnicity and social norms. The identity of individuals and groups together with intergroup relations, are formed by cultural and linguistic otherness. Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of Cultural Hegemony. It refers to the dominance of one cultural group above others, and to how these dominant cultures dictate their norms, values and languages on the subordinate groups. This hegemony can lead to discrimination and the marginalization of other cultural groups (Gramsci quoted in: Flores & Rosa, 2017: 621-647). Individuals of different minority cultural and linguistic backgrounds often face barriers in education and employment because of their lack of proficiency in the dominant language. This can limit their access to get into a good school or to get a quality job, which can result in unemployment and economic marginalization.

The promotion of cultural and linguistic inclusion challenges stereotypes and disparities. Societies need to be more respectful and inclusive towards different cultural and linguistic groups in order to combat and eliminate discrimination (Flores & Rosa, 2017: 621-647).

2. Types and examples of otherness in specific contexts

The concept of otherness is both a global and an individual issue. Forms of otherness appear in various fields of life and contexts. Education has a crucial role in creating a non-discriminative environment and attitudes.

2.1. Otherness in education

Education plays an important role in dealing with the forms of otherness. To foster a greater understanding and respect toward different groups of people, whether they are perceived as 'others' by their race, culture, gender, sexuality or disabilities, it is crucial to educate young people to raise awareness of these issues. To create a more tolerant environment, the promotion of diversity and the education of the future generation is crucial. People who belong to marginalized groups may face a high level of discrimination. Not to mention those individuals who belong to

multiple marginalized groups. They even face more intensive discrimination. The judgment and discrimination towards these individuals multiply and handling these problems significantly depends on how these topics were treated in schools. The years spent in school are crucial in personality development. People living with disabilities and chronic health conditions many times face barriers in education as well. Inaccessible classrooms can limit their academic career. Educational initiatives and programmes that promote understanding disability and health conditions help to develop a more tolerant society.

Socioeconomic status goes hand in hand with quality education. Wealthier individuals are able to afford better educational opportunities. Of course, there are also some exceptions when students and individuals with outstanding academic or sports performance receive a partial or full scholarship. Also, schools in low-income locations many times lack adequate resources and funding or qualified teachers. This can lead to limited opportunities for students and lower educational outcomes.

Teaching about different religions is also an important step on the road of acceptance. Promoting religious tolerance and the fight against negative stereotypes is the key in the reduction of prejudice. To foster a greater understanding, schools need to introduce programmes that encourage interfaith dialogues. Students from different language groups whose mother tongue is different than the dominant language face many educational barriers. Individuals from different cultural and linguistic background may have difficulties accessing quality education due to language differences and the preference of dominant language over others in educational systems. This can not only marginalize students but also leads to lower educational attainment and outcomes (Banks, 2020: 3-6, 14-19).

It can be claimed that education plays a huge role, if not the biggest, in the acceptance of otherness. To teach children and youngsters about the recognition and acceptance of others in the way they are, without any prejudice and discrimination, may be the key factor in the reduction of hate and violence in modern societies.

2.2. The notion of belonging

The notion of belonging is often said to be the opposite of otherness. When individuals are not afraid of showing who they are, when they feel secure and accepted, that is when belonging takes place.

When individuals can feel and believe that they fit in and are accepted by certain groups, their personal beliefs and self-esteem rise to a higher level, while their work shows a positive progress as well. The director of the Achievers Workforce

Institute, David Bator shares five factors that need to be fostered so that people feel belonging. The five factors are the following: being welcome, known, included, supported and connected. All these factors need to be considered as equal in order to rise the sense of belonging in individuals and groups (Bator quoted in: Myers, 2003: 135-155). Joseph Myers outlines four types of belonging. These types are practically spaces in which individuals have a sense of belonging: public, social, personal and intimate. An individual can feel seen and they can feel like they truly belong only if they conquer all four types of belonging (Myers, 2003: 135-155). According to the theory of Lee and Robins, the need to belong includes a psychological experience of social connectedness and it is acquired by sharing emotions from a very young age until maturity. Belonging is a very subjective emotion of connection to individuals or groups. A huge barrier of this is when someone wants to fit in instead of just accept themselves in the way they are. (Lee and Robins quoted in: Pardede et al., 2021).

Belonging is highly needed for individuals to feel safe and accepted in society. People perform best when they feel welcome and supported by other people or groups, especially by those they want to belong in.

Conclusion

Otherness has been a central factor in defining structures in communities and relationship among people. Throughout history, from ancient religious and cultural differences to modern national, racial and gender dissimilarities, the notion of otherness has been the part of both public and private discussions. Otherness is manifested in a variety of forms including racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic otherness. Concepts connected with these categories are deeply planted in human societies. To understand otherness and foster a more empathetic worldview, it is vital to celebrate diversity rather than marginalize individuals and groups of people. It is necessary to talk about the various forms of otherness not only with individuals but also in different groups. Education has a vital role in challenging boundaries.

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Differentiation based on individual strengths in religious education with the help of multiple intelligences theory

Lilla SZÉNÁSI[14]

ABSTRACT

Constructive pedagogy believes that every child has strengths in a number of areas while performing less well in others. It is the teacher's responsibility to find these strengths in the case of each child, i.e. the areas on which they can build the most. The teacher of religion is no exception. Nonetheless, as a result of information and communication technology used in the twenty-first century, changes have occurred in the development of the nervous system of the currently growing generation, which also affects abilities. All these pose a challenge to the teacher of religion and to the minister. Some methods that had worked well for decades do not work so efficiently anymore. For this reason, in this paper Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is presented to highlight and characterise differentiation from a pedagogical point of view, and examine how we can achieve this in religious education with the help of multiple intelligences theory building on the individual strengths of learners. This theory can help us to motivate learners properly in religion classes and to be effective in our work.

Keywords: religious education, differentiation, Howard Gardner, multiple intelligences, individual strengths

Introduction

Both in education and in our personal lives, we are increasingly confronted with the assertion that today's young people are very different from previous generations. There is nothing surprising in this statement, which has been true

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in every age. However, the fact is that today's generation of young people has specific characteristics that must be taken into account in order to ensure effective education and training. Some methods that worked well for decades are no longer effective for them. How, then, can we be successful with them? Which method can be effective in teaching them? How can we make the lesson learner-centred focusing and building on individual strengths?

The main aim of this paper is to explore possible ways of doing this. It will, therefore, first address the concept of intelligence and highlight the many ways in which researchers have tried to understand it and why it has been considered important to measure intelligence. It describes Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which is an excellent way of understanding learners' strengths and thus differentiating on the basis of these strengths. The paper provides practical examples of differentiation in the faith classroom using the theory of multiple intelligences.

1. The concept of intelligence

Since the nineteenth century, cognitive ability, or intelligence as it is known in the literature, has been one of the most researched areas of modern psychology. Sternberg concluded that since researchers cannot see the nature of intelligence as the object of their research, they cannot look at it directly (Sternberg, 1990). In general, however, it is understood as "a person's general ability to understand and comprehend"[15] (Kollár & Szabó, 2004: 598). Intellectual ability consists of learning, memory and purposeful use. Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, memory is the storage of knowledge, and purposeful use is the way in which a person can use this knowledge in different areas of life.

Individual differences in intellectual ability were first explored and measured by Sir Francis Galton. Based on Galton's principles, James Cattell constructed the first intelligence test. This test was largely based on the accuracy of perception (Révész, 1995).

The first intelligence scale was developed in Paris in 1905 by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon to measure which children were likely to succeed in school and which were likely to fail. Lewis Terman adapted this test in the 1930s, introducing

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15   The author's own translation.

the concept of intelligence quotient. This test is known as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test and is, along with the Wechsler Intelligence Scale, the most widely used test for measuring children's intelligence.

There are two main schools of thought on intelligence, namely the singularist and the pluralist approach. According to the singularist approach, there is general intelligence, the so-called g-factor. This is an ability that determines all our intellectual abilities. According to the pluralist approach, however, the g-factor is only secondary (Dezső, 2014; Kerékgyártó, 2012).

Sternberg saw that exploring the nature of intelligence could be helped by looking for metaphors that would help to articulate what it is. He mentions seven such metaphors, which will be briefly summarized below, based on Cianciolo and Sternberg's study.

Geographic metaphor. A geographical map provides information about the most important features of a region, which are the major cities, where there are bodies of water, and where the political boundaries are. In the context of intelligence theories, the geographical metaphor manifests itself as the human mind embodying the map. Many modern theories of geographic intelligence have paid attention to basic intellectual abilities, the so called ability factors, which enable humans to do many intelligent things. The main differences in the various theories of geographic intelligence can be defined in terms of the number of ability factors and individual factors. Theories based on the geographical metaphor show the different abilities that can be measured by tests and the abilities that individual people possess. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Computational metaphor. Computer theories of intelligence use the computer as a metaphor to explain what intelligence is. The terms they use such as information processing, describe what goes on in the mind when a person is engaged in intellectual activities. They look at why people's intelligence is different or similar. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Biological metaphor. It primarily seeks answers to questions why people's intelligence differs and how intelligence works in humans. It looks for answers in the biology of the brain. It also tries to assess how different intelligent behaviours can be detected in the human brain. The results can help us understand intelligent behaviour that manifests itself outside the test situation (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Epistemological metaphor. Epistemology is a formal theory of knowledge – its nature, its limitations and its validity. Theories of this type examine how intelligence develops through the development of an individual's thinking. The

epistemology of intelligence is based on the work of psychologist Jean Piaget, who wanted to understand how children acquire logical thinking and scientific knowledge. Piaget's theories and those of his followers played a key role in focusing on the development of intelligent behaviour. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Sociological metaphor. Sociological metaphor focuses on the impact of society on intelligence. This theory draws attention to the fact that everyone is a collaborator in the development of human intelligence. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Anthropological metaphor. Anthropology's concept of intelligence, looking at it from the centre of culture, seeks to answer this question of what it means to be intelligent. The role of culture is seen as crucial. This is because different cultures approach the question of intelligence in a culture-specific way. Thus, the anthropological metaphor is concerned with examining how cultural differences prevail, since this allows a fair measurement of intelligence and the discovery of general truths about the nature of intelligence. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Systems metaphor. A system is made up of multiple complex parts, and to work successfully, these parts must work together in harmony. Systems theory sees intelligence as multiple interrelated parts, i.e. multiple intelligence. However, it assumes a complex mutual interaction of parts to successfully perform life tasks. (Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004)

Sternberg integrated geographic, computational and anthropological metaphors in his theory of the three faculties of successful intelligence. He defines successful intelligence as the balance of analytical (analytic), creative, and practical skills to achieve success in a sociocultural context (Sternberg, 1990).

2. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences

In education, students are assessed primarily along the singularist concept of intelligence, but from a pedagogical point of view, it is worth considering a pluralist approach.

Howard Gardner is a prominent and well-known exponent of pluralism, who questions general intelligence. His theory is controversial among psychometricians, but practising educators are using it. Gardner's starting point is that every human being strives to understand the events of the world and the things around him/her, by which s/he can give meaning to them and to his/her own life. However, since each person has different gifts, this also happens in different ways. Gardner calls these gifts talents or abilities, but for the sake of the literature he uses the term intelligence to

describe them (Gardner, 2012). He published his theory in 1983 in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, based on extensive studies of the brain. He emphasizes the possibility of intelligences that cannot be described by a single concept. He puts the types of intelligences into the following system:

- *Linguistic Intelligence.* It includes fluency in both oral and written language, as well as sensitivity to various linguistic subtleties and word order. People with strong linguistic intelligence like to read, write and tell stories. This intelligence is present in everyone to some degree.

- *Logical – Mathematical Intelligence.* It is related to the ability to reason deductively and inductively, and to understand abstract systems and relationships. A person with this intelligence is characterised by a well-developed ability to organise and solve problems. They have a reflective mind and ask logical questions.

- *Spatial Intelligence.* It involves extraordinary visual skills and imagination. People with this intelligence enjoy presenting information in a concrete, visual form. They are good with graphs, diagrams and maps. They like puzzles and mazes.

- *Musical Intelligence.* It not only assumes that the person enjoys music, but also that s/he can use different rhythms, tones, musical elements and vocals in a masterly way. They are aware of the sounds around them and are excellent players of one or more instruments. (Gardner links this with linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. Gardner, 2012).

- *Bodily – Kinaesthetic Intelligence.* These individuals like to move, play, do different physical activities. They understand and read touch and non-verbal signals.

- *Intrapersonal Intelligence.* This is the ability of a person to understand, perceive and control their own emotions and actions. They have a strong sense of self-awareness, are confident and work well on their own. They are also good at assessing their strengths and abilities in public.

- *Interpersonal Intelligence.* These individuals can interact effectively with others because they can sense and respond to other people's moods, feelings, motivations and orientations. They can work well in cooperative groups, have developed leadership skills, and are skilled in organisation, communication and negotiation.

- *Naturalist Intelligence*. They are passionate about nature. They see the difference in the natural world and how nature and civilisation interact (Gardner, 2012).

Gardner explains that intelligence types are concentrated in different areas of the brain, but these areas are interconnected so that one area builds on another, but can also function independently. And under the right conditions, these areas can even be developed. He therefore sees each type of intelligence as dependent on a combination of three factors:

- "innate biological brain structures,
- the form of intelligence emphasised by culture,
- the extent to which the child receives thoughtful education and related activities appropriate to the child's intelligence"[16] (Cole & Cole, 2003: 533).

This assumes that everyone has the types of intelligence defined at a certain level. "The social payoff of Gardner's interpretation of intelligence is that optimally if everyone is trained according to their own intelligence profile, each individual supports his or her community to the maximum of his or her own strengths"[17] (Dezső, 2015: 37).

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is based on three basic principles. The first of these is that there is no single intelligence, but rather several distinct types of intelligences, each operating according to its own laws. The second principle is that these types of intelligence are separate and independent of each other, so the level of ability shown in one says nothing about the other. And the third principle is that although these intelligence types are independent of each other, there is interaction between them. In most cases, more than one intelligence type is needed to solve a problem.

Gardner also distinguishes between existential, moral and spiritual intelligence types in addition to the eight basic types, but he has only made references to these (Smith, 2002, 2008).

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16 The author's own translation.
17 The author's own translation.

3. Differentiation

Learners have individual differences that are reflected in their attitudes to learning, their motivation, the way they learn and, last but not least, their achievements. These differences are the result of biological, psychological and social factors and have a significant impact on their personal development.

The different personality traits present a double challenge for the teacher: firstly, to get to know the learner's personality and, on secondly, to develop the learner's skills in an optimal way, taking this personality into account. In addition, it everyone must be allowed to acquire literacy up to the upper limit of his/her abilities, while respecting differences. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that the teacher's learning management activity does not have the same effect on all learners, and that it is not possible to achieve a uniform basic level of literacy by teaching the same content to all learners in the same way and in the same circumstances. The way to achieve a uniform basic literacy is to take maximum account of individual differences. Differentiation is a means to achieve this (Lappints, 2001).

Differentiation assumes that the teacher has assessed and understood the characteristics and individual differences of the students. This understanding can be influenced by a number of factors. It is not the same whether it is a lower-grade class teacher or an upper-grade teacher who is trying to get to know the learners. In the first case, it is easier for the teacher to observe the pupils in every lesson and in every situation, and to form an opinion about them on that basis. In the case of a specialist teacher, the fact that s/he only spends one or two hours a week with the learners makes it difficult to get to know them and to form an objective picture.

3.1. Differentiation in education

Based on literature, three levels of differentiation can be distinguished:
1. differentiation at school system level
2. differentiation at class level
3. differentiation in the educational process

The first two levels are also referred to as external differentiation, while the third level is also referred to as internal or didactic differentiation. We will now focus on didactic differentiation.

One way of didactic differentiation is the so-called latent differentiation. In this case, the teacher, in our case the catechist, involuntarily forms hidden groups through his/her interactions, prior expectations and behaviour. This also includes spontaneous differentiation, which is often not conscious, but rather arises from love of children and pedagogical intuition.

Differentiation can also be based on performance. In this case, the teacher or catechist will organise groups of learners within the class according to their performance. In this way, a group is made up of pupils of the same ability. This type of differentiation is also called flexible differentiation.

Differentiation also gives scope for grouping students by interest or aptitude. In this case, learners can choose their own subject, subject area or literacy pathway. This type of differentiation is particularly important in the field of talent management (Riedl, 2008).

Whatever type of differentiation the teacher uses, it is important to see students as partners in the learning situation. Make them feel that they are largely dependent on them to acquire knowledge. This, of course, requires a change of perspective, since in traditional education the teacher's task is to organise teaching, while the learner is merely the object of the process (Lányi, 2008; Lappints, 2001).

One possible way of didactic differentiation is when the teacher differentiates the curriculum according to the students' level of thinking. In this case, differentiation can be based on Bloom's cognitive levels on the one hand, and on some of the intelligence domains of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences on the other. Didactic differentiation, therefore, refers to "personalised activities in which all students learn the same concepts and skills, but with different levels of support, challenge and complexity of tasks"[18] (Good & Brophy, 2008: 101-102).

3.2. Differentiation in faith education using the theory of multiple intelligences

In exploring different aspects of understanding, Gardner also touches on learning theories. He argues that it is important that the material in the curriculum is mastered by all, but distances himself from the traditional form of education where there is only one way to master the material (Gardner, 2012). To avoid the latter, he points out that there are three ways in which teachers can put his theory into practice:

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18   The author's own translation.

"a, to develop children's skills and abilities;

b, approach a concept, subject or discipline in different ways;

c, personalising education by taking individual differences seriously"[19] (Nicholson-Nelson, 2007: 13).

Theory is an excellent tool for motivating students in religious education as well as for learning unfamiliar pieces of information and new materials. By focusing on their strengths, we can deliver and they can receive the message of the Bible in different ways, but in ways that are closest to them.

The following is an overview of the learning styles that are closest to each type of intelligence and how they can be built upon in catechesis.

Linguistic Intelligence – They learn most by reading, listening to and visually memorising words, listening to lectures, taking notes, speaking and debating. They can use words to illustrate, explain, name, and summarise.

They find the following things enjoyable in religious education:

- The catechist's choice of stories and curriculum.
- Telling the stories and lessons in their own words.
- Processing that requires written or oral work with words.
- Creative teaching of gold panning.
- Word and letter games related to the curriculum.

Those with Linguistic Intelligence can easily master the terms used in church language and the various Bible memorisations.

Logical – Mathematical Intelligence – They like asking questions, working with numbers, working with schemes and relationships, organise, categorise, working with abstract concepts. They have good problem-solving skills and are reflective thinkers. Since they are experimental, they like to test, plan, arrange, divide, map, evaluate and extract.

They value the following in religious education:

- Clear, logical structure and explanation of the course material.
- Jobs that require logical thinking.
- Discussion and argumentation tasks requiring critical thinking.

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19   The author's own translation.

- Creating timelines.
- Preparing a synopsis.
- Organising information and facts on a given topic.
- Making tables and diagrams to organise information.

Spatial Intelligence – They like to plan, draw, build, and create. They like working with pictures and colours. They are extremely imaginative, forming and creating models, using their inner vision. They are able to visualise information in concrete, visual forms.

They value the following in religious education:

- The illustration of stories and the curriculum.
- Visual illustrations to accompany stories and teaching materials.
- Films and presentations related to the stories and learning materials, and creating these themselves.
- Making maps related to a story.
- Making a poster on a specific theme.
- Imaginative exercises.

Musical Intelligence – They enjoy music, rhythm and melody. In addition to singing, they enjoy using different musical elements and playing instruments. They hum and like rhythm. They can interpret inner harmony and express emotions through sound.

They value the following in religious education:

- Learning hymnbooks, children's or youth songs related to stories and themes.
- In lower primary school, the accompaniment of songs with movements.
- Accompanying the songs with instruments.

Just as singing is a means of expressing communion with those present in the congregation, so it is a means of creating communion in the faith formation process. At the same time, the content is imperceptibly acquired along with the melody. Gardner links musical intelligence with linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence (Gardner, 2011).

Bodily – Kinaesthetic Intelligence – They process knowledge through their bodily senses. They can read touch, facial expressions, and non-verbal cues. They like to move, play, choreograph, and act. They have good motor skills. They learn mostly by doing.

They value the following in religious education:

- Tasks in which they can actively participate.
- Drama pedagogy in storytelling and processing.
- Situational tasks.
- Role-playing games.
- Pantomime.
- "Show-off" songs for lower primary children.

Intrapersonal Intelligence – They like to do tasks at their own pace, work individually, and reflect on things. These are people who meditate, reflect, and analyse. They are able to see through and control their own emotions and actions because they value themselves.

They value the following in religious education:

- Topics and tasks in which they have to express their own feelings, insights or experiences.
- Topics and tasks that make them express themselves.
- Tasks that require individual work.

Discipleship involves correct knowledge of oneself. Therefore, in faith formation, special attention should be paid to students with intrapersonal intelligence, because they are the ones who easily understand God's message and guidance in everyday life.

Interpersonal Intelligence – They like to learn by discussing with others, comparing. They are highly cooperative, like to deliberate, are able to perceive and respond to other people's motivations, moods, and feelings. They are empathetic and mediating people who strive to build and shape social relationships. Because of their ability to influence others, they are willing to mediate or intercede on behalf of others.

They value the following in religious education:

- Telling a story from more than one point of view, or from the point of view of more than one character.
- Acting out a story from several points of view or from the point of view of several characters.

- Introduction to the people connected to the story or theme.
- Situational games.
- Role plays.
- Tasks based on cooperation.

Natural Intelligence – They enjoy exploring the living world, learning about nature and its phenomena. They like to look for differences, classify, and record.

They value the following in religious education:

- Learning about and researching the flora and fauna of the Bible.
- The description and research of biblical geography.
- Analysis of passages from the Bible that contain examples of flora or fauna.
- Handicraft processing methods with natural materials.

Taking the above into account, we can agree with Szászi, who thinks that by using the theory of multiple intelligences in catechesis, we are pushing the boundaries, both from the point of view of the teacher and the student. We can introduce methods and ideas into faith education that are creative and speak directly to the learner (Szászi, 2012).

Conclusion

In this paper, which explored the possibilities of differentiation based on individual strengths in religious education using multiple intelligences, two main lines of understanding intelligence were presented briefly, and then differentiation was described from a pedagogical point of view. It can be stated that differentiation is in fact the choice of what and how we teach as teachers to meet the individual needs and interests of the learners. At the same time, attention must be paid to differences between learners and groups of learners. Several practical ideas were presented to demonstrate how multiple intelligences can be used to differentiate in faith education. The challenge for teachers is to make the curriculum attractive and understandable to as many learners as possible. Evidently, all teachers of religious education feel this challenge and want to meet it.

Keeping the theory of multiple intelligences in mind, alternating and complementing methods can effectively be used in religious education, these are methods that require logical-analytical-verbal thinking from students, upon which

the school system is based, and intuitive-intuitive-visual thinking that provides space to imagination and creativity. In this way, we can truly educate and teach children in a way that is right for them. In other words, we can bring God's message to them in the way that best arouses their interest and in the way that they can most naturally receive it.

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Language, culture and otherness in literature and linguistics

Exploring forms of otherness:
Female images in Dark Academia novels
and in campus novels

Cyntia KÁLMÁNOVÁ[20]

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the relation between campus novels and Dark Academia, a social media subculture and aesthetic that is fascinated by a glorified vision of literature, intellectualism and the classical arts. Dark Academia offers a highly idealised, picturesque portrayal of higher education and the academic, however, it is not merely an aesthetic devotion towards campus settings and archaic libraries, ink-stained pages of bound manuscripts, or the misty autumn atmosphere of a new academic semester. The objective of this paper is to outline the peculiarities of Dark Academia, to examine how it critiques the fundamental nature of academia, and to analyse how it alters gender representation, unrealistic societal expectations and explorations of personal identities. The paper explores female images and forms of otherness in selected novels categorised as 'campus novels' and 'Dark Academia'. The paper seeks to challenge the conventional and masculine narrative surrounding the depiction and construction of female identity in academic fiction.

Keywords: Dark Academia, campus novel, academic fiction, female identity, forms of otherness

Introduction

In the polished world of Dark Academia, an aesthetically pleasing realm of educational pursuits and elite academic settings, there is a dilemma that is expressed by Tartt in the following way: "Does such a thing as 'the fatal flaw,' that showy dark crack running down the middle of a life, exist outside literature?" (Tartt, 1993: 5).

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This question is what amuses the narrator of the novel *The Secret History*, Richard Papen, and puts his own and his friends' actions under the metaphorical lenses of a microscope, analysing and explaining – or rather, *mansplaining* their reasons and motives in committing a crime, "a morbid longing for the picturesque at all costs" (Tartt, 1993: 5).

One might wonder whether the narrative would have been different had the women themselves been the narrators of this story, tracing their own experiences, including the dangers, trauma, chaos and loss they had to endure. What other outcomes might occur if we could truly comprehend their identity, rather than merely assuming that this is how a woman should feel and act. These characters are continuously struggling against the dominant conceptualisation of the white, middle-class male experience in academia. They seek to fit into this role, while simultaneously trying to diverge from it.

The genre of campus novels typically presents a traditional image "that leads girls toward a denouement of domesticity within the marriage plot, rather than the opportunity to pursue intellectual or professional agendas" (De Vido, 2022: 361). In order to investigate further, the present study will initially examine the meanings of the terms 'campus' and 'academic novels', considering the frequency with which these terms are used interchangeably or in conjunction with a multitude of other terminology. This step is crucial to clarify the true essence of Dark Academia, a literary genre that has evolved from being a social media subculture, fascinated by a glorified vision of literature, intellectualism, and the classical arts.

This paper aims to investigate the origins of female representation in early academic fiction, to shed light on the shift that occurred in the portrayal of women in campus and academic novels as well as in Dark Academia. It takes into account the stereotypical and archetypical female figures in the academic genre with the intention of challenging their traditional status as minor characters in relation to the masculine narrative, and instead exploring their own, complex relation to the world.

1. The origins of Dark Academia

The concept of Dark Academia is relatively new in the field of literary aesthetics. The term gained popularity as a social media aesthetic and subculture, a phenomenon originating on the social media platform Tumblr in 2015. It was subsequently reintroduced to the literary world during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Being one of the earliest aesthetic movements, it had an immediate and profound

impact on other emerging subcultures, influencing their formation and evolution. Its influence can now be seen in shaping the path of numerous other subcultures, including the concept of various forms of the aesthetic of academia.

The term itself, however, is still in need of a clear definition. While celebrated as both a subgenre and a social media trend, as a literary genre it still lacks a polished description or set of rules defining what it is that makes a book classified as Dark Academia. At its heart, it centres on the idea of the search for ultimate knowledge, a higher power achieved by the few.

The starting point is the year of 2020, when a significant global shift occurred resulting in a rift that tore everything apart and left humanity facing uncertainty. Life suddenly ceased for a seemingly endless moment. The change was unexpected even in the academic sphere, with schools closing, teachers and students adjusting to new learning environments, while spending time off campus. The abrupt and sudden realisation that we were isolated from our daily habits and the feeling that we could no longer communicate with others in the same way as before began to impact society. During the period of lockdown, it became increasingly challenging to maintain meaningful face-to-face relationships, prompting a greater reliance on technology.

Nevertheless, in the chaotic readjustment to life during the global pandemic, some earlier elements of intellectual reconnection were rekindled. Members of an entire generation sought comfort in technology and the Internet to find meaning in the melancholy pattern of lockdown days. This resulted in the creation of various *aesthetics*, allowing almost everyone to find a platform and label that most closely matched their interests. One of these *aesthetics* was an online community that formed a close group of individuals engaged in the pursuit of personal identity and knowledge. These individuals saw the beauty and value of learning, the significance of academic dedication, an idealised version of self-learning and self-education within an online community, with the potential for new connections and the acquisition of knowledge. This led to the re-emergence of Dark Academia.

As an aesthetic, Dark Academia has a vivid image of what it stands for: it is that fascination with the classics, a scenic route through a dimly lit, narrow corridor, with walls that are cold to the touch, yet mesmerising in their intricate panelling, glass windows letting in only a hint of light, while footsteps echo in the depths of a solemn journey to reach an archaic library. Here, the scent of dust-covered and leather-bound manuscripts awaits to be read and consumed in search of academic validation. An obsession that neatly shapes the 'dark' into Dark Academia.

It originated as a purely aesthetic phenomenon, but has since become popularised for the picturesque representation of the academic. First appearing on Tumblr and then conquering image-centric platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest, this phenomenon is associated with pretty images of historic buildings of academic institutions, including those in Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard or Yale, interiors of hidden campus libraries, autumnal foliage, ancient Greek and Roman sculptures, classical antiquities, inkwells and quills, old manuscripts or typewriters on display, showcasing the appeal of a handwritten text in a digital age. Collectively, these elements create a so-called *'mood board'* for the fascination with all things academic.

Following the emergence of the video-sharing platform TikTok in 2020, Dark Academia saw a sudden representation through fashion, with creators attempting to recreate outfits originally imagined by characters from books associated with this aesthetic. The style of fashion associated with this phenomenon included a wardrobe typically favoured during the autumn/winter seasons. These include tweed jackets or large wool coats, plaid skirts or trousers, huge turtlenecks, silk blouses with intricate collars or sleeves, loafers or Oxford boots, velvet bows and glasses, preferably round and tortoiseshell. This aesthetic imaginary is what truly establishes the core of Dark Academia. In fact, Lara López Millán interlocks its aestheticism with the concept of "visual nostalgia" (Lara López Millán, 2023).

Therefore, the revival of Dark Academia on TikTok has led to the intertwining of two fundamental branches: fashion and aestheticism, becoming the foundation for a new genre of literature that embodies the picturesque representation that Dark Academia originally covered. The majority of critics and researchers agree that the two absolute classics that shaped the framework of Dark Academia are *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt (1992) and *If We Were Villains* by M. L. Rio (2017).

Currently, the list of books categorised under the term Dark Academia appears to be endless. However, several of them only share the typical characteristics of the term, and rather include features of fantasy and magic-centred compositions. Both of the aforementioned novels exemplify the original blueprint of a complex framework that could, in fact, place a literary work in the category of Dark Academia. These two books perfectly capture the core elements of what makes a book a true example of Dark Academia: an introduction to academic fantasy centred on secret societies fascinated by mysticism, human nature in tragedy, twisted morality and even murder.

2. Campus and/or academic novels

Dark Academia is still a relatively recent entry in the literary lexicon, and it is unclear whether there is a clear and accurate definition for it. It has its roots in different branches of academic fiction, murder mysteries, and elements of Gothic tradition. As previously mentioned, when it appears in literature, it is often referred to as the campus novel or the academic novel, before it is considered to be a distinct genre in its own right. The question thus arises as to whether these terms are all intended to convey a single, unified definition, meaning that the academic novel, university novel, college novel and campus novel would be essentially synonymous. This would also suggest that they are all intended to refer to the same concept, namely academic fiction or academic satire which emerged in the United States and later Great Britain in the 1950s.

In his book *The College Novel in America* (1962) John O. Lyons presents an intriguing predicament on the origins of American and English university novels. Lyons posits that the following:

> "There seems to be agreement that a sense of class structure is necessary for satire and humor in the novel—as well as the Aristotelian terror arising from the fall of the protagonist. Certainly the novel of academic life has wrung a good deal of satire as well as pathos out of a situation in which there is a hierarchy of power and prestige from the demos-freshman to the tyrant-president. Yet the novel of academic life has fostered no Fielding, Flaubert, or Tolstoy. The major American novelists have avoided the academy" (Lyons, 1962: xv).

Lyons then proceeds to suggest that "Part of the reason may be that their British mentors were not associated with the universities and wisely avoided writing about things they did not know" (Lyons, 1962: xv) and that "this type of novel involves an essentially romantic and pastoral rejection of the sophisticated bumptiousness and Godless analysis of the academy. Curiously, this most serious type of novel of academic life is basically anti-intellectual" (Lyons, 1962: xv). Lyons notes that these types of university novels cannot be classified to fit into the genre of academic fiction due to their dubious, questionable and muddled style, aimed "frequently for boys, if not for boyish men" and that "In general the English university novel is sparse because the novelists were not university men or the men in the universities did not write novels. This is especially true in the beginning when the novel was for young ladies and even so was not quite a respectable form" (Lyons, 1962: xv-xvi). With regard to American novels, Lyons identifies Nathaniel Hawthorne as the only major American novelist who was a college man, however, then he proceeds to cite Hawthorne's novel *Fanshawe* (1828) as an example, stating that it "is set at

a romanticized version of Bowdoin College and has little to do with college life" (Lyons, 1962: xvi). In *The Rise of the Academic Novel* (2012), Jeffrey J. Williams first notes that "The academic novel is usually thought to be a marginal genre", and lists a few notable exceptions such as "Mary McCarthy's *Groves of Academe* (1952), Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), and David Lodge's *Small World* (1984)" (Williams, 2012: 561), then goes on to say that the genre is "quaint and eccentric, depicting the peculiar world of academics and appealing to a coterie audience. However, over the past two decades, it has become a mainstream genre in Academic fiction" (Williams, 2012: 561).

Examining Lyons' perspective, it is evident that he integrated, if not anticipated, academic experiences with writing, particularly in the genre of academic fiction. He further notes that when considering the twentieth-century, "Even now that many of the serious novelists are intimately connected with the colleges and universities in order to finance their seriousness, there are few novels of academic life from them" (Lyons, 1962: xvii). In his book *The American College Novel: An Annotated Bibliography* (1982), John E. Kramer collects 648 novels set at American universities and colleges. He acknowledges that "during my fifteen years as a college faculty member, I have taken a great deal of perverse delight in reading fictional accounts of people very much like my administrative overseers, my faculty colleagues, my students, and myself" (Kramer, 1982: x). This proclamation differs from Lyons' presumed priorities within the genre of academia. However, it ultimately demonstrates the multifaceted nature of it, offering insights that can appeal to both those "who enjoy reading college novels for pleasure and for scholars who use college novels as a tool for understanding how higher education is perceived in American culture and as part of the serious, systematic analysis of higher education" (Anderson & Thelin, 2009: 106-107). David Lodge also expresses the notion of appeal when he compares the university to a "microcosm of society at large, in which the principles, drives and conflicts that govern collective human life are displayed and may be studied" (Lodge quoted in Moseley, 1991: 169).

In order to gain an understanding of the features of the academic genre, John O. Lyons also articulates that in the academic novel "higher education is treated with seriousness and the main characters are students and professors. This eliminates from consideration juveniles and mysteries." (Lyons, 1962: xvii). In his article *It's a Small World, after All: Assessing the Contemporary Campus Novel* (2004), Robert F. Scott mentions Adam Begley's critique in *Lingua Franca* of the academic genre as an example suggesting that even if in a campus novel "The novelist's perspective shifts, but the place itself remains substantially the same … On every campus in

every decade, there's the urgent need for new funds, issues of academic freedom, worries about hiring and admissions quotas, petty jealousies, endless inter- and intra-departmental squabbles" (Scott, 2004: 82). Scott then adds that in campus novels "Other common areas of focus for these works include: the absurdity and despair of university life; the colourful, often neurotic personalities who inhabit academia; and the ideological rivalries which thrive in campus communities" (Scott, 2004: 82).

Williams declares that there is a clear distinction between these terms saying that campus novels "tend to revolve around campus life and present young adult comedies or dramas, most frequently coming-of-age narratives" (Williams, 2012: 561-562), while in the academic novel the goal is to "feature those who work as academics, although the action is rarely confined to a campus, and they portray adult predicaments in marriage and home as well as the workplace, most familiarly yielding mid-life crisis plots" (Williams, 2012: 562).

It is, therefore, clear that in some essence Dark Academia might draw a form of inspiration from the academic novel with necessary paradoxes. Scott claims that "campus novels are essentially comedies of manners", but shortly follows saying:

> "… these works tend to dwell upon the frustrations that accompany academic existence, they often call attention to the antagonistic relationships that exist between mind and flesh, private and public needs, and duty and desire. As a result, despite their comic tone, most campus novels simmer with barely concealed feelings of anger and even despair as protagonists frequently find themselves caught between administrative indifference on one side and student hostility on the other. Thus, even when campus novels are lightly satirical in tone, they nonetheless exhibit a seemingly irresistible tendency to trivialize academic life and to depict academia as a world that is both highly ritualized and deeply fragmented." (Scott, 2004: 83).

Williams points out that "In the early part of the century, there was a vogue of campus novels, (…) with some noteworthy entries like Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* (1992) or, most recently, Jeffrey Eugenides's *The Marriage Plot* (2011), but it transferred a good deal of its momentum to film" (Williams, 2012: 562). In her article *Nostalgia in Dark Academia* (2022), Mary Ann Nguyen echoes the original principle of the genre adding that "campus novels fuse with the *Bildungsroman*", but also points out that "Dark academia is not a *sub*genre of the campus novel". She explains: "(…) though they share similar characteristics by focusing on students and campus life – but instead is its own literary genre that developed in 2015 on Tumblr ("dark academia") and expanded from the urtext *The Secret History* (1992) by Donna Tartt" (Nguyen, 2022: 55). To highlight this discrepancy, in his

article *Campus Novels and the Nation of Peers* (2014), Travis M. Foster also claims that "Campus novels track their hero from her or his freshman to senior year, recording the trials and subsequent maturation that ensue, ultimately ending with graduation, followed occasionally by marriage to the sister or brother of a friend" (Foster, 2014: 465).

To further prove the independence of Dark Academia and its differentiation from campus and academic novels, Foster argues that campus novels are "set within institutions of higher learning that position themselves entire in opposition to instruction", and then follows by explaining that "The genre deals with formal education either by ignoring it entire or assuming an actively hostile stance towards the faculty who so rudely impose it" (Foster, 2014: 466). Elaine Showalter also refers to the genre as "*Professorroman*" when classifying academic novels (Showalter, 2005: 92). Similarly, when Scott lists recurring character types in campus novels, he opens with the figure of the professor, but presents them as powerless, malignant figures portraying

> "the absent- minded instructor, the wise simpleton, the lucky bumbler, the old goat, and the fuddy-duddy. Far removed from (…) the dedicated seeker of knowledge, fictional academics- males in particular- are more likely to emerge as burned out lechers with a penchant for preying on their students or their colleagues' spouses" (Scott, 2004: 83).

Lyons states a similar idea when pointing out that "the character of the professor in literature has consistently suffered from stereotypes ranging from the chalky-coated, absentminded, ineffectual, and even impotent professor, the timid and harmless pedant, the vicious and demonic sinner, or even the philanderer" (Lyons, 1962: 119).

Other stereotypical characters include college administrators and of course, students. Scott points out an interesting observation in the case of the latter claiming that "in the vast majority of academic novels, the overriding implication seems to be that teaching is not an essential component of higher education. That is, not only do campus novels rarely depict their protagonists in the classroom, but these figures also seldom discuss their actual teaching experiences" (Scott, 2004: 84).

The central element of Dark Academia, its primal core, is actually the excessive and obsessive need to seek ultimate knowledge and thereby learn to control and manipulate with its power. Dark Academia glorifies an idealised version of classical arts and intellectualism in the universal setting of prestigious boarding schools or elite campus environments with the goal of finding beauty and terror in learning, literature and in the darkness it comes together with. It presents professors and

students – not necessarily focusing on administrators– absorbed in their academic pursuits, particularly obsessed with their research and hypotheses to a level where reality merges with their imagination.

3. Female identity in academic fiction

Female identity in the academic world has long been a subject of debate – whether in relation to real-life scenarios or the literary genre. Following the rising popularity of the Dark Academia phenomenon on the Tumblr platform, its aesthetic-blended nature began to be reflected in lists of audio-visual and literary works including *Dead Poets Society* (1989), *Good Will Hunting* (1997), *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), *Kill Your Darlings* (2013), and *The Riot Club* (2014), all of which have since become essential units in the evolution of the genre. However, upon closer examination of these projects, it becomes evident that the majority of them revolve around male protagonists – with the exception of *Mona Lisa Smile*, in which the plot speaks for itself: to play with the idea of college for girls only until the moment they get engaged. As if the purpose of education was valid only before marriage, and then it became a memory of interest that was no longer needed suggesting that it has no value beyond this period.

In *Clever Girls and the Literature of Women's Upward Mobility* (2018), Mary Eagleton makes a noteworthy observation: "women's embodiment, even if not pregnant, is deemed unsuited to professional status. The woman, viewed as sexual, girlish or maternal, hysterical can never encompass rationality, dedication and expertise" (Eagleton, 2018: 465). In her book, Eagleton follows and explores the female figure of "the scholarship girl, the clever girl, the professional woman or, in some guises, the 'superwoman' who 'has it all'", but also "the 'austerity girl' or the 'have-not girl'" from the post-war era to the present in the contemporary fiction of British writers (Eagleton, 2018: 2). This study illuminates the challenges women have faced in moving from a traditional feminine identity associated with the roles of wife or girlfriend, and even after years and years of education and hard work, these women still struggle to gain access to elite professions. A consideration of data from the years preceding the 1920s reveals the extent of elitism in the academic sphere. In his study, *'Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon: A Case Study from the Twenties' Feminist Criticism and Social Change*, Paul Lauter examines the female tradition at work and in the academic environment. He notes that "The professors, educators, critics, the arbiters of taste of the 1920s,

were, for the most part, college-educated white men of Anglo-Saxon or northern European origins" and he also highlights that this was a "tiny, élite portion of the population of the United States which, around the turn of the century, could go to college" (Lauter quoted in Eagleton, 1996: 39). He discusses how, following the year 1921, not only were "women virtually excluded from leadership positions in them and given few opportunities to read papers, but they also appear to have been pushed toward — as men were certainly pushed away from — subject areas considered 'peripheral' to the profession" (Lauter quoted in Eagleton, 1996: 39).

In *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005), Elaine Showalter sheds light on how novels about academics and academic societies have been transformed since the 1950s. She reviews the genre of academia and argues that "The best academic novels experiment and play with the genre of fiction itself, comment on contemporary issues, satirize professorial stereotypes and educational trends, and convey the pain of intellectuals called upon to measure themselves against each other and against their internalized expectations of brilliance" (Showalter, 2005: 4). Showalter ponders on the idea that "Perhaps we professors turn to satire because academic life has so much pain, so many lives wasted and destroyed (…) Perhaps it's the ultimate narcissism for an English professor to write literary criticism about novels by English professors about English professors" (Showalter, 2005: 2-3).

Showalter provides a brief analysis and commentary on selected academic novels through the decades and at the same time adds her own personal experiences saying "It's a personal take, and my selection reflects my preoccupations, particularly with feminism, as well as my occupation" (Showalter, 2005: 13). When focusing on the sixties, she states "Women particularly figure as angry and excluded" or "virtually unrepresented in academic fiction, expect as murder victims", and she even point out the figure if the "rare female professor" who is "ambivalent about power and in denial about ambition" (Showalter, 2005: 34-35). When discussing later decades, she still laments the representation of "these newly empowered female academics" who "are oddly ambivalent about status, tormented by power, and isolated from other women as well as from their male colleagues" (Showalter, 2005: 84).

Williams outlines a similar image of female representation when he takes into account the momentum when by the 1990s academic fiction became more of a mass product than previously. While he argues that in the academic novel the role of "the professor became a hero, or anti-hero, of the story of contemporary work and family life", it still "retained a bias toward imagining the professor as male, despite the demographic rise of women in academe" (Williams, 2012: 577).

It is interesting to consider the extent to which female characters are represented in the first novels of the new intake of academic fiction, collectively known as Dark Academia. This is especially relevant given that the goal of this genre is so clear: the search for ultimate knowledge and the power that comes with it. It is, therefore, important to examine the extent to which female characters are differentiated in these novels. As previously stated, characters in Dark Academia novels typically adhere to certain archetypes or stereotypical roles, albeit with a distinctive twist in their core – often done for the sake of criticism, which is a fundamental element of the narrative. While it has been observed that campus and academic novels tend to focus separately on their student and professor characters and follow a certain *Bildungsroman*-like plotline, Dark Academia novels intertwine these characters and focus on their identities being torn to shreds as they try to understand how certain factors shape someone's personality.

4. Multiple faces of women in Dark Academia

The Secret History is widely regarded as one of the most seminal works of Dark Academia fiction. Originally published in 1992, the novel subverts the traditional role of the professor as the central figure in the narrative, instead, positioning him as a pivotal but not sole protagonist. In *The Secret History*, the professor initiates the metaphorical engine that leads to the recognition of the fatal flaw inherent in the Greek philosophical and mythological concept, namely "Beauty is terror" and that humanity's ultimate desire is "To live *forever*" (Tartt, 1993: 42). Upon further examination, it becomes evident that Dark Academia novels frequently revolve around a mysterious close-knit group of boys or men, with the potential inclusion of a girl or two.

Upon initial observation, female characters appear to be merely incorporated into the lives of male protagonists. They appear to be mere reflections of the decisions made by other characters. In *The Secret History*, only two women receive some substantial introduction and page space: Camilla Macaulay, an angelic creature, beautiful, shy, and intelligent, untouchable, and "a slight lovely girl who lay in bed and ate chocolate, a girl whose hair smelled like hyacinth and whose scarves fluttered jauntily in the breeze" (Tartt 1993: 252). On the other hand, there is Judy Poovey, a striking contrast, the loud and vulgar, bold girl from Los Angeles, who has "wild clothes, frosted hair, a red Corvette with California plates bearing the legend JUDY P. Her voice was loud and rose frequently to a screech, which rang through the house like the cries of some terrifying tropical bird" (Tartt, 1993: 49).

Despite the absolute clear differentiation between Camilla and Judy, as if only these two types of female characters could exist in the world of Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*, the book demonstrates a deeper reflection on their characteristics. While Judy is presented as an annoying, lovesick girl, as Richard Papen, the narrator of the novel, notes, she "cornered me in hallways; tried to make me dance at parties; had told several girls that she was going to sleep with me, only in less delicate terms" (Tartt, 1993: 49), she is not as shallow as this description suggests. Similarly, Camilla is subjected to criticism for being a figure who is both unseen and elevated by the men in her life. On the surface, she appears to exemplify the archetype of the flirtatious bimbo, basking in the attention she receives and seemingly content with the role she plays in this secret group of friends. Bunny is the only one who openly shares his dislike and hatred of Camilla, which he justifies with a very misogynistic concept – he does not like the fact that there is a girl in their group. For him, she becomes "his most vulnerable target", "through no fault of her own, but simply because in Greekdom, generally speaking, women are lesser creatures, better seen than heard" (Tartt 1993: 251).

Tartt presents a multifaceted and complex portrayal of women, whose actions and perceptions are deliberately misconstrued through the lens of the male characters. The first-person narration of the unreliable narrator only allows a glimpse of the real persona of the women in the story. The narrative reveals that these women rarely express their true thoughts or act solely for their own benefit. Instead, they are the representations of the narrator's desires, or at least the narrator believes they are, when he is only "listening to the sweet, throaty cadences of her voice" (Tartt, 1993: 107) without actually hearing her at all. Tartt masterfully hints elements of contradiction suggesting that Richard's perspective is not entirely consistent, indicating that not everything is as it seems. Both Camilla's and Judy's vision is undoubtedly distorted by Richard's perspective. As female characters, they are inherently sexualised. According to Richard, Camilla is consumed by obsessive love for Henry, she willingly maintains a sexual relationship with her brother, and both she and Judy lead Richard to believe that they are openly flirting with him, despite the fact that it is Richard who persistently tracks them down: "I lay on my bed and looked at the ceiling, trying to guess when Judy would return, trying to think of what to do in the meantime" (Tartt, 1993: 173).

The male characters in the narrative continue to regard women with disrespect, expressing only superficial admiration for those who gratify their desires. When in the company of Judy and her friends, Richard is quick to make negative remarks about them. He contemplates that "Despite her faults, Judy was a kindly soul" and

he "felt oddly safe with her", but her friend, Beth he "disliked" (Tartt, 1993: 429). He describes her as "a dancer, from Santa Fe, with a rubbery face and an idiotic giggle and dimples all over when she smiled" and even if at the school people "thought something of a beauty but I loathed her lolloping, spaniel-like walk and her little-girl voice—very affected, it seemed to me—which degenerated frequently into a whine" (Tartt, 1993: 429). At the same time, he does not object to the other friend's similar characteristics when he states that "Tracy was great. She was pretty and Jewish, with a dazzling smile and a penchant for Mary Tyler Moore mannerisms like hugging herself or twirling around with her arms outstretched" (Tartt, 1993: 429).

Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that there is more to their allure of the novel's female characters than meets the eye. While Camilla appears to be fully aware of her influence over the male characters, she tries to utilise it to her advantage: "In many ways she was as cool and competent as Henry; tough-minded and solitary in her habits, and in many ways as aloof. (…) She was the Queen who finished out the suit of dark Jacks, dark King, and Joker" (Tartt 1993: 252). Even when she is the only girl in the group, "Things would have been terribly strange and unbalanced without her" (Tartt 1993: 252) and she is just as influenced by the idea of ultimate knowledge and the loss of innocence as the other characters. She is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve this goal. In her case, it is this openness to the disturbing – her willingness to participate in the Bacchanal, her role in maintaining the secrecy surrounding the murders, and her tendency to revisit and reassure.

In contrast, Judy is far more concerned with pursuing her own career path at school, rather than attempting to seduce Richard. Despite her apparent objectification, she still provides assistance and care for him, driven by kindness alone and not by some kind of obsession. Likewise, Beth is regarded with disdain because she "had a nervous breakdown or two, and sometimes, in repose, she got a kind of walleyed look" (Tartt, 1993: 429). However, it is important to note that all male characters in the novel are depicted as experiencing frequent mental breakdowns as a consequence of their actions. Nevertheless, the narrative presents these instances of mental illness in a glamorous and broken image of a survivor. The image in question is regarded negatively only if the experience in question is that of a woman.

The narrators in Tartt's novels exhibit a certain superficiality when interacting with women. They do not fully understand the women they encounter, or perhaps they simply do not wish to do so, creating a kind of vessel, a ghost image of the way women are represented in the narratives. This type of hidden characterisation of

female figures is evident in later novels of the Dark Academia genre as well. As a genre that relies heavily on the concept of individuals bound by secrets and employs narrative techniques characteristic of an unreliable narrator, it can be argued that nothing should be taken for granted. It is, therefore, necessary to maintain a degree of scepticism and to recognise that what is initially perceived may not always be the case.

In contrast to *The Secret History*, where the characters are not necessarily labelled as specific archetypes, most recent Dark Academia novels deliberately label their main characters. In these novels, women are no longer introduced as side characters; however, they still do not achieve the same representation as men. In contrast to the representation of Camilla and Judy as objects in the eyes of men, these women actively challenge social preconceptions in order to achieve their freedom.

In M. L. Rio's *If We Were Villains*, the main characters are students at the Dellecher Classical Conservatory, where they "spent four years … *immersed* in Shakespeare. Submerged. Here we could indulge our collective obsession. We spoke it as a second language, conversed in poetry, and lost touch with reality, a little'" (Rio, 2017: 248). The protagonists are characterised by a number of archetypes, including the ingénue, the temptress, the hero, the sidekick, the villain, the tyrant and the chameleon – painted in a very Shakespearean imagery. Not only do they embody the character when they are on stage, they also make it their own. The roles female figures represent in this novel are the Temptress or the Femme Fatale, the Ingénue and the Chameleon. These archetypal roles are also evident in other Dark Academia novels.

The role of the Femme Fatale is evident in *The Atlas Six* (2020, 2022 and 2024) trilogy written by Olivie Blake, as well as in *Bunny* (2019) by Mona Awad. These characters are adamant about knowing how powerful their beauty is and they are not afraid to use that to their advantage. Meredith Dardenne, in *If We Were Villains*, acknowledges that her physical appearance is a source of both pride and vulnerability. She admits, "I have a great body. Because I work … hard at it. I love looking this way and I love people looking at me. And that makes me magnetic" (Rio, 2017: 39), but at the same time she also understands that this attractiveness exposes her to certain weaknesses: "I'm afraid, that I'm prettier than I am talented or intelligent, and that because of that no one will ever take me seriously. As a performer or a person" (Rio, 2017: 40). In *The Atlas Six*, Parisa Kamali employs her own physical attractiveness and sexual desire as a weapon against her victims, while concealing her own feelings of uncertainty and insecurity about being regarded as an object: "It would fit the archetype of her. Seduce and destroy. The world was filled

with poets who thought that a woman's love had unmade them" (Blake, 2020: 197). In Awad's novel, the "bunnies," as the main group of girls is referred to, are depicted as cloying, petty, and mean. They create an almost Barbie doll-like faultlessness and superiority while simultaneously dehumanising themselves, "their eyes taking us in (…), their noses twitch, their eyes do not blink, but stare and stare" (Awad, 2019: 9). This is further evidenced by the nicknames they give themselves: Bunny, Duchess, Cupcake, Vignette and Creepy Doll.

As the archetypal Shakespearean Femme Fatale, they all suffer retribution for their actions, raising the question of whether this archetype necessarily equates to a formidable villain or a catastrophic woman hungry for power and manipulation. On the contrary, the Ingénue is almost paradoxically reverse. In *If We Were Villains*, Wren Stirling portrays the Ingénue as a young woman, innocent and pure, almost childlike. Another example is Libby Rhodes in *The Atlas Six*, who is continuously compared to Parisa. While Parisa embodies sensuality, Libby is anxious, shy and perfectly fits the image of the girl next door. However, in true Dark Academia fashion, this character type represents a departure from the role of the female supporting character or the tragically innocent balancing act between the Femme fatale and the Chameleon. Rather than merely advancing the stories of others by remaining ignorant of the evils of the world, this character type holds up a mirror to real society, thereby proving the importance and existence of a strong-willed woman while portraying vulnerability.

It is the Chameleon archetype, however, that remains unnoticed. This is a master of disguise or a wallflower; unpredictable but not at all inconsistent. In *If We Were Villains*, Filippa Kosta, also known as "Pip," embodies this character. She does not necessarily fit into any fixed roles, instead, she shapes herself into the character role that she is offered or auditions for. She lacks any clear gender characteristics and displays fluidity both on and off stage. In *The Atlas Six*, Reina Mori and in *Bunny*, Ava represent a similar image. They are reserved and tend to maintain distance from others, yet they are capable of swiftly shifting between emotional extremes, exhibiting submission or a sudden outburst of intense hatred: "I bite", Ava says, sliding out of the booth. "It's a terrible, voluntary affliction"" (Awad, 2019: 182). In terms of the Shakespearean archetype, the Chameleon is probably most similar to the Crossdresser, moving and speaking more freely, possessing the ability to solve problems or manipulate events in order to overcome boundaries and limitations.

Examining the list of archetypical female figures represents only the initial phase of investigating the Dark Academia genre. With several new additions to the canon of Dark Academia novels, a shift in the representation of the academy,

gender and race is being expressed. The focus is beginning to shift away from the aesthetic representation of the institution towards more critical lens, addressing the injustices inherent in the academic environment and reminding the reader that there is a reason not to take anything for granted and to look beneath the surface.

Conclusion

The fiction of Dark Academia remains a constantly developing field, opening new avenues for the portrayal of its characters. In his article *The American College in Fiction* (1946), Richard C. Boys argues that "Most novels centering about academic life demonstrate strikingly that we have had little first-rate fiction in this field. (…) Through their eyes we see a composite picture of this life which is, in the main, unreal and distorted" (Boys, 1946: 381-82). Dark Academia does not necessarily imply a prioritisation of the transformation of emotions from a state of control to one of insecurity. Rather, it is characterised by an emotional and/or social demolition through the pursuit of academic validation, the acquisition of higher knowledge and, simultaneously, the dismantling of elitism, superficiality, sexual and gender overpowering, snobbish classism and cruel oppression fuelled by power.

Given that Dark Academia is very much a critique of itself, and it critiques elitism, Eurocentrism, social distraction and a limited view of gender representation, it is important to argue that there is a great deal more to be considered when portraying these women as masks of stereotypical objectification. While women in academic roles may display emotional vulnerability, this does not distinguish them from men in similar positions, and their actions and thoughts within these exclusive groups are as important to consider as those of their male counterparts. This consequently results in the necessity for them to fight even harder to attain and sustain their role, due to their status as women. Even if they experience the same forms of manipulation, violence, abuse and discrimination as their male counterparts, they are subjected to these experiences twice as much due to their gender: "The moral of this story is: Beware the man who faces you unarmed. If in his eyes you are not the target, then you can be sure you are the weapon" (Blake, 2020: 11).

This is ultimately the key element that sets this genre apart from established academic fiction, including the campus and the academic novel. Williams proposes that "the contemporary academic novel presents "anxiety narratives." [These]

novels portray not the solitary artist nor the autonomous professional, but the managed professional anxiously negotiating his or her way through postmodern institutions" (Williams, 2012: 581). The genre of Dark Academia proposes an aesthetic vision of academic institutions, while confronting the issue of double standards – the necessity to fulfil exceptional aspirations while grappling with the underlying horrors. And while Dark Academia appears to function as a satire, its aim is not to ridicule, but rather to draw attention to and ultimately challenge the romanticisation of a Western-centric, white-dominated mentality within academia.

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The kaleidoscope of diversity and perspectives (Zsófia Bán Vagánybagoly [Cool Owl] duology)

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a text-adjacent analysis of Zsófia Bán's Vagánybagoly [Cool Owl] duology. This collection of children's stories depict various members of a classroom community as characters with diverse perspectives, offering insights into the daily life and social diversity of the Central and Eastern European region. The first part of the series focuses on illustrating societal stratification, including different family structures, financial situations, origins, and skin colours. Meanwhile, the second part explores various forms of perspective shifts, ranging from the absence of sight to unique viewpoints expressed through the arts. These volumes are united by an animated animal character, Cool Owl, who acts as an all-seeing figure closely connected to the narrator, always appearing when most needed. In this paper, we will examine the narrative and poetic characteristics, structural composition, medial stratification, intertextual connections, societal critique perspectives, and sensitizing attitudes, through which teaching literature can be utilized to promote recognition, acceptance, and respect for diversity.

Keywords: children's stories, social critique, sensitization, perspective shifts, interart poetics

Introduction

Space travel or intergalactic portals are not always necessary to encounter strangeness, difference, and diverse perspectives. Moreover, a multicultural environment is not always a requirement either, as the social stratification of the

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Central and Eastern European region is diverse enough to offer insights into the variety of everyday life (Gökhan & Bán, 2020). We all create our own worlds, influenced by different social backgrounds and experiences.

Following her work *Vagánybagoly és a harmadik Á. Avagy mindenki lehet más* [Cool Owl and the Third A. Or Everyone Can Be Different] (Bán, 2019), Zsófia Bán continued the adventures of the same classroom community in her book *Vagánybagoly és a negyedik Á. Avagy mindenki láthat mást* [Cool Owl and the Fourth A. Or Everyone Can See Different] (Bán, 2022). They are also unique because a "*truthful owl*" watches over their steps. Structurally, both books consist of chronological chapters – children's stories – but can be read independently or even interchanged (Komáromi, 1999: 227; Petres Csizmadia, 2015: 124).

1. Diversity of perspectives

Some pieces of the analysed story series provide insight into the adventures of a specific child, while other characters from the classroom community also appear in supporting roles. This is one reason why it is difficult to designate a clear main character. Both books react self-reflexively to the fact that while we are the protagonists of our own everyday lives, we inevitably become supporting characters in the lives of others.

Only one character seems to appear in every chapter: the titular Cool Owl, though never in a leading role beyond the opening chapter of the first book. More of an observing presence, seeing everything, and closest to the narrator, Cool Owl always appears when needed the most (Vándor, 2019). For example, when Nemhanemka suffers an accident and without Cool Owl's help would not be able to submit the class's photogallery on time for a competition; or when Hardtmuth Koh-i-Noor, also known as Nóorika, falls into a ravine, and instead of the blind Faber-Castell Rafael, the bird calls for help. Cool Owl intriguingly balances between the ordinary, animated animal character and the transcendent helper figure. Its seemingly deus ex machina interventions points towards the latter, yet the duology's world remains grounded in reality and does not work with supernatural elements, which negates the possibility of the owl being a transcendent guardian. While several animal characters come to the forefront in each chapter, their society is not developed enough to refer to Bán's works as animal novels. However, it becomes clear that children regard them as important beings, evidenced by the communication with them, which is not only based on gestures.

2. Two books, two guiding threads

Besides sharing a common setting and characters, the two volumes are also linked by sensitization efforts (Vojnics-Rogics, 2020). However, each has its own guiding thread. The latter concept becomes a key term in the last two chapters, serving as self-reflection. The subtitles reveal the guiding threads. While the first book builds upon the premise that 'everyone can be different', highlighting diversity factors such as different family structures (raised by only a grandmother, single father, or two mothers), financial situations (a beggar living in the forest, a poor Roma family), origins (a child of a Tahitian mother and a German father, a Transylvanian family settling in Hungary), or even skin colour (why someone may not be suitable for the role of Sleeping Beauty), the sequel is centred around the premise 'everyone can see differently'. The scale in the latter case is perhaps even broader, with one endpoint being the absence of sight and its substitution with other senses, while the other is represented by creativity, more precisely, various methods of representing reality through different artistic tools. Let us take a closer look at these.

In one memorable chapter of *Vagánybagoly és a negyedik Á. Avagy mindenki láthat mást* [Cool Owl and the Fourth A. Or Everyone Can See Different] we read about the friendship between Hardtmuth Koh-i-Noor and Faber-Castell Rafael. Both are iconic figures in Bán's world. Through Nóorika, for example, multiculturalism is represented in the Hungarian context, as she moves to Hungary due to her German father's job without any prior connection to the Hungarian language. Furthermore, in addition to actively contributing to the presence of the English language in the text, the girl continuously reflects on learning Hungarian as well. For example, she interprets newly heard word combinations not only metaphorically but primarily in their literal meanings. "Hardtmuth Koh-i-Noorika, as the saying goes, was left with her jaw dropping in amazement. Nóorika had imagined it well, her jaw dropping. Brrr! Hungarian is such a strange language"[22] (Bán, 2022: 35). Through Rafael, we see another social class, the deprived nobility, emerging in the world of the work. As we find out, during introductions, "he had already dropped the title of 'Count' from his name because his grandfather had explained to him that such people, like them, had been abolished long ago"[23] (Bán, 2022: 33). Rafael embodies

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22 In the original: „Hardtmuth Kohinóorikának, ahogy mondani szokás, leesett az álla a csodálkozástól. Nóorika ezt is jól elképzelte, ahogy leesik az álla. Brrr! Furcsa nyelv ez a magyar" (Bán 2022, 35).

23 "[M]ár a grófot is elhagyta a neve elől, mert a nagyapja azt is elmagyarázta neki, hogy az ilyeneket, mint ők, már réges-régen eltörölték" (Bán, 2022: 33).

nobility, unapproachability, and forms an interesting pair with Nóorika, as the girl appeared in a similar role of otherness in the previous volume. However, the other students approach the boy with even more pronounced reservations. "They were told that Rafael was blind and that he could not see, but they didn't know what to do with this information because they couldn't imagine what it could be like. So, just to be safe, they avoided him"[24] (Bán, 2022: 36). However, Nóorika is attracted precisely by his uniqueness, and as they start talking, the two, with their different perspectives, prove to be particularly receptive to each other (Frindt, 2022). While walking in the forest, Rafael encourages the girl to close her eyes and try to navigate the landscape as he does in everyday life. This scene offers exciting possibilities in experiential pedagogy, as suspending our sight makes us consider how we could substitute it with other senses. "– No, I can't see you, but I can hear you. And based on your voice, I can imagine you. But if you allow me to touch your face as a good friend, then my fingers will see your face"[25] (Bán, 2022: 38). Such perspective shifts, as also seen in Nóorika's case, can contribute to increasing sensitivity. Furthermore, it is an intriguing play that the author names both characters after well-known pencil manufacturers. The latter emphasizes the importance of creativity, drawing attention to alternative ways of representing the world.

Other art forms appearing in the volume reinforce this. Sculpture becomes pivotal in the first chapter, while in the third, we gain insight into the activities of circus performers, and photography becomes the main emphasis of the volume. More precisely, despite the focus on different aspects for each individual, how the image concepts developed along one guiding thread create a coherent whole (Frindt, 2022). For example, Group B focuses on patterns found in nature to shape their work, while Group A focuses on the various manifestations of light. However, it is important to notice that regardless of the art form, each is interested in the peculiar representation, the different viewpoint of reality (and its elements). As for today, an artwork is not considered aesthetically pleasing merely for its beauty; rather, it is valued for presenting the subject of art from a novel, unique perspective. Thus, in this self-expression, the individuality of each artist or individual is

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24 "Ugyan mondták nekik, hogy Rafael vak, hogy nem lát, de ezzel nem tudtak mit kezdeni, mert el sem tudták képzelni, hogy az milyen lehet. Úgyhogy a biztonság kedvéért inkább kerülték" (Bán, 2022: 36).

25 "– Nem, nem látlak, de hallak. És a hangod alapján elképzellek. De ha majd egyszer megengeded, hogy jó barátodként az arcodat is megsimogassam, akkor az ujjaim látni fogják az arcodat" (Bán, 2022: 38).

revealed. Reflecting on the subtitle: everyone can see differently, and, in an artistic sense, the more unique one's perspective, the more valuable it becomes. And if we apply this to everyday life: just as diversity, diverse perspectives hold value. Because it is in their intersection that the true face of their world is revealed. When children refer to accordion books or marvel at the development of photographs, the text rhetorically emphasizes the same experience: "[L]ike in that folding game, you can't predict how the individual parts will turn out, but when you unfold it in the end, it still tells a story." – And regarding the photographs: – "What she loved most was when the outlines of the picture gradually emerged on the floating paper in the developing solution. It was like a wonderful, secret magic"[26] (Bán, 2022: 86-87). In this respect, the photography competition in Bán's book intriguingly demonstrates the interaction between different art forms and artists, potentially inspiring another experiential pedagogical activity in classrooms.

3. In the spirit of sensitization

The intention of sensitization permeates many chapters of Zsófia Bán's book, but apart from Nóorika and Rafael's story, it never takes central stage in the plot. Instead, the children chase presumed lost statues or even a kangaroo, take photos, and eagerly await the evaluation of their works. However, they keep their eyes and minds open to the world, learning a lot about how it operates through their adventures. This does not mean they are perfect, they make mistakes, mock others, and even occasionally ostracize them, but this is what makes them both credible and capable of growth (Vojnics-Rogics, 2020). One of the most inspiring examples is found at the beginning of the second book, involving another character beside Cool Owl, their class teacher Ms. Mimi (Parti, 2020), who prefers to discover truth in nature rather than in people's opinions. "There was a parent who thought it unnecessary to fill children's heads with strange things. Like when they set up the class terrarium, Ms. Mimi told them that snails and earthworms are often hermaphrodites. Meaning they are both male and female, boys and girls! Because everything happens in nature, Ms. Mimi said, and we humans are part

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26 "[M]int abban a hajtogatós játékban, nem lehet tudni előre, hogy alakulnak az egyes részek, de ha a végén széthajtogatod, mégis kiad egy történetet […]. Azt szerette legjobban, amikor a kép körvonalai fokozatosan előbukkantak az előhívóoldatban lebegő papíron. Az egész olyan volt, mint egy csodálatos, titkos varázslat" (Bán, 2022: 86-87).

of nature too. And that everything that happens in nature… – here she looked questioningly over her glasses at the class, and the children responded in chorus: / – Is NATURAL!"[27] (Bán, 2022: 8). Although only subtly implied, the text still hints at the blind spots of exclusionary perspectives and the prejudiced attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community (Andrejčáková, 2020; Bakró-Nagy, 2020). However, it is crucial that Bán's characters engage in arguments, and it is precisely children who deliver the most significant rebuttal to their parents' reservations. One father, for instance, fears that "they'll learn these oddities, and then they'll be really confused!" But when the class became aware of his opinion, "there was great joy and laughter because apparently, then, the children shouted, they could all become princesses, frog princes, evil witches, wizards, and even Captain Hook, or even Johnny Depp, just because they've heard about them!"[28] (Bán, 2022: 8-9). In the context of Zsófia Bán's duology, it cannot be claimed that she indoctrinates or possibly overrepresents issues related to sexual minorities or gender, but she also does not depict a world where certain natural elements are removed purely from an ideological perspective.

From the first Cool Owl book, the author encourages us not to be shy to question certain ingrained beliefs, stereotypes. Like when the children want to assign the role of Sleeping Beauty to each other, and someone is initially excluded because of their skin colour, while someone else is excluded because of their weight. But since as recipients, we saw the scene from Cool Owl's perspective, thanks to his thoughts, we could also question this stereotype. And "from an owl's perspective, what else could we say about life, but wise things?!"[29] (Parti, 2020). The truth-revealing bird is particularly sensitive to such situations, having experienced their burden first-hand. Her father, elder Edward, named her Edward, too because he could not imagine anything else. After all, in their family, every offspring was given the name Edward. But the last Edward was a female owl. This story reflects unchallenged

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27   "Volt olyan szülő, aki úgy gondolta, hogy minek a gyerek fejét felesleges, furcsa dolgokkal tömni. Mint például, amikor az osztály terráriumát berendezték, Mimi néni elmesélte nekik, hogy a csigák és a földigiliszták gyakran kétneműek. Azaz egyszerre hímek és nőstények, fiúk is, lányok is! Mert a természetben mindenféle előfordul, mondta Mimi néni, és hogy mi, emberek is a természet részei vagyunk. És hogy minden, ami a természetben előfordul… – itt kérdőn kinézett a szemüvege fölött az osztályra, és a gyerekek kórusban felelték: / – Az TERMÉSZETES!" (Bán, 2022: 8).

28   "[M]ajd eltanulják ezeket a furcsaságokat, aztán jól összezavarodnak!" […] "[L]ett nagy jókedv és kacagás, mert akkor, ezek szerint, rikkantották a gyerekek, ők is királykisasszonyokká, varangyos békává, gonosz boszorkává, varázslókká, sőt, kampókezű tengerésszé, sőtissimo Johnny Deppé vál-hatnak, csak azért, mert hallanak róluk!" (Bán, 2022: 8-9).

29   "Bagolytávlatból [pedig] mi mást mondhatnánk az életről, mint bölcs dolgokat?!" (Parti, 2020).

family expectations, which the little owl eventually breaks free from through self-determination. True, the outside world helps a lot, the encouragement from the children also, who eventually names her Cool Owl. With this name, in this role, she truly finds herself, thereby indicating that alongside honouring ancestors, finding our own path is equally important.

4. The poetics of text and image

The omniscient, heterodiegetic narrator of the book cannot be identified with any of the characters, yet it maintains a close connection with Cool Owl, focusing from an overhead perspective on the most significant moments of the stories. At times, it interjects comments, while at others, it reflects on its own storytelling position. Bán's language is simultaneously entertaining, humorous, and ordinary, largely reflecting children's speech, logic, and worldview through the overrepresentation of dialogues, contributing to the engagement of young readers. The book "excellently captures the innocence of children, their inclination toward curiosity, and moments of wonder at the world: besides misinterpretations (thanks to the found »treasures«, Gazdagrét makes sense as a »Rich Meadow«), the accumulation of mood-setting and onomatopoetic words, along with numerous wordplays (»they didn't even sleep an eyelaaash-wink«) ensures the humour and momentum of the volume"[30] (Vojnics-Rogics, 2020). In the course of the central questions, the philosophical musings of children also emerge intermittently, shaped by their purely childlike rhetoric. "Because you see, if I don't know what a kangaroo looks like, then even if I see it. I'll see it, but I won't see it because I don't know – added Bonifác, who liked complicated situations"[31] (Bán, 2022: 63). Some of the children's names, or rather nicknames, are aptronyms, referring to a particular characteristic of the respective character. For instance, Nemhanemka [Notinstead] mostly starts his sentences with instinctive opposition, saying, "Not, instead...". Within the text,

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30 "[K]iválóan kifejezi a gyermeki ártatlanságot, hajlamukat a kíváncsiságra és a világra való rácsodálkozásuk pillanatait: a kifejezések félreértelmezése mellett (Gazdagrét a talált »kincseknek« köszönhetően, mint gazdag rét nyer értelmet), a hangulatfestő és hangutánzó szavak halmozása és a rengeteg szójáték (»szemhúúnyásnyit sem aludtak«) biztosítja a kötet humorosságát és lendületét" (Vojnics-Rogics, 2020)

31 "Mert ugye, ha nem tudom, hogy néz ki egy kenguru, akkor akkor sem fogom tudni, ha látom! Ugyan látni fogom, de mégse látom, mert nem tudom – tette hozzá Bonifác, aki szerette a bonyolult helyzeteket" (Bán, 2022: 63).

as part of the prose rhythm, certain word combinations recur, rhymes derived from Hungarian folk songs, substituting emphasis – "Hihihi, hahaha, into the king's court!"[32], as well as iconic pop culture elements, ranging from references by characters (Sherlock Holmes) to entire universes (Pirates of the Caribbean).

The work employs various forms of highlighting. The keywords of individual sections, as well as newly acquired technical terms (restoration, concept), for example, are capitalized, while cultural works mentioned by the children are italicized, just as the interspersed English language elements (sometimes just words, other times entire sentences). As children's speech tends to integrate freshly acquired knowledge into everyday communication, the highlighting of such elements within the text is justified, contributing to their assimilation by readers and facilitating navigation within the book too.

Norbert Nagy illustrated both books. These illustrations, mostly full-page works, operate with vibrant colours, imbued with a certain degree of grotesqueness. The artist favours the use of different coloured contours to convey foreground-background relationships, overlaying them onto the coloured images, and enjoys incorporating repeated elements into the same illustration and among illustrations, as well as filling them in with various material textures. The cobblestone sidewalk, the trunk of the tree, the tiled floor—all exhibit these characteristics. The individual elements of the illustrations create the effect of stacked layers, which is particularly prominent, for instance, in the case of the sculpture garden in the first chapter, where the sculptures appear as elements photographed from existing works, superimposed onto the image.

Conclusion

Zsófia Bán's *Vagánybagoly* [Cool Owl] duology, besides observing the everyday world from multiple complementary perspectives, also effectively illustrates that the completeness of our universe can only be manifested in the intersection of these viewpoints. Not everyone can be equally receptive to its many layers. But if we pay attention to each other, to the perspectives of others, new, sensitized horizons may open up before us. The children in the book "felt even more strongly

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32   "Hihihi, hahaha, király udvarába!"

connected by such secrets, that they were the FOURTH A. And no matter how, this was a pretty GOOD feeling"[33] (Bán, 2022: 83). This kind of community-building, open-minded approach would benefit our society as a whole.

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33 "Az ilyen titkoktól csak még inkább úgy érezték, hogy összetartoznak, hogy ők a NEGYEDIK Á. És akárhogy is, ez eléggé JÓ érzés volt" (Bán, 2022: 83).

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Encounters brief, close, and indefinite

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ABSTRACT

In many languages, "encounters" are more than mere "meetings", but something unexpected, unsought, and even unpleasant. Are "Encounters of Education, Literature, and Culture" of this type? This paper explores that possibility via James Joyce's short story *An Encounter* (1905, pub. 1914) – a cultural and literary artefact with much to say about the educational experience. How was it both so shocking that the publisher Grant Richards wanted to omit it from *Dubliners* and so innocent that its "enormity" seems to have escaped his notice until Joyce pointed it out? Does it still have the power to shock; or, at a distance of over one hundred years, does the educator find themselves in the similarly strange position of directing students' attention towards the missable scandal? When dealing with controversial subjects, to what extent do educators need to pre-empt the range of possible reactions (for example with content warnings) or, on the contrary, create the conditions for a genuine encounter? This paper describes the story's storied publication history; presents an account of one particular encounter with "An Encounter" (in an undergraduate seminar); argues for its significance to Joyce's later writing; and reflects on what these instances have to say about other reading encounters.

Keywords: encounter/s, James Joyce, prescribed and proscribed reading, content warnings

Introduction

In many languages, though not all, the word 'encounter' signifies something other than a mere 'meeting'; and etymologically, 'encounter' (Latin '*in*' + '*contra*' ('against')) suggests something more like a *clash* or *collision*. While not all collisions are negative – those that take place between two pieces of flint, for example, could literally be described as 'scintillating' (as in Henry Vaughan's *Silex scintillans*) – an 'encounter' implies something unexpected, unsought, and perhaps even unpleasant.

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This is certainly the case in James Joyce's short story *An Encounter*, whose young protagonists' thirst for adventure is quite quenched by an eruption of the real; it might also be true of any encounter with *An Encounter*. Written in 1905, it was deemed so controversial that no one was willing to risk publishing it until 1914, a history that will be explored below. This paper then combines (or collides) an analysis of a particular encounter with the text in an undergraduate seminar with a close reading of it, incorporating other encounters, before proposing its relevance to comparable scenes in Joyce's later writing. Finally, it offers some reflections on what reading *An Encounter* and its related texts has to say the paradox of intolerance and reading encounters.

1. First encounter: James Joyce and Grant Richards

On 7 December 1905, the publisher Grant Richards wrote to James Joyce to acknowledge receipt of the manuscript of *Dubliners* (see Scholes, 1963: 142), a collection of (then) twelve short stories. *An Encounter* had been completed that September (see Ellmann, 1975: 74). Its narrator is an unnamed schoolboy who, along with his friend Mahony, plans a day of playing truant – a day which is successful, to a degree, and almost over, when they encounter a man in a field. The man's repetitive speech, strikes the narrator as strange and unnerving in some way he cannot quite articulate ("I disliked the words in his mouth" (Joyce, 1914: 22)). There follows a passage Joyce's friend Thomas Kettle considered "beyond anything in its outspokenness he had ever read" (as quoted in Norris, 2003: 30):

> After a long while his monologue paused. He stood up slowly, saying that he had to leave us for a minute or so, a few minutes, and, without changing the direction of my gaze, I saw him walking slowly away from us towards the near end of the field. We remained silent when he had gone. After a silence of a few minutes I heard Mahony exclaim:
> –I say! Look what he's doing!
> As I neither answered nor raised my eyes Mahony exclaimed again:
> –I say…He's a queer old josser! (Joyce, 1914: 22—23)

The fact that the collection *Dubliners* was only eventually published in 1914 is partly due to this passage from *An Encounter*, although its key role in this process did not immediately rise to the fore.

On 23 April 1906, Richards informed Joyce of a problem with another story in the collection, "Two Gallants": "the printers […] say that they won't print it" (Scholes, 1963: 145). He also highlighted problematic passages in "Counterparts" and the use of the word "bloody" in "Grace". Following an exchange of letters (on 26 April and 1 May), Joyce wrote again on 05 May, in uncompromising mood:

> I have come to the conclusion that I cannot write without offending people. The printer denounces "Two Gallants" and "Counterparts". A Dubliner would denounce "Ivy Day in the Committee-Room". The more subtle inquisitor will denounce "An Encounter", the enormity of which the printer cannot see because he is, as I said, a plain blunt man. The Irish priest will denounce "The Sisters". The Irish boarding-house keeper will denounce "The Boarding-House". Do not let the printer imagine, for goodness' sake, that he is going to have all the barking to himself. (James Joyce to Grant Richards, 5 May 1906) (Ellmann, 1975: 83)

Richards's reply of 10 May was a mixture of flattery and threat – but its refusal to deal with specifics seemed to have provoked Joyce into an even more defiant position:

> […] I must say that these objections seem to me illogical. Why do you not object to the theme of "An Encounter", to the passage "he stood up slowly saying that he had to leave us for a few moments &c…"? (James Joyce to Grant Richards, 13 May 1906) (Ellmann, 1975: 86)

– the passage quoted above.

In his letter of 16 May, Richards accepted what he took to be Joyce's qualified concessions about the instances of "bloody" and tried to suggest a compromise regarding "Counterparts" – but then added "[o]n consideration I should like to leave out altogether 'The Encounter' [*sic*]" (Scholes, 1963: 147). This earned a coruscating response from Joyce:

> […] you now say that you wish to leave out altogether the story "An Encounter". You said nothing of this in your first letter and it was I […] who pointed out to you the "enormity" in it. […]
>
> You state your objection to "An Encounter" (an objection I was imprudent enough to provoke) so mildly that I imagine this will not be one of our difficulties. […] Many of the passages and phrases over which we are now disputing escaped you: it was I who showed them to you. And do you think what escaped you (whose business it is to look for such things in the books you consider) will be surely detected by a public which reads the books for quite another reason? (James Joyce to Grant Richards, 20 May 1906) (Ellmann, 1975: 87, 88)

As Margot Norris summarizes the point of contention, Richards "first underreacted, then overreacted, to a story whose 'enormity' no one in the publishing establishment recognized until Joyce drew their attention to it" (Norris, 2003: 30). Joyce's uncompromising self-confidence can perhaps be gauged by what seems to be some play on the publisher's name: "[…] I have perforce granted what you asked, and even what you didn't ask, me to grant." (James Joyce to Grant Richards, 20 May 1906) (Ellmann, 1975: 88).

Two weeks later, Joyce had still not received a response, so he wrote again (on 03 June) to request one; Richards finally replied 7 June, countering,

> But I did notice very clearly "An Encounter" when I first read the manuscript, and we were at that time told by our adviser that we ought to get you to omit it. I was in doubts about it, but came to the conclusion that it was unnecessary to do so. But matter which to a large section of the public will seem questionable is cumulative in its effect, and when I came to read "The Two Gallants" [sic] I saw that to publish the book with that story as you had written it would be to draw attention to other things in the book which would otherwise pass. (Scholes, 1963: 147)

It was an argument not without merit, and when Joyce then approached other prospective publishers of *Dubliners*, one, George Roberts, also demanded that *An Encounter* be omitted (see Norris, 2003: 32). However, after eight further years of fruitless approaches, *Dubliners*, including *An Encounter*, was eventually published, by Grant Richards, in 1914.

Does *An Encounter* still have the power to shock, or are today's readers even less likely to cop on? How should we as educators introduce the story and its controversial subject matter? More than a century after its publication, how might we reflect on the fact that we are as likely to find ourselves leading our students towards the heart of its matter as chaperoning them carefully past it? Or is the story still shocking but perhaps in ways unforeseen even by its all-seeing author? What might encountering *An Encounter* in an educational setting today have to do with promoting tolerance?

2. Brief encounter: an undergraduate seminar

I invited some "anglisztika" (English major) undergraduates at my own university to voluntarily participate in a seminar on an unspecified literary text which I would circulate the day beforehand (see Appendix A). I am very grateful to the eleven intrepid students who responded positively (five first-years and six second-years;

two male and nine female), taking time out of their exam period in order to take part. I created and circulated a six-page pdf document of the text, including the title but not the author's name, with line numbers for ease of reference. In an attempt to make this a true encounter with the text, I asked them (perhaps naively) not to look up any background information about the text online – an injunction they say they followed. I also asked the participants not to look up any unfamiliar words but simply make a note of them. The only prompt I gave them before we met on 23 May 2024 was to consider what the word "encounter" meant to them, and how they would translate it into their own language.

  Several languages were represented in our seminar room: Hungarian, English, Slovak, and Russian as mother tongues, and French, German, Spanish, and Danish as foreign languages. Most of the students spoke of having different words for scheduled meetings, chance meetings, and unfortunate meetings (or collisions), as summarized in Table 1 below:

Tab. 1. Words for "a meeting", "an encounter", and "a clash" in several languages

English	a meeting	an encounter	a clash
Danish	et møde	et møde	et sammenstød
French	une rencontre	une rencontre	un choc
German	ein Treffen	eine Begegnung	ein Zusammenstoβ
Hungarian	egy találkozó	egy találkozás	egy összeütközés / egy összecsapást
Russian	vstrecha	vstrecha	stolknoveniye
Slovak	schôdzka	stretnutie	stret / kolízia
Spanish	una reunion	un encuentro	un choque

As can be seen, in Danish and in French the same word would translate both 'a meeting' and 'an encounter', even though speakers of the other languages were clear that there was a qualitative difference between the two. Indefinite articles do not exist in Russian and Slovak. The Hungarian root of both 'találkozó' and 'találkozás' implies a kind of 'finding' ('talál').

As far as associations went, some of the students knew Steven Spielberg's 1977 film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, but David Lean's 1945 film *Brief Encounter* (based on the short play *Still Life* (1936) by Noël Coward) was a new cultural reference for them. (They were amused at how very British it sounded.) No one mentioned 'the cultural-political monthly' *Encounter* (1953—1991) (which turned out to have been funded for a decade by the CIA and the British Foreign Office (see Lewis, 2022 and New York Times, 1967)) nor the 2021 film *Encounter* (dir. Michael Pearce), originally entitled *Invasion*. We might also have mentioned publications such as *Academic Encounters* (Seal, 1999), *Academic Listening Encounters: American Studies* (Sanabria and Sanabria, 2008), and *Encounters: A Hungarian Quarterly Reader* (ed. Zachár, 1999). There is, finally, the recent book *Encounterism: The Neglected Joys of Being in Person* by Andy Field (2023).

I next asked the students to share their lists of unfamiliar vocabulary, so that we could compile a glossary (see Appendix B). The list was long enough to make the point that the narrator's vocabulary is rather erudite ('incredulous', 'palpitated', 'docile', 'solemnity', 'sedulously', 'desisting'), and is certainly "not the language that a boy of the narrator's age would himself use" (Senn, 1969: 35). (Native Hungarian speakers were at something of a disadvantage here, as Hungarian is not a Romance language (derived from Latin).) The terms for defunct denominations of British currency (for example 'bob' and 'tanner' but also 'sixpence') all caused some confusion, and the students wanted to know the equivalent in today's money. Some terms were examples of 'Hiberno-English' (e.g. 'some gas' for 'rather fun') and others of dated slang (e.g. 'totties'). In most cases, the fact that the students were encountering the words for the first time posed no obstacle to comprehension; however, some (such as 'josser') occurred at pivotal moments and were potentially crucial to understanding what exactly was taking place.

I suggested that we divide the text into three parts:

> part 1: from "It was Joe Dillon […]" (16 line 01)
> to "[…] must be sought abroad." (17 line 19);
>
> part 2: from "The summer holidays […]" (17 line 20)
> to "[…] crumbs of our passions." (20 line 04); and
>
> part 3: from "There was nobody […]" (20 line 05)
> to "[…] despised him a little." (24 line 15).
> (Unless otherwise stated, the page references in this section refer to Joyce, 1914.)

The story soon moves on from Joe Dillon, the star of the opening sentence (16), whose contribution beyond hollering "[y]a! yaka, yaka, yaka!" (16) with "an old tea-cosy on his head" (16) is to set up the punchline "[e]veryone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vocation for the priesthood" (16). Its attention shifts to Joe's "fat young brother Leo" (16) who is caught red-handed surreptitiously reading *The Apache Chief* instead of concentrating on his primer of Roman History (16—17).[35] The students emphasised with Leo: although they are all avid readers, all of them could recall feelings of disinterest or even disgust with the texts they were obliged to read at school. Works attracting particular (and persistent) animus included *Egri csillagok* (1901) by Géza Gárdonyi (1863—1922)[36] and *Árvácska* (1941) by Zsigmond Móricz (1879—1942), the background to which sounds, to say the least, extremely troubling.[37] One student who was particularly passionate about the inappropriateness of *Árvácska* is a keen fan of Clare Keegan, the author of *Foster* (2010), indicating different degrees of tolerance (and indeed different criteria of judgement) for texts encountered in or outside the classroom.

The appeal of non-prescribed (if not necessarily positively proscribed) works, between set texts and self-chosen ones, was familiar to all – and also symbolised in part 2 of the story by the boys' decision to risk bunking off school for their adventure, despite the fact that "[t]he summer holidays were near at hand" (17) (a point made by Senn, 1969: 26—27). The forethought and planning necessary for this 'adventure' represents a significant chunk of the text here, amplifying the irony of the boys' 'arranged' Indian battles described at the start (16) and the 'arranged' siege (18); at times, however, the narrator also proved capable of great economy ("That night I slept badly. In the morning […]" (17); "I was happy." (18). "*Swaddlers! Swaddlers!*" (18) was one of the unfamiliar terms – but the narrator himself indicates the relevant context of tensions between Protestants and Catholics

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35 For more on *The Apache Chief*, see Winston (2009) and Roos (2012); for more on the three boys' magazines mentioned in the second sentence of "An Encounter" (*The Union Jack*, *Pluck*, and *The Halfpenny Marvel*), see Kershner (1989).

36 Had I known this at the time, I would have wanted to discuss the irony that in fact *Egri csillagok* was first published in serial form in magazines in 1899, and was therefore very much the Hungarian equivalent of stories such as 'The Apache Chief'. (For more on this, see Winston (2009).) In Gárdonyi's defence, in the *Nagy Könyv* survey of 2005 it emerged as Hungary's most popular book.

37 *Egri csillagok* (literally *Stars of Eger*) has been translated into English as *Eclipse of the Crescent Moon* (by George F. Cushing (1923—1996)), and *Árvácska* as *Orphalina* (2020) (by Virginia L. Lewis (b. 1960)).

in Ireland, even among schoolchildren. Such prejudice had also been called upon by Father Butler in part 1 when he appealed to Leo's pride and shame ("I could understand it if you were… National School boys." (17)).[38]

Our time was running out, as was that of our intrepid duo, as we broached part 3, where the narrator sees "a man approaching from the far end of the field" (20). He passes the boys and "continue[s] his way" (20) – but, having gone "perhaps fifty paces", he retraces his steps and sits down beside them "slowly and with great care" (20). He talks of the weather and expresses sentiments about his schoolboy days "which bored [the boys] a little" (20). "Then he began to talk of school and of books" (20), mentioning in particular Thomas Moore, Sir Walter Scott, and Lord Lytton (20). Here, no appeal to pride or shame is needed: the narrator is all too ready to pretend to have "read every book he mentioned" (20), which the man seizes upon ("Ah, I can see you are a bookworm like myself" (20)). Something about Joyce's use of reported speech here greatly assists in (re)creating a decidedly uncomfortable and foreboding atmosphere, before the most controversial moment of the encounter takes place. We noticed that the text does not in fact explicitly state what the man does at that moment; however, the students persuasively said that he had more likely excused himself to masturbate than to urinate as merely urinating would not have caused such a reaction in Mahony (and non-reaction in the narrator).

I had wondered whether an entirely different aspect of the text might now prompt controversy – namely the boys' staging of "Indian battles" (16) and the narrator's remark that Joe Dillon "looked like some kind of Indian" (16) – especially given that most of the students in the seminar would have learned about the diversity of indigenous peoples and appropriate terminology in their "English-Speaking Cultures" course – however, the none of the students raised the issue.

I had not shared details about the story's authorship, but the students made some astute comparisons: the geographical detail of the boys' route through Dublin (on which see Mulliken (2013)) earned comparisons with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and, yes, with Joyce's *Ulysses*. I commended these observations, and confirmed that the author was indeed James Joyce, who was familiar to most *via* "The Dead". I also mentioned that this practice of presenting texts to students without any information about the author was pioneered in Cambridge by I. A.

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38   See Appendix B, note to page 17 line 8.

Richards, who called it "Practical Criticism" (see Douglas-Fairhurst, 2004: 373). (The students had encountered the terms "close reading" and also "distant reading", but not "practical criticism".)

After the class, I circulated a questionnaire (see Appendix C), asking about the students' previous encounters (if any) with Joyce and their experiences of the seminar, asking in particular whether they felt uncomfortable reading or discussing the story and whether they considered content warnings necessary when studying *An Encounter*. The responses I received could not have been more mixed: some found reading the story more uncomfortable than discussing it, others the opposite; some considered content warnings unnecessary, others suggested what form the content warning should take; some thought the minimum appropriate age to read the story 16, some thought 18 – as much because of the difficulty of the language of "An Encounter" as for its mature themes.

3. Serial Encounters:[39] Joycean returns

Whether it was because it was the subject on which the seminar students were most animated, or whether I had staged that encounter for the purposes of writing this paper, for me, on this occasion, the scene in the school classroom in part 1 took on a particular significance. I quote it here at length:

> One day when Father Butler was hearing the four pages of Roman History clumsy Leo Dillon was discovered with a copy of *The Halfpenny Marvel*.
>
> –This page or this page? This page? Now, Dillon, up! *Hardly had the day*… Go on! What day? *Hardly had the day dawned*…Have you studied it? What have you there in your pocket?"
>
> Everyone's heart palpitated as Leo Dillon handed up the paper and everyone assumed an innocent face. Father Butler turned over the pages, frowning.
>
> –What is this rubbish? he said. *The Apache Chief!* Is this what you read instead of studying your Roman History? Let me not find any more of this wretched stuff in this college. The man who wrote it, I suppose, was some wretched fellow who writes these things for a drink. I'm surprised at boys like you, educated, reading such stuff. I could understand it if you were…National School boys. Now, Dillon, I advise you strongly, get at your work or… (Joyce, 1914: 16—17)

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39 *Serial Encounters* is a study by Clare Hutton (2019) about the fact that readers of the *Little Review* and *The Egoist* "encountered *Ulysses* not as an iconic and finished masterpiece, but as a gradually evolving serial" (Hutton, 2019: 8) – but here the title is put to a different use.

In retrospect, this encounter with the unexpected "prefigures the course of the adventure" (Senn, 1969: 35). Scholars have identified the prescribed text as Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (see Norris, 2003: 36) (probably included in an anthology or primer) and the proscribed one as "Cochise The Apache Chief" by Paul Herring, published in *The Halfpenny Marvel* of 25 June 1895 (see Winston, 2009: 220 and 224).[40] The passage features a clear example of the narrator's erudite vocabulary, which rings somewhat false when compared with a more immediate moment of fear in part 3. Whereas here, facing no more than a vicarious danger, the narrator's heart "palpitated" (Joyce, 1914: 16) with the others', towards the close the latinate verb is replaced by the more immediate (and continuous) "beating" ("my heart was beating quickly" and "[H]ow my heart beat" (Joyce, 1914: 24)). Father Butler's vocabulary, on the other hand, seems somewhat limited, with the repetition of "wretched". The ellipses also suggest discomfort, the final one in particular almost Lear-like ("I will do such things,—" (II.iv)), but also of uncertain cause: does it convey the empty threat of an older and overwhelmed man or perhaps one that is all too real, the excessive emotion which causes words to fail being not anger but pleasure – something seen again when the man with the stick speaks of "whipping" (Joyce, 1914: 23-24)). What had initially seemed rather disparate, discreet sections of the short story start to coalesce in troubling ways.

Just as the man retraced his steps to the boys, and as we have returned to part 1, Joyce, too, would revisit this classroom scene in his later writing – not just once, but at every opportunity (in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and *Ulysses* (1922), and *Finnegans Wake* (1939)).[41] He does so first of all at length in the final section of chapter I of *A Portrait* (Joyce, 1916: 45-67), where the narrator is no longer unnamed but is Stephen Dedalus, the "Artist" of the title. If, as Winston (2009: 220) argued, *An Encounter* is "a Dublin-based parody" of 'Cochise The Apache Chief'", then this section could be Joyce's version of the later "Boys' Weeklies" discussed in George Orwell's 1939 essay of that name.[42] Stephen and his

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40   Winston (2009: 220) further argues that *An Encounter* is "a Dublin-based parody of the single *Halfpenny Marvel* tale and issue it references", while Roos (2012: 177) contends that Herring's original story has parallels with "the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848".

41   Joyce and Nora Barnacle had moved to Trieste in March 1905, and at the time of writing "An Encounter" Joyce was teaching English at the Berlitz school (see Ellmann, 1975).

42   Orwell characterised most of the stories that appeared in the *Gem* and *Magnet* as "stories of what purports to be public-school life" (Orwell, 1939: 177). "Sex is completely taboo, especially in the form in which it actually arises at public schools. […] When the *Gem* and *Magnet* were started, it is probable that there was a deliberate intention to get away from the guilty sex-ridden atmosphere that pervaded so much of the earlier literature for boys." (Orwell, 1939: 180).

"fellows" first discuss the likely punishment in store for some wrongdoers (Joyce, 1916: 49-50), and then, in class, Stephen himself is unjustly "pandied" by Father Dolan (Joyce, 1916: 57-58) – an injustice that marks a key moment in his moral development. A minor detail establishes a clear link with *An Encounter*: in passing, Stephen describes some schoolboy graffiti which reads "Julius Cæsar wrote The Calico Belly" (Joyce, 1916: 49) – a play on the Commentarii de Bello Gallico.[43]

There can be little doubt that the classroom scene in *An Encounter* serves as a template for the opening of "Nestor", the second chapter of *Ulysses* (Joyce, 1922: 28-45), in which Stephen has assumed the position of teacher:

> –[…] Now, Dillon, up! *Hardly had the day*…Go on! What day? (Joyce, 1914: 16)
> –You, Cochrane, what city sent for him? (Joyce, 1922: 28)

The events of *An Encounter* are assumed to have taken place in around 1895; those in *Ulysses* famously take place on 16 June 1904: it seems that teaching methods had not changed radically in the interim. Nevertheless, one can reasonably conclude that Stephen's teaching is, at best, disinterested and desultory, as he repeats the formula almost immediately ("—You, Armstrong, Stephen said. What was the end of Pyrrhus?" (Joyce, 1922: 29)). Stephen has not even bothered to stay the minimum one step ahead of his students, having to "glanc[e] at the name and date in the gorescarred book" (Joyce, 1922: 28) to be sure of the answer he is supposed to want to hear. Stephen does have sympathy for his pupils, his close observations revealing a level of care – one of which seems to be another echo of *An Encounter*:

> Crumbs adhered to the tissues of his lips. (Joyce, 1922: 29)
> The sun went in behind some clouds and left us to our jaded thoughts and the crumbs of our provisions. (Joyce, 1914: 20)

Granted, Stephen is attentive to Sargent – but overall the interaction reinforces the pervasive sense of the "futility" (Joyce, 1922: 33) of the educational endeavour. Mr Deasy had told the boy "to write [his sums] out all again" (33); Stephen has to ask twice whether this has resulted in improved understanding/ability before receiving the inevitable answer "No, sir" (33). "Sitting at his side, Stephen solved out the problem" (33), which is perhaps as much as a solicitous teacher can do. When

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43 The fact that the miscreant boys were caught on "the Hill of Lyons" is unlikely to be a reference to Lord Lyyton's *The Lady of Lyons* (1838) (Joyce, 1916: 45), as the Lyons Demesne is indeed in the vicinity of Clongowes. However, *The Lady of Lyons* is explicitly referenced later in *A Portrait*: "[…] every night [Mr Dedalus] led a party of three or four to the theatre to see *Ingomar* or *The Lady of Lyons*" (Joyce, 1916: 110).

asked "Do you understand now?" (34), the boy answers "Yes, sir" (34), but even this apparent success is instantly undercut by Stephen's remark "—It is very simple" (34). Stephen's subsequent interaction with said Mr Deasy is equally unsatisfactory. He objects ineffectively to Deasy's slapdash ascription of opinions expressed in a text to its author:

> –[…] what does Shakespeare say? *Put but money in thy purse.*
> –Iago, Stephen murmured. (Joyce, 1922: 37)

Deasy proves more astute in his assessment of Stephen's suitability for teaching:

> –I foresee, Mr Deasy said, that you will not remain here very long at this work. You were not born to be a teacher, I think. Perhaps I am wrong.
> –A learner rather, Stephen said. (Joyce, 1922: 43)[44]

One suspects that a love of learning is what motivates many teachers to enter the profession – but Stephen's comment here brings the underlying assumption into radical doubt.

With each iteration, Joyce displaces the centre of narrative gravity: in *An Encounter* and in *A Portrait*, the narrator is one of the pupils (respectively, unnamed and Stephen Dedalus); in "Nestor", Stephen is (at least purportedly) the teacher. In Book 2, chapter 2 of *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce, 1939: 260—308 (known as "Nightlessons")),

> […] there doesn't appear to be a teacher, except to the extent that the children act as "pupilteachers" educating themselves and each other, sometimes through confrontation. They even take part in the construction of the primer (which is the text of the chapter itself), with the twins [Shem/Dolph and Shaun/Kev] contributing marginal glosses and Issy adding the footnotes. (de Campos, n.d.).

Finnegans Wake is overdetermined, but "Nightlessons" does seem to allude to the previous class-scenes. Among the dozens of subjects the children say they have essayed is one based on perhaps the most famous *bon mots* of the aforementioned Lord Lytton: "Is the Pen mightier than the Sword?" (Joyce, 1939: 306). (The fact what was originally assertion is here rendered questionable is significant, too.) "*Nestor*" is also among the classical and Biblical figures listed in the left margin (Joyce, 1939: 307) (although, admittedly, there are fifty-five others). As is true of

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44 As originally published, in the *Little Review* 4(12) (April 1918), the line "And here what will you learn more?", which could be ascribed to either speaker or neither, is centred though not italicised – see Gaipa *et al.*, 2015: 34.

the *Wake* as a whole, the theme of perversion or incest is not only never far from the surface but part of its very texture – and in "Nightlessons", educational contexts are no exception: "All's fair on all fours, as my instructor unstrict me" (Joyce, 1939: 295). As for the remarkable form of "Nightlessons", Luca Crispi explains that

> Joyce only hesitatingly and adventitiously implemented the mimetic strategy of structuring this episode as a parody of the children's lessons, with commentaries and asides, sacrificing an established and articulate (although inherently fragmentary) narrative to the exigencies of a performative text. (Crispi, 2001: xxvi)

This strategy was only adopted "between November 1937 and September 1938 […] over ten years after the first draft of any fragment of II.2 was composed […]" (Crispi, 2001: 263), and caused huge problems for the printers (Crispi, 2001: 313). Is it too fanciful to imagine that in so doing Joyce was enacting revenge for the problems Grant Richards's printer had caused (and overlooked) in those early encounters as a young teacher and aspiring writer?

Conclusion

As I. A. Richards's star pupil, William Empson, put it, "one aim of imaginative literature is to enable us to see the world through other eyes, to think differently" (quoted in Douglas-Fairhurst, 2004: 381). Such a belief seems to lie behind the idea that reading encounters promote tolerance. Reading *An Encounter*, however, challenges this notion: there, it is the two boys within the story who are prematurely shown things it would perhaps have been better they had not seen, who encounter a world for which they are not quite ready.

Concern for young readers about to encounter *An Encounter* might lead educators to include content warnings; but such solicitousness might equally be experienced as patronising spoilers which render impossible any genuine encounter. The aim of reading "An Encounter" is, presumably, *not* to increase our tolerance for perverted men and potential pederasts – although encountering it again (*re*reading "An Encounter"), one notices that the man is not such an aberration, but shares similarities with other figures in the story, not least Father Butler and the narrator himself. What is the effect of the parallels between the encounters in the classroom and in the field? One might even ask which is the titular encounter. For learning and teaching to truly encounter each other requires them to be both intimately connected and entirely separate.

There must always be a first encounter with *An Encounter*; but Joyce returns to its classroom encounter, subjecting readers to serial encounters in each of his subsequent works – information which it would surely be too much to include in the initial, brief encounter and which might, even, seem excessive here. Joyce is surely saying something both about the foundational nature of first encounters and about their seriality. To adapt a passage from the penultimate chapter of *Ulysses*, an encounter "is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one […] neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (Joyce, 1922: 863). *An Encounter* is both paradigmatic of every reading encounter, and no more than one particular example of a reading encounter, only "an encounter".

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Appendix A: Invitation to students (Wednesday 22 May 2024)

Dear All
I hope your exams are going well so far! Keep calm and carry on!

Several of you said you might be interested in attending a special one-off (non-compulsory) seminar this week, where we would discuss and analyse a short literary text. (It's for an article I might be writing... I can't say any more at this stage!)

The seminar will take place **TOMORROW (Thursday 23 May 2024) from 11:00 to 12:00 in Room 327, Building R. (3rd floor).**

Please find the text for the seminar (a short story called "An Encounter") attached. Please RESIST the temptation to look up any further information about it: I would rather you brought your own, unique, genuine responses to the text to the seminar, rather than someone else's explanation! Similarly, with any unfamiliar vocabulary, please note it down but please do NOT look it up: instead, try to work out what the word means from the context. We will create a glossary tomorrow.

Please DO read the text before the seminar! Please bring a copy of the text with you tomorrow, either printed or on a readable device. Finally, please could you also think about the following questions in advance:

1. What does the word "ENCOUNTER" mean to you?
2. What associations (if any) does the word "ENCOUNTER" have for you?

3. What word in your own language would you use to translate "ENCOUN-TER"? Is it used in precisely the same way, does it mean exactly the same thing, or are there differences, do you think?

Places are limited, so if you are intending to come, please let me know via email. My address is mansell.thomas@btk.elte.hu.

Many thanks - and best wishes,

Tom

Appendix B: Glossary of terms unfamiliar to the students

(Page and line references are to Joyce, 1914.)

Page	Line	Word	Gloss
16	05	carry it by storm	to "storm" a fortification or city means to attack it (and its inhabitants) with force to "carry" it means to seize control of it
16	07	siege	a military blockade of a city to force it to surrender – e.g. the Siege of Troy (as depicted in *The Iliad*) or the Siege of Budapest (1944—1945)
16	14	yaka	an approximation of the cry of a Native American Indian (tribe unspecified)
16	15	incredulous	disbelieving (from the Latin *credere* "to believe")
16	25	unkempt	not pristine or well groomed
16	33	palpitated	beat rapidly or strongly (from the Latin *palpare* "to stroke")
17	08	National School boys	in Ireland, a primary school funded by the state, following the arrangements outlined in the "Stanley Letter" of 1831 – supposedly multi-denominational, but at the end of the nineteenth century increasingly denominational (*i.e.* separate schools for Catholics and Protestants)

Page	Line	Word	Gloss
17	10	rebuke	an insult or scolding
17	11	puffy	swollen or inflated or plump
17	22	miching	variant of "meeching" playing truant "to meech" means to whine, or to sneak or skulk around, or (as here) to play truant
17	27	ferryboat	a "ferry" is a boat that carries vehicles or passengers back and forth
17	31	sixpence	a denomination of British currency, worth 1/40 of one pound, or half a shilling; sometimes known colloquially as a "tanner" *(q.v.)*
18	04	pipeclayed	in this case, whitened with clay
18	05	docile	tame, meek, gentle; originally "apt or willing to learn" (from the Latin *docere* "to teach")
18	07	slanted	here, entering at a diagonal angle; (metaphorically) biased
18	11	clambered up	climbed up (perhaps with some difficulty), using one's hands and feet
18	13	bulged	swelled, protruded
18	15	some gas	(Hiberno-English for) "rather fun"
	???	masts	a tall upright post on a sailing ship
18	22	bob	a denomination of British currency, a colloquial term for a shilling (which was worth 12 pennies, or 1/20 of a pound)
18	22	tanner	a denomination of British currency; a nickname for a "sixpence" *(q.v.)*
18	26	brandishing	openly wielding or waving
18	27	ragged	wearing rags or of untidy appearance; *cf.* "unkempt" (page 16 line 25)

Page	Line	Word	Gloss
18	27	chivalry	ideals associated with medieval knights
18	30	swaddlers	one "swaddles" a baby in blankets among Irish Catholics, "swaddlers" is an offensive term originally for Methodists but later for any Protestants
18	38	flanked by	standing either side of something
19	02	quays	(pronounced "keys") a platform by or in a body of water where ships can be loaded and unloaded
19	04	currant	a small, dried, seedless grape
19	07	woolly	made of (or resembling) wool
19	09	right skit	"very comical/amusing" or "a lot of fun
19	13	wane	to decline or shrink (*e.g.* in its phases the moon appears to us to "wax" (increase) and "wane" (decrease) in size)
19	14	toll	a charge or fee (*e.g.* to use a motorway or a bridge)
19	16	solemnity	excessive earnestness
19	18	three-master	a ship with three masts (q.v.)
19	20	stern	the rear of a boat (from the Old Norse *styra* "to steer")
19	28	sultry	humid weather, or sexually suggestive
19	30	sedulously	the adverb from the adjective "sedulous", meaning diligent
19	31	squalid	dirty, impure
19	36	ridge	a raised edge, in this case the brow of the hill or bank
20	12	jerry [jerry hat]	a stiff felt hat not unlike a bowler hat
20	19	bade	the past tense of "bid" (in other contexts, *e.g.* auctions or elections, a "bid" is an offer or an attempt)

Page	Line	Word	Gloss
22	05	totties	plural of "totty", an informal (and old-fashioned) term for an attractive girl or woman
22	08	pertly	the adverb from the adjective "pert", meaning attractive or lively or cheeky
22	24	magnetized	acted like a magnet
22	25	orbit	the elliptical path of one celestial object around another; area of interest or influence
22	23	alluding to	referring to
23	03	josser	a disrespectful term for an old man (or, in Australia, for a priest)
23	12	escaladed	scaled, as in climbed up (strictly speaking, ladders would be involved)
23	12	desisting	ceasing
23	16	indignantly	adverb from "indignant", meaning annoyed about something that is unfair
23	18	chastising	telling off, scolding
24	06	bade	(see page 20 line 19)
24	12	paltry	meagre
24	12	stratagem	plan or scheme
24	13	hallooed	shouted "hallo"/"hello"
24	15	penitent	remorseful
24	15	despised	hated

Appendix C: Questionnaire for participants (sent via FlexiQuiz)

1.   What is your age (in years and months)?
2.   What is your gender?
      ☐ Female   ☐ Male   ☐ Other   ☐ Prefer not to say
3.   What are you studying at ELTE, and what year are you in?
4.   Before this seminar, had you ever read any works by James Joyce before? If so, please state which work/s you read, and whether it was the complete work or extracts from it.
5.   Do you think "An Encounter" is a suitable text to be studied by undergraduates? Please give reasons for your answer.
6.   Do you think "An Encounter" is a suitable text to be studied by schoolchildren? (If so, what is the minimum age for whom it would be appropriate?) Please give reasons for your answer.
7.   Did you feel uncomfortable at any point during this seminar (including while doing the assigned reading)?
8.   Do you think "An Encounter" should be accompanied by any kind of content warning? ("Content warnings are verbal or written notices that precede potentially sensitive content." (University of Michigan, "An Introduction to Content Warnings and Trigger Warnings in the Classroom", available here: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching-sandbox/wp-content/uploads/sites/853/2021/02/An-Introduction-to-Content-Warnings-and-Trigger-Warnings-Draft.pdf)) If so, what should it warn of?
9.   If you have any questions which you were not able to ask during the seminar, please enter them here.
10.   If you have any further comments about today's seminar, please enter them here.

Thank you very much for taking part.

From inclusion to various language identities in two Slovak settlements in Hungary

Sándor János TÓTH[45]

ABSTRACT

The paper presents some recent research outputs as part of the project APVV 18-0743 *Language in the City – Documenting the Multimodal Semiosphere of Linguistic Landscapes in Slovakia and in a Comparative Perspective*. Data were collected with the method of participation. After the classification of the language material, the problem of double or mixed identity was examined. The publication is the output of collective research organised by the Research Institute of Slovaks in Hungary in Pilisszentkereszt (Mlynky, researched in 2022) and Bükkszentkereszt (Nová Huta, researched in 2024).

Keywords: bilingualism, language and religion, language use, Slovaks in Hungary, identity

Introduction

The author has dealt with the dimensions of linguistic otherness as a member of a sociolinguistic research team (Tóth et al., 2010). This paper is based on the theory of J. Dolník on inclusive language and language inclusion (Dolník, 2021: 10-60). Dolník stresses that social and communicative inclusion depend on each other, the model of social inclusion in a deliberative and democratic society needs cultivated but inclusive language usage (Dolník, 2023: 11-45). Individual language usage should be tolerated as mental self-realization (Dolník, 2023: 85-105). Tóth (2017) applied the term xenism to Slovak and Hungarian. The use of the mother tongue in church ceremonies and the visualization of this language are among the factors that strengthen identity, so we decided to investigate the manifestations of

language use mentioned in the title of the paper. Church inscriptions, writings, domestic devotions are carriers of family and ethnic tradition, individual and collective identity.

1. Background of the two villages

The Piliš Slovak villages have strongly been connected with the Catholic Church since the beginning of the settlement in the territory, on the property of the Esztergom Archdiocese (Pintérová Jurkovičová, 2021: 236). O. Szabó (2008) describes the historical and demographic background and development of the investigated location in details. The Slovak settlements from the eighteenth century were named by the locals Mlynky after three water mills were built on the surrounding streams and Nová Huta after looking for new resources for glass production. In Hungary, both churches are devoted to the Saint Cross, which became the motivation of later name giving in Hungarian avoiding also homonymy with Mlynky in Slovakia and Nová Huta in Zemplén county. The village of Mlynky was re-settled as part of the third stage of the colonization of the territory of today's Hungary by the Slovak population from the territory of today's Slovakia (1740-1790). Back in 1755, Nová Huta was a green field industrial settlement in today's sense (Veres, 1995: 28-37). The inhabitants migrated from several territories of the Habsburg Monarchy, especially from Silesia and today's territory of Eastern Slovakia speaking German, Moravian (Valach) and East-Slovak (Zemplén) dialects (Sipos, 1958: 35-53). Their first language integration process was fulfilled in the former glass production sites Stará Huta / Óhuta (today Bükkszentlászló, part of Miskolc) and Répáshuta, resulting in a unique interdialect differing from any other (Sipos, 1984: 39-44). As Nová Huta (together with the settlement Gyertányvölgyi Üveghuta) was a newer location of these colonists, the impact of Hungarian was already present, the most inhabitatnts were bi- or triningual (Sipos, 1984: 36-37). The dialect of Mlynky cannot be completely identified with any other Slovak dialect, the synchronous phonological system of this dialect coincides with the peculiarities characterizing the West Slovak dialect taking into account both the vowel and consonant systems. Based on these characteristic elements, it can be stated that the phonological system of this dialect preserves the West Slovak character (Szabóová Markolová, 2023: 15).

Nová Huta and Mlynky show three fundamental similar features: they are traditionally Catholic settlements in the mountains close to a city. In both cases, we could evidence the linguistic-ethnic influence of suburbanization, tourism, the

neutral language attitude of the Catholic Church, which results from the historical universal use of Latin. This background also reinforces the use of parallel repeated research.

2. Methodology

During field research, we applied methods of research on the use of the Slovak language (Tóth, 2008: guided interview, participant observation, research on institutionalized and individual language use, etc.) and we applied data collection and processing of the language landscape (Tóth, 2021: photo documentation, analysis based on multimodal aspects). The combination of the above mentioned two methods of sociolinguistics was also beneficial during the study in Mlynky (Tóth, 2023), so we decided to continue with these frameworks. However, we adapted the given methodological model to the conditions of the given location. Repetition of a similar study has the advantage of comparability, the disadvantage is if the locality has a different ethnic model or a different identity. Therefore, we started from the language situation, which is conditioned by the diachronic and synchronic extra-linguistic circumstances of the reserached villages.

3. Interpretation of collected data

3.1. Catholicism and Slovak language in Pilisszentkereszt / Mlynky

The current language situation is influenced by the past on an individual level, e.g. Parents were strongly Catholic. In the past, the church was full, there were many children, which is not typical today. Those who used to be close to the church used to go both in the morning and in the evening, every day, even to Slovak and Hungarian ceremonies. The Slovak mass was held on Wednesdays and every second Sunday. The same priest served the Hungarian mass at 8:30 a.m. and the Slovak mass at 10:30 a.m., the Slovak one was the big one. There were three priests who did not speak Slovak. At school, they were taught to write in Slovak by the same teacher who taught them Hungarian. Religious education was in Hungarian, Slovak songs and prayers were learned from parents.

In the past, the parish priest used Latin and sang in Slovak. In 1946, they brought hymn books and prayer books from Slovakia, but in 1948 many left for Slovakia (in spite of the fact that they did not want to go).

The litany was sung once in Slovak, once in Hungarian. The secrets were spoken in Slovak.

The typical frequency of attending church services is on Sundays and when someone dies. The language situation is complex, e.g.: The older daughter and one neighbour speak Slovak. The younger daughter knows Slovak but responds in Hungarian. Today, they rarely speak Slovak, but the home prayer is mostly in Slovak and Hungarian. In other cases, the daughter always prays in Slovak when she is alone at home. The particular respondent prays every day for a happy ending, so that she can be freed from suffering as soon as possible. She also prays for the children, the granddaughters, and the family so that they are healthy. Children do not normally speak Slovak, but even the younger ones go to Slovak mass. However, we also found out that young people do not really like the Slovak mass, they do not understand much, least of all the reading from the Gospel. The second age aspect: those who live far away take the bus within the municipality. A respondent does not walk on Wednesday, he walks with difficulty even leaning on a cane.

Holidays (especially St. Mary's Day) are also an opportunity to use the Slovak language. There is usually an Easter procession, when Slovak and Hungarian Eucharistic and Marian songs are sung.

One of the traditional, already "inner Pilis" meeting places for Pilis residents is the Studienka spring in Mlynky (Chrastina, 2023: 33). Pilgrimage occasions are 1 May, 5:00 a.m., 16 July, 14 August, 8:00 p.m., 11 February, and in addition to these 18 apparitions, every month. They also sang at night when they went to Studienka. The pilgrimage is the most spontaneous opportunity for the public use of the Slovak language in Mlynky. They also had pilgrimage to Esztergom, they went to all kinds of places by bus: they visited Mariazell six times, Częstochowa four times, they visited Marianka in Slovakia, Rome and Lourdes and also Mátraverebély, Gyűd, Pannonhalma. The radius of pilgrimages, of course, was expanded by transport possibilities, traditionally they went to the nearby pilgrimage towns and to the Slovaks living in the Bükk mountains (Császári, 2021: 321).

There are more monolingual signs in the ecclesiastical sphere of the language country than elsewhere in Mlynky. The names of streets, shops or secular commemorative plaques also contain Hungarian, if Slovak is present. The ecclesiastical linguistic landscape is characterized by an interesting binary: all notices and other inscriptions on and in the church are in Hungarian, but either one or the other language appears on the tombstones and around the pilgrimage site, so it is not a matter of complementary bilingualism in this visual area, the information is, after all, comprehensible, because recipients themselves are bilingual.

3.2. Language situation and church in Bükkszentkereszt / Nová Huta

The dialect origin of the population is different, Slovak school and cultural institutions are less exposed in Nová Huta than in Mlynky. Code switching has a tradition in the village due to the integration of German, Slovak, Moravian and Hungarian dialects. Up to the present day, this language mixture has been reduced to Slovak – Hungarian bilingualism, where Hungarian dominates (Császári, 2023). The first steps to this neutralisation of language identity were made in the interwar period of the twentieth century by the school system (Veres, 2003: 55-68) and also by giving Hungarian surnames (e.g. *Fridel → Szívós, Erdős, Melicher → Nemes, Novek → Mátrai, Offentáler → Ónodi, Piplák → Hortobágyi, Flekács, Oprendek → Füredi, Stuller → Bikkhegyi, Szlávik → Borsodi, Matiscsák → Váradi, Hleba → Révész,* see Császári, 2019). On the other hand, those who travelled selling products gave Slovak names to the surrounding Hungarian settlements, e.g.: *Kivesd* (Mezőkövesd), *Sal* (Sály), *Čerep* (Cserépfalu), *Žirc* (Bükkzsérc). The interlocal movements of the residents were primarily motivated by travels to sell products like lime, wood, coal, forest fruits to the surrounding areas (Viga, 1984, 2002) – the difference to Mlynky is the lack of grape (Kontriková Šusteková, 2023: 156-158) and summer field works at the Lowlands – these were the previous language contact situations with the Hungarian majority. The current phenomenon is the immigration from Miskolc and Debrecen, which has increasingly been carried out in the last 30-40 years. New residents are constantly arriving to live in the village, they buy and renovate old houses, they build new ones, since the gardens and the original extravillas are no longer used and are divided into building plots. It is predominantly Hungarian population, which has no ties here, but participates in local culture, programmes, the community life of the village, except Slovak language use.

The geographical conditions and location of the village became a prerequisite of the emergence of tourism in the entire area. In the second half of the twentieth century, around the village, they built more recreational facilities with accommodation, catering and other related facilities services including ski lifts, mountain bike trails, and horse riding facilities. The large height differences in the village caused by the mountainous terrain affect the frequency of visits to the church and the place of pilgrimage, especially in the case of the older generation. Those who live farther from the church (moutainous terrain) are more isolated from the members of the community who use the Slovak language.

Today's Catholic Church emphasizes the spiritual mission, the language is only an issue of communication not of identity, no attention is paid to ethnic-religious contexts, as it mostly, typically and traditionally blends with Evangelic Slovaks in

Hungary. Masses are conducted according to the universally valid missal according to the calendar, which is given centrally, the priest adds a lesson to it, but this sermon is shorter than in the case of Protestants. The priest has less liberty. It is mystery in the centre of attention, not the word. There is no local priest, the parish is taken care of by nuns who – understandably – not only do not speak Slovak, they also have no relation to the Slovak origin of the autochthonous population. It also has a generational aspect: they try to bring religion closer to the younger generation (mostly Hungarian), while, of course, they do not forget the pastoral care of seniors, but also disregarding the Slovak language. It is possible to note a huge difference compared to the church language situation in Mlynky: in Nová Huta, the Slovak language is not relevant in the church, minimal expressions are handed down individually in the area of singing religious songs and that is all. The universality and internationality of the Catholic Church is absolutely manifested here, they do not have the Slovak language in mind, nor do they plan to link the minority language and religion, church ceremonies do not have the secondary function of strengthening national identity. The goals of the church are global, we did not observe top-down language adaptation to the location.

A partial conclusion is that multimodal inclusion lead to a peak of mixing identities in Nová Huta, then the language situation was simplified to bilinguialism currently heading towards assimilation.

Conclusion

General problems and everyday life determine language questions. A certain degree of bilingualism is, on the one hand, asymmetrical, on the other hand, natural to the extent that the speaker does not even pay attention to which language is used.

Believers use Slovak even without a priest (Pintérová Jurkovičová, 2021: 237), the important role of songs and devotions must be emphasized. At the moment, the Slovak-Hungarian bilingualism of the mass is ensured in Mlynky, however, it cannot be ignored that because of changes in ethnic relations at the expense of Slovaks, Slovak nationality is gradually losing its dominant position resulting in advancing language assimilation.

The obtained data show the pulsation of the use of the Slovak language, depending on extra-linguistic and organizational factors. However, the use of Slovak was never absent, thanks to strong traditions in which the connection of immanent religion, spontaneous devotions and the mother tongue is evident. The

former traditional way of life (lime and coal burning, logging, harvesting plants, etc.) have gradually changed. Currently, most people try to adapt to the requirements of the times and the rapidly changing global and local labour market conditions. Although currently the Hungarian language has a stronger preference and the level of the knowledge of Slovak language is declining, even slowly disappearing, and considering its status as a secondary language, the prerequisites of acquiring Slovak language is theoretically secured.

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Identity aspects of language choice and code switching: Linguistic anthropology versus bourdieu

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the language use of bilingual individuals living in a minority situation in Southern Transylvania who identify themselves as Hungarian. Through the lens of language use and code-switching practices, the complexities of individuals' identities, unknown to the individuals belonging to the research population themselves, are explored. The study basically describes the approach of two theoretical schools, the collision of rational choice theory and Bourdieu's theory and practice theories related to language choice, forming an exciting theoretical field where language is only one specific representation of identity.

Keywords: identity, bilingualism, language choice, code switching

Introduction

The subject of this study is language use, code switching use and aspects of identity among Hungarian-Romanian bilinguals in the South-Transylvanian village of Răcăștie/Rákosd. We have studied the language use of individuals whose native language is Hungarian and whose "second" language is Romanian. The stated identity of the interviewed individuals is thus Hungarian; however their language use reveals another strong element of their identity.

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This problem is addressed with the help of two theoretical approaches: linguistic anthropology (represented by Silverstein, Myers-Scotton, Bolonyai, and Fishman) and Bourdieu's notion of habitus, practice and linguistic economy. The first approach is a very pragmatic one, in many cases intertwined with the rational choice theory model, while Bourdieu's approach tries to take into consideration factors which are 'outside' the individual, too, while seeking the answers and explications for linguistic behaviour.

Although the paper operates with sensible concepts (identity, diaspora, community, language, ethnicity), it should be emphasized that these terms are not treated as explanatory and homogeneous categories, and they should not be essentialized, either. Equally important, the population which is the object of the study is regarded as a community because it is a small group where people are in face-to-face interactions with each other, and thus cannot be defined simply as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991).

Even though the authors are aware that language and ethnicity are constructed conceptions, this does not mean that sociologists should not include them in sociologic analysis. For people, language is something real, something inner, and as such, if the study aims at understanding its working mechanism, it should be treated as equal. As Jenkins puts it referring to Bourdieu's idea regarding *practice,* "it is not possible to read in other minds but it may be possible to step into other's shoes" (Jenkins, 2002: 50). Bourdieu addresses the issue of relevancy of the time and space where the practice is 'happening' because it is intrinsically defined by it (Jenkins, 2002: 69-70). Even though Mary Douglas (1992) 'argue' with this idea on the basis that anthropologists study 'in' a certain village and never the village itself, the paper starts with introducing and describing the place of study, as 'knowing' the field facilitates the deeper, the easier is the understanding of the constructed phenomena.

There is a consensus among many scholars and political entities that many linguistic and cultural minorities will not survive "let alone achieve relative equality without special assistance". Keller maintains that "the right to maintain and develop a cultural identity is in principle a universal right" (Keller in Batizán, 2011).

1. The field of study

Răcăştie/Rákosd is a village in Hunedoara county, 3 kilometres from Hunedoara town, administratively being even part of it. It is a village inhabited by people of Romanian and Hungarian ethnicity. Most Hungarians living in Răcăştie/Rákosd are members of the Reformed (Protestant) Church. Moreover, the role of the Reformed Church and religion is of paramount importance in shaping and maintaining the Hungarian community's identity and language in Răcăştie/Rákosd. Scholars agree that one function of religion is to maintain a group's collective memory and to stabilize collective identity which is often threatened by disintegration (Assman, 2006: 16). By this study, we can see an almost ideal typical example of how religious and ethnic belonging are embedded into each other and how they can construct the boundaries of a certain community. In line with this idea, Hungarian people are those who participate in the reformed sermons. And the tendency is clearly visible in the village: those who attend church possess a stronger ethnic identity, endeavour to use the Hungarian language in different societal interactions and usually teach their children to speak Hungarian as well. This is how language can become a "liéux de mémoire" (Nora in: Batizán, 2011) as well as a 'social glue' and together with the narration of the common past establishes a common identity that ties individuals to each other.

2. Speech acts in Răcăştie

The two interview fragments below were registered in Răcăştie/Rákosd, Transylvania, Romania, and they serve as a starting point for introducing the linguistic world of this community. The analysis is based upon these two texts because they are considered to vividly illustrate the dominant linguistic context.

1. Interview part

Mother: - A házban magyarul, az udvaron románul, a férjem autószerelő, s akkor inkább
románok jönnek, s aztán mikor itt van a nép a gyermekek is sokszor magyarul a
házban kint az udvaron románul, s a szomszédok mind románok s... S a munkahely,
hát itt a kapun belül , csak magyarul, románul na, mert románul kell dolgozzunk a
kocsiknál.*(Hu)/*

	In the house [we speak] Hungarian, in the courtyard Romanian, my husband is an auto mechanic and mostly Romanians come, so when the crowd is here, the children speak Hungarian in the house but they too speak Romanian in the courtyard, and the neighbors are all Romanians... And the workplace, well it is our court, only in Hungarian, Romanian, because we have to work on cars in Romanian.
5 year old child:	- Mamii! *(in Romanian)* Mummy!
Mother:	-Timea, menj ki édesanyám *(in Hungarian)* Timea, go out sweetheart.
Child :	- Nu vorbi pe ungureşte şi aşa nu-nţeleg. *(in Romanian)* Don't talk to me in Hungarian, you know that I don't understand it.
Mother:	- Timi menj ki. Timi menj ki, menj ki! *(in Hungarian)* Timi go out. Go out, go out!
Child:	- Meni chii?? [*trying to repeat what her mother said; hard to decide which language*] Go out??
Mother:	-Timea mér vagy rossz, Kriszti vidd ki! *(in Hungarian)* Timea why are you so crappy, Kriszti take her out!

<p style="text-align:center">*******</p>

2. Interview part

Child 1:	- Mami pot să beau suc? (*in Romanian*) Mummy, may I drink juice?
Child 2:	- Nici în grajd nu-i! (*in Romanian*) It is not in the equerry either! [new born lamb]
[...]	
Child 1:	- Mami pot să beau suc? (*in Romanian*) Mummy, may I drink juice?
[...]	
Child 1:	- Mami vreau suc. (*in Romanian*) Ihatok szukkot?? *(in Hungarian)*

	Mummy, I want juice. (*in Romanian*) Can I drink juice?? (*in Hungarian*)
Mother:	- Igen, édesanyám.(*in Hungarian*) Yes, sweetheart.

2.1. Bilingual individuals

This short speech act exemplifies their ambivalent sense of identity via language use when faced with a situation analogous to what Rabinowitz has termed "trapped identity" (Rabinowitz in: Batizán, 2011). The speakers define themselves as Hungarians, their declared identity being Hungarian, however, in reality even within the family they probably mostly use Romanian - this is why the girl in the conversation bursts out saying that she does not understand Hungarian.

The above illustrated linguistic behaviour can occur among the speakers because their language usage can be characterized through bilingualism. These individuals are bilinguals not necessarily in Bloomfield's maximalist approach: usage of two (or more) languages on mother tongue level (Bloomfield in: Mackey, 2000: 29) but rather in Grosjean's and Bartha's estimation: bilingual are those people who in their daily interactions use one or more languages, no matter the level of their competency (Bartha, 1999). In Grosjean's estimation, too, bilingualism means the regular usage of two or more languages, and bilingual are those people who in their daily interactions need to use these languages (Grosjean in: Kiss, 2002).

Lambert defines different typologies of bilingualism: additive versus subtractive, balanced versus unbalanced and integrative versus instrumental bilingualism. In the case of the community, in talk we can speak about subtractive bilingualism, when the usage of one language "flows" into the other language (Lambert in: Bartha, 1999) because Hungarian discourses are almost always mixed with Romanian words (this affirmation is not true vice versa). These people can be characterized also as unbalanced bilinguals (in relation to ambilinguals) (Wei, 2000), because they generally dispose of higher linguistic and communicative competencies in Romanian than in Hungarian. The third typology construes bilingualism from the point of view of language acquisition. In this approach, Lambert stresses that people can be motivated from two directions when learning a new language. Whether they want to become a part of the group which uses that certain language – Lambert calls this type of language acquisition integrative bilingualism – or they want to benefit from the fact that they do speak that certain language, and use it as an object – labelled by Lambert as instrumental bilingualism (Lambert in: Bartha,

1999). It is hard to decide where the bilingualism of the population of Răcăştie/ Rákosd - the object of our study - can be categorized, but we consider that we can speak about integrative rather than instrumental bilingualism.

2.2. Language choice. Explanation 'inside' the interlocutor

In the words of Grosjean, code switching is the alternate usage of two or more languages during the same manifestation and discourse (Grosjean in: Bartha, 1999).

A view that dominated for a long time in linguistic anthropology regarded code switching as a "macaroni language". In this view, the usage of foreign elements is not justified even in the undemanding forms of linguistic speech acts. This view has been challenged by many scholars (Myers-Scotton, Bolonyai, Silverstein, Fishman, Giles and Heller) who maintain that code switching calls forth a language variant which has its own inner logic and reasons. This approach is generally a very pragmatical one and usually makes it possible for the scholars to move from a "formalist" and "functionalist" paradigm to the domain of "intentionalism", which is "centered in the individual's mind" (Silverstein, 1998).

Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai refer to these code switching interlocutors as "calculating speakers" (Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai, 2001), considering that linguistic behaviour is influenced by background and social context although not determined by these. In their estimation code switching is "cognitively based calculations that depend on the actor, not speech community or social network, but rather individuals <own> the linguistic choice of one way of speaking over another" (Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai, 2001: 3).

Scholars differentiate between intersentential and intrasentential switching. In the first case, there is a turn between sentences, while in the latter, agents change the language used within one sentence. Firstly, we can address smooth code switching, where the interlocutor does not mark his/her intention to switch to another language, and second, about marked code switching, when the interlocutor indicates the language change. Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai underscore that while participating in a conversation act marked by language switching, each participant must understand the significance of particular code choices. They emphasise that each language has a set of rights and responsibilities, and in the case of marked code switching the speaker wants to establish a totally new role (Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai, 2001: 3).

Giles develops an interpersonal adaptation theory. He explains that interlocutors tend to switch code in those situations when they wish to underline that they are similar or different to their speech partner. The basis of code switching can be a societal change, almost a trade, which means that in some situations it is definitely worth switching the language (Giles in. Bartha, 1999).

The situation presented above in the second interview part can be analyzed through this perspective. The little girl asks for juice from her mother in Romanian, she tries to make her wish heard by her mother, but she does not succeed. Having already obviously lost her patience, she switches to Hungarian, the language preferred by her mother. And only then does her mother answer her question, allowing her to have juice. This situation would be interpreted by linguistic anthropologists through emphasizing that bilingual speakers are aware that they can achieve their goals most successfully through the usage of the correct language, the language in that specific situation considered by the speakers and context to be the correct one. In this interpretation, the little girl is aware that the Hungarian language is favoured by her mother and after she repeats her request in Romanian without any effect, changing strategy, she switches to Hungarian. This is how she finally obtains an answer.

Heller heads of this pragmatical, intentionalist approach, claiming that bilingualism and code switching can be considered a political strategy which "permits people to say and to, indeed to be two or more things where normally one choice is expected" (Nilep, 2006).

Fishman (2000) presents many factors which need to be taken into consideration while examining and understanding code switching and code choice. He too argues that when speaking about code switching we need to take into consideration the interlocutor: his/her status and role in the community and his/ her demographical characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity and religion). The second aspect which needs to be interpreted is the situation. It might be important where the interaction takes place in space (does this have an important latent meaning?) and how the linguistic interaction can be characterized: through formality, informality, solidarity, intimacy, status or power (Fishman, 2000). It might happen that the language usage changes according to certain topics (~ as might happen in the case of diglossia). As an illustration, an old woman explains her memories about her childhood in Hungarian, while at the same time she is speaking in Romanian about her grandchildren whose upbringing language is Romanian. This can happen because the language which

connects the old woman to her grandchildren is Romanian. Fishman argues that in the sphere of intimacy the interlocutor will always use his/her mother tongue no matter whether it is the H (high) or L (low) variant.

On the basis of Fishman's conception, we can draw an intimacy-power axis which plays an active role in language usage, in particular in language choice:

Intimacy   **Status/ Power**

Usage of mother tongue   *Usage of the other language*
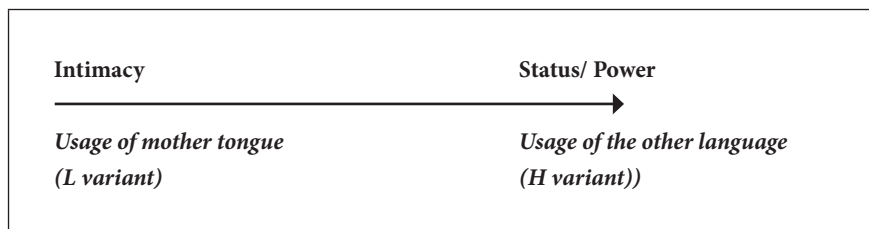*(L variant)*   *(H variant))*

Fig.1. Model built on Joshua Fishman's intimacy–status/power concept

However, we have seen that Fishman's intimacy–status/power model is not born out by reality in Răcăştie/Rákosd. Or put it more correctly, it is only partly confirmed, considering the fact that the respondent claimed that they are using the Hungarian language in the family (intimacy). Here we need to appeal to critical self-reflexivity and mention that the researcher's presence could have resulted in modifications in the field. This presence could have been interpreted, even unwillingly, as the presence of a 'Hungarian' person.

The approach and ideas presented above can prove very useful because they act with the linguistic interactions themselves, they can be empirically tested, and in many aspects are proved and confirmed by reality. On the other hand, these scholars might still miss something. We consider that they endow the interlocutors with too much autonomy and the speech act itself with too much consciousness. The next part of the paper presents how Bourdieu completes this approach.

3. Between freedom and constraint: Bourdieu's theory of practice

Bourdieu criticizes the rational choice theory (as he calls it "rational action theory") and we dare say that he criticizes anthropological linguistics, too, which has the same pragmatic approach in explaining language choice and code switching. His main critique to their address is that they locate the "dynamic of social life in

individual" (In Jenkins, 2002: 73) and do not lend enough importance and attention to collective histories and to social life. Moreover, Bourdieu alludes to the idea that "rational action theory" is the "sociologized version of the fond illusions which actors themselves maintain about their own rationality and power of decision making" (Bourdieu in: Jenkins, 2002: 73). To illustrate Bourdieu's view there is an adage which perfectly fits: "in a free country free individuals do what they are free to do". "We can always say that individuals make choices as long as we do not forget that they do not choose the principles of their choices" (Jenkins, 2002: 77).

In Bourdieu's estimation every interaction, and hence linguistic behaviour too, must be analyzed within the paradigm of "subjective expectations but objective probabilities" (Bourdieu in: Jenkins, 2002: 30). He also considers that in order to understand the studied phenomenon we need not only a view from 'above' (structuralism, objectivism) but also a view from 'below' (existentialism, subjectivism) to know how people live it (Bourdieu in: Jenkins, 2002: 50). Thus, the linguistic behaviour of the little girl cannot be understood simply through the logic that she practiced code switching, because she was aware that her mother preferred the Hungarian language. Thus she 'decided' to use the Hungarian language to reach her goal more effectively. We believe we feel that something is missing from this model. Was she that conscious that her wish would be fulfilled in a shorter time if she spoke in Hungarian? Do actors always have that much time to contemplate this issue during conversation? Is it always so black-and-white which language carries more weight in a certain situation? And was it the totally 'free' choice of the girl when she switched to Romanian? Bourdieu would answer "no" to all these questions. Consequently, he moves beyond subjectivism (interpretation of lived experiences) but beyond objectivism, too (which highlights rules and structures) and tries to bridge these two levels (Bourdieu, 1992:12).

This is how he introduces his theory of practice. Practices are results of different set of predispositions or products of the "relation between habitus and special social context" (Bourdieu, 1992). In his 'field', he defines everyday linguistic exchanges as situated encounters between agents endowed with socially structured resources and competencies, in such a way that every linguistic interaction, however personal and insignificant it may seem, bears the traces of the social structure that it both expresses and helps to reproduce (Bourdieu, 1992: 2). Practice is not wholly conscious, neither is it wholly unconscious either. Practice is "happening" and it is part of the social game, of the social game where the rules are inculcated in early childhood (the girl in our interview is a child) by the structure because they determine what one can and what one cannot do (Jenkins, 2002: 70-72). This is

how actual speakers possess a "practical competence" (Bourdieu, 1992: 8). This is how the girl in Răcăştie/Rákosd does not necessarily 'know' that she should switch, but she 'does' it. Something between 'knowing' and 'having a sense' or 'feeling' of it.

This feel for the game is created through habitus, which is a set of dispositions which orientate individuals to act in certain ways. Habitus mediates between outside and inside worlds, between individual and supra-individual structures. It is a system of "generative schemes" that are durable (both in social construction and in self), transposable, both subjective and objective (Craig, Puma & Postone, 1993). Habitus defines one's possibilities and access to symbolic (social and cultural) capital. It is not an abstract concept, it exists "inside the heads" as a result of participating in interactions (Jenkins, 2002: 74). With this logic, the habitus of the girl was facilitated (Bourdieu would emphasize that it was not predetermined) by her ethnic belonging, family background, by the temporal and spatial factors. Consequently, this speech act happened in (and is typical to) Hungarian diaspora-area in Transylvania, Romania. The girl in the interview does not belong to a Hungarian elite family, who could afford to enrol their children in a prestigious Hungarian private school but 20 km away. Nor can the mother afford to spend much time with the education of their children, because she is helping her husband from morning until night repairing cars and because she is not that educated either. The child spends most of her time with her brothers and sisters and with girls and boys who are living in the neighbourhood and who are all Romanian. This is how her language competency in Romanian is higher than in Hungarian, although Hungarian is her 'first' language (Batizán, 2011).

Language as any other social, socially embedded phenomenon cannot be understood and analyzed "in isolation from its cultural context and the social conditions of its production and reproduction" (Jenkins, 2002: 153). Linguistic relations are always relations of power, set by the authorized and legitimized cultural authorities of the dominant group and exercised even on lower level through "civil hegemony". It is important to note that in Gramsci's view, the state turns to "direct domination" only in that case when it cannot win the consent of the masses through "civil hegemony" (Anderson, 1976). Bourdieu uses the term "symbolic domination" to express the same thing. As Bourdieu puts it, "all symbolic domination presupposes from those who submit to it a form of complicity which is neither passive submission to external constraint nor a free adherence values" (Bourdieu, 1992: 51). Thus the absolute dichotomy of constraint and freedom is challenged, and something is happening that Bourdieu describes as "invisible, silent violence" (Bourdieu, 1992: 52).

As a result, to the directed nature of the linguistic market, languages do not have the same value, and dominant legitimate language (Romanian, in our case study) is a distinct capital (Jenkins, 2002: 154). It needs to be added that Jenkins is speaking in this case about different registers of the same language, but we consider that his observation - which in fact belongs to Bourdieu - is valid in those situations too when two different languages are at stake.

Finally, we consider that Bourdieu's approach to language use and code switching, as socially embedded phenomena offers us a new perspective and new dimension when trying to analyze rhetorical acts. Thus, while seeking explanations for these phenomena we need to be aware that they are not autonomous and totally conscious speech acts. Individuals dispose of a certain habitus and are situated in a certain 'social game'. Additionally, there are the linguistic markets too, which define the 'use value' and the recommendation level of a certain language.

Conclusion

In this paper two theoretical approaches were presented which attempted to answer the question of code switching, language choice and identity in different ways. Linguistic anthropology offered a more pragmatical approach to this issue. Scholars belonging to this theoretical "school" (Myers-Scotton, Bolonyai, Silverstein, Fishman, Giles and Heller) consider that code switching appears as result of the direct (rational) choice of the interlocutor, who realizes that the 'correct' language can help him/her to achieve his/her goals more effectively and faster.

At the same time Bourdieu emphasizes the social context of the linguistic interaction and habitus, the practices reflecting the identity of the persons participating in these interactions. He also underlines that the use of one or another language is never 'innocent', and the value of languages, and thus their use too, is determined by the linguistic market which, in turn, is highly influenced by the legitimizing apparatus and dominating goals of the state.

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Cross-linguistic differences in semantic conceptualization and the relation of lexical transfer to cultural competence

Gábor GYŐRI[48]

ABSTRACT

Languages often reflect different, sometimes even contradicting worldviews in terms of dividing up reality, which is most noticeable in the structure of the lexicon. Comparing corresponding lexical fields across languages frequently shows that they reflect the human environment in different ways. The reason for this is that the meanings of lexical items making up these lexical fields, that is, the way they categorize reality, is influenced to a great extent by culturally conventionalized conceptualizations. These conceptualizations are results of cultural perspectives yielding various interpretations of reality and not reflecting an objective structure of the world. However, these cross-linguistic and cross-cultural divergences provide an equally acceptable and adequate view of the world. These semantic discrepancies due to cultural influence are true even for basic level terms, despite the fact that their meanings cannot be totally separated from perception. The study will focus on such lexical differences and also discuss how word knowledge in one's L1 (and L2, etc.) may influence lexical transfer and the ensuing semantic information connected to cultural knowledge when learning another language. This process will also enhance the language learners' cultural acceptance and awareness and through this increase their pluricultural competence.

Keywords: conceptualization, semantic knowledge, cross-linguistic differences, lexical transfer, cultural awareness

Introduction

An important function of a category system is to provide a taxonomy of the entities categorized, i.e., to exhibit their super- and subordering relations. In such a taxonomy the categorizing process of entities at certain levels is more closely

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linked to sensory experience than at others. For instance, it would be quite difficult to list perceptual features that characterize for instance the category FURNITURE in general, i.e., that are characteristic of all entities that count as pieces of furniture. Consequently, an object cannot be recognized as 'furniture' by its shape alone. In contrast, a description of any item of furniture, for instance a chair, will necessarily contain such characteristics and a description of a specific type of chair, for instance an office chair, will contain even more specific ones.

Interestingly, such a taxonomy, one based on the words of a language exhibiting such relations, does not necessarily stand in exact correspondence with how entities appear to be related to each other in a super- and subordering hierarchy in the natural world. The biological taxonomy of vertebrate animals has five main subordinate groups: fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. Vertebrates, obviously, do not have common visual characteristics in general. Their subgroup fish, on the other hand, has quite prominent general perceptual characteristics. The same can be said also for the subgroup of birds. However, if we consider the vertebrate subgroups of amphibians, reptiles, and mammals, the situation is quite different. Especially mammals as a subgroup are difficult to characterize with perceptual features – not to mention the most prominent visual characteristic of shape – that can be generalized to the whole group, although they are at the same level as fish and birds in this taxonomy. However, animals found one level lower, i.e., belonging to the group of mammals, like for instance horses, are very well describable in this general way and thus also characterizable by a general shape.

In line with the above observations, at the beginning of research on basic level terms, Rosch, (1978: 30) claimed that there is a level of categorization of reality – which she termed the *basic level* – at which we make categorizations on the basis of natural discontinuities found in nature. At this level we find "information-rich bundles of perceptual and functional attributes […] that form natural discontinuities" and this is where "basic cuts in categorization are made" (Rosch, 1978: 31). Furthermore, in a taxonomy this is "the most inclusive level at which there are attributes common to all or most members of the category" and where at the same time the discontinuities between adjacent categories is the largest. The criteria for distinguishing entities that display category similarity to a maximal degree between one another and minimal similarity compared to other entities is, on the one hand, perception of shape, and on the other hand, those behavioural functions and motor movements that are usually associated with them. Due to this, these categories are the ones most easily recognized, which also means, as Rosch et al. (1976: 382) explained, that these "categories [are the] most codable, most

coded, and most necessary in language". Obviously, this has a decisive effect on vocabulary acquisition. This effect clearly derives from the perceptual salience as illustrated above with the example of vertebrate animals. This accounts for the fact that this is the part of the vocabulary that is first learnt in first language acquisition (Pruden et al., 2006), and on the other hand, understandably also has great priority in vocabulary acquisition in foreign language learning (Xio & Wolf, 2010).

1. Categorization and cultural knowledge

Categorization above the basic level has no direct perceptual ground, and even categorization below the basic level is not necessarily grounded in perceptual qualities but often involves knowledge other than the types basic level categorization is based on. This knowledge comprises mostly various types of socio-cultural knowledge, which influences the process of vocabulary acquisition in foreign language learning, since it requires the parallel acquisition of some degree of socio-cultural knowledge (Byram, 1997). Therefore, the awareness of the culture where the foreign language to be learnt is spoken should be promoted in language teaching, as proposed by Halverson already in 1985 (Halverson, 1985: 329). This type of knowledge is the most important in the case of human artefacts. For instance, tables as such are easily recognizable purely by their shape, but knowledge of the category FURNITURE requires the familiarity with the cultural tradition of what objects count as furniture. For instance, according to the examples in Rosch and Mervis's experiment, basic level categories like CUSHION, RUG, VASE, TELEPHONE, etc. are subordinates of the category FURNITURE (Rosch & Mervis, 1975: 579). The reason for this is that a linguistic category works as a network of prototypical meaning structures in which there is a conceptual global prototype for the category as a whole. This means that conceptually certain members of the category represent typical exemplars, while others are considered to be further away from this conceptual centre and therefore represent peripheral exemplars (Taylor, 2008: 49). This prototype structure of a category is often dependent on cultural conceptualization. This is also the case with the superordinate category FURNITURE, and thus, cushions, rugs, vases, and desk telephones are definitely not considered to be pieces of furniture in many other cultures. From a linguistic point of view it follows that in languages spoken in these cultures these words are not hyponyms of the word that has the meaning 'furniture'. This example perfectly shows that learning a foreign language, especially the acquisition of vocabulary, promotes the acquisition of cultural knowledge, which

at the same time facilitates the language learner's awareness and acceptance of that particular foreign culture and cultural differences in general. Therefore, emphasis should be put on this aspect in vocabulary teaching and learning, especially since this will also enhance the learner's linguistic competence in that language.

As for the perceptual characteristics alone, it is obvious that different types of chairs or different types of tables have a large number of attributes in common, whereas different types of furniture, although the category FURNITURE is more inclusive, do not. Also, different types of kitchen chairs, for instance, do not share a significantly larger number of common attributes than do different types of chairs as compared to the number of attributes (of course mainly non-perceptual ones) of furniture as such. The existence of a special level in categorization, which is basic in the above respects, is also demonstrated by the fact that the handling of objects categorized at this level also has the most motor sequences in common in terms of human interaction and behaviour related to them – mostly in the case of artefacts. Furthermore, objects at this level exhibit a significant similarity in shape, i.e., this is "the most inclusive level [in a taxonomy] at which an averaged shape of an object can be recognized" (Rosch, 1978: 33-34).

Thus, a basic level category is distinguished from its superordinate category and subordinate categories according to the following. For instance, if we take the example of the category CHAIR, members of the more inclusive category FURNITURE are not associated with similar shapes or with common motor sequences that humans perform with them, and members of the less inclusive category KITCHEN CHAIR do not require different motor sequences in our interaction with them or do not have significantly different shapes than chairs in general. Rosch also claims that "objects are first seen or recognized as members of their basic category and only with the aid of additional processing can they be identified as members of their superordinate or subordinate category" (Rosch, 1978: 35). This is obviously due to the fact that it is mostly perceptual features that dominate at this level of categorization, or in other words, categorization at this level is largely based on the way humans perceive the world in terms of sensory input. Categorization at the levels above and below this one requires the processing of functional features, i.e., it must involve knowledge about the functions of objects, which knowledge, as we have seen above, is mostly socio-culturally grounded. The socio-cultural embeddedness of these latter categories is undeniable and their existence can only be explained as cultural categorization. Thus, for instance, distinguishing two relatively similar tables as kitchen or dining tables respectively,

involves, apart from perceptual information, the socio-cultural knowledge of how, where and for what purpose certain items, in this case tables, are used or with what function in mind they were manufactured.

Since categorization at the basic level relies mainly on perceptual attributes and common motor movements, it is to be expected that the basic level perception of world structure will engender categories that exhibit a significant degree of universality across languages and cultures. This is also suggested by the fact that the psychological relevance and the special status of basic level categories derives from the universally fundamental characteristic of human cognitive capacity. Categorization is primarily a non-linguistic cognitive operation and the existence of basic level categories is in itself not a linguistic matter but a psychological-cognitive one, since it is about the recognition of perceptual features and motor movements for the guidance of interaction with the physical environment. This is the reason why basic level terms designating objects naturally appear before words designation super- and subordinate categories during first language acquisition, as it was shown in a study carried out by Pruden et al. (2006) with 10-month-old infants, which study demonstrated that perceptual salience dominated the learning of object names. Furthermore, even mentally impaired children have been shown to have a grasp of basic level categories without language, while they cannot handle categories at other levels (Boucher et al., 2008: 273).

2. The interplay of language and culture and its effect on the vocabulary of basic objects

When examining the universality of basic level categories, the issue of language cannot be left aside – however strong their reliance on perception is. Therefore, an experimental investigation of such categories requires invoking their linguistic counterparts, i.e., basic level terms. Pansky and Koriat (2004) found in two experiments on memory for story material that participants tended to remember basic level terms instead of the super- and subordinate ones that they had been presented with. The conceptual primacy of basic level categories as exhibited by their effects on memory was shown in these experiments on the basis of linguistic material, i.e., storytelling. The results of these experiments may also offer practical assistance for the methodology of foreign language vocabulary teaching.

For human beings and for human societies in general, language is the primary instrument for categorization since we can be aware of these categories only in this way, i.e., in a linguistic form. However, if we want to explain why the basic level

may differ from language to language, it is important to make a strict distinction between the basic level in perceptual categorization and the basic level in linguistic categorization, which latter is basically word meaning. Although categorization is primarily a non-linguistic cognitive operation, the formation of linguistically coded categories is strongly influenced by cultural conceptualizations even at the basic level. As Lakoff says, "[h]uman categorization is essentially a matter of [...] human experience [...] and *culture*" (author's emphasis) (Lakoff, 1987: 8).

In our everyday lives we are aware of the partitioning of the world into categories in the form of words which designate these categories in language, the language we speak. The issue is therefore not simply about categories in language but about "categories found in a culture and coded by the language of that culture at a particular point in time [... and ... w]hen we speak of the formation of categories, we mean their formation in the culture" (Rosch, 1978: 28). Thus, when looking into what categories can be found in different cultures at the basic level, we have to examine the linguistic aspects of basic level categorization and analyse the relationship between such categories, their linguistic expressions and their cultural embeddedness. In the following I will show that in spite of the expected universality of basic level categories due to their general reliance on perception, their linguistic coding – based on the standard mechanisms of lexicalization – exerts a strong cultural influence on them. It is for this reason that differences in cultural categorization manifest in the meanings of linguistic items must be taken into consideration in foreign language learning and teaching.

The developmental effect of basic level categorization, according to which "basic objects are the first categorizations of concrete objects made by children" (Rosch, 1978: 35), is not necessarily a question of language development. It has been suggested that the acquisition of such categories may precede their linguistic expression in the child (Diesendruck, 2003: 771), although the tangible manifestation of the acquisition of a category is the proper usage of its linguistic expression by the child. Children's acquisition of the names of basic objects prior to names for categories above and below that level may also be influenced by the fact that basic-level names for different items appear to be the most useful and the most used ones as compared to other elements of the lexicon (Rosch, 1978: 35). This usefulness and frequency is obviously connected to the already mentioned dominant cognitive status of basic level categories according to which objects are first recognized as members of such categories. This is why foreign language learners are inclined to learn words for basic level categories first, since

the knowledge of categories above and below this level requires additional socio-cultural information, which the learner is not likely to possess in the first stages of vocabulary learning.

However, as will be shown below, even when learning words for basic level categories, a foreign language learner will not simply learn a label for a universal perceptual category that necessarily matches the semantic scope of the corresponding word in the learner's native language. Even the learning of a basic level term will often require knowledge of a culture-dependent grouping of various objects, although of course with a rather strong perceptual basis. An illustrative example is the semantic difference between the English word *cup* and the Hungarian word *csésze*, theoretically constituting semantic equivalents. However, while *csésze* denotes only ceramic cups, *cup* is used to refer to cups that are made of paper or plastic as well, and which have the shape of a glass, and not only to ceramic cups. Paper and plastic cups in Hungarian are denoted by the word *pohár*, which is theoretically the semantic equivalent of English *glass*. As we can see, even basic level categories – although they rely on perceptual attributes to a great extent – are affected by the human conceptualizing capacity when emerging in language as basic level terms. Since they constitute linguistic meaning, they must also be the results of cultural categorization and represent cultural categories. It is in such cases when cross-linguistic influence must be taken into consideration in the learning process. Cross-linguistic influence in this case is lexical transfer, which in the event of vocabulary acquisition is the process of a language learner consciously or unconsciously applying L1 knowledge to the procedure of learning. This transfer can be positive, causing correct and successful learning, while negative transfer is when the influence of L1 causes erroneous learning (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse 2018; Jarvis 2009). In the above case the semantic differences in the seeming lexical equivalents enhance the likelihood of negative transfer, like referring to a paper cup with the word *glass*. Pavlenko (2009) stressed the relevance of cross-linguistic mental representations for the quality of this transfer between L1 and L2, as the transfer depends on these, and she examined how "the actual structure of *linguistic categories*, that is mental representations linked to word forms (*lexical concepts*)" (italics in original) effects this transfer (Pavlenko, 2009: 125).

Basic level categories are expressed in language with basic level terms, but words are not simple labels for these categories. Word meanings are symbolic representations of *conceptual* categories containing not only perceptual and structure dependent functional features as perceptual categorical representations do but also cultural knowledge about these categories. This is also the main reason why there

may be cross-linguistic semantic discrepancies as for the concrete sets of referents in the denotations of corresponding words. Super- and subordinate categories are even more dependent on non-perceptual features. However, a superordinate category like FURNITURE, drawing upon some culture-based knowledge of housing (as has been discussed above), can display more crucial discrepancies cross-linguistically than subordinate categories. Thus, the symbolic representation for instance of KITCHEN CHAIR is anchored in the cultural knowledge that some chairs, not necessarily perceptually different from other chairs, are used in kitchens. However, subordinate level terms usually have the morphological characteristics of linguistically representing this culturally relevant knowledge in the form of compounds, like English *kitchen chair* and Hungarian *konyhaszék*. This also shows the relative universality of this feature for subordination, which is based on its metonymical character typical for compounds specifying a salient attribute that distinguishes it from other members of the category by identifying the scope of referents the compound denotes (Benczes, 2006: 91-92; Brdar, 2017: 144).

3. Cross-linguistic and cultural differences in the lexicon

The function of categorization as a cognitive process is to create a model of the environment in the mind for the facilitation of a functional and adaptive interaction with this environment. Because of this it is obvious that categorizing an object on the basis of its perceptual features does not happen for the sake of these features alone but in order to provide information about necessary or possible ways of interaction with that object, i.e., about its function. In different cultures this function may depend on all kinds of other knowledge not purely derivable from the perceptual characteristics of objects, like shape, structure or other such features, but cultural knowledge of tradition, customs, habits, beliefs, etc. This knowledge is built into the language of that culture and is reflected in the conceptualizations incorporated in the linguistic categorization, i.e., the meanings of words, because "lexical items provide an index to conceptualisations that are largely derived from the cultural experience of the users of a given language" (Sharifian, 2011: 48). Therefore, among the affective strategies in foreign language learning it is very important that the learner develops a positive attitude toward the culture and society where the foreign language is spoken (Pavičić Takač, 2008: 40).

As already mentioned, among the different levels of categorization cultural conceptualizations are the most obvious in the case of the lexical manifestations of super- and subordinate categories. For instance, the functions comprised in the

category of FURNITURE cannot even derive directly from the structures of the different members of the category on the basis of the notion of affordance, which occurs when similar features shared by certain objects afford them similar functions (Gibson, 1979: 119). The category FURNITURE can clearly not be characterized with perceptual attributes because its members have no common structure, and hence there are no common and general motor movements for interacting with pieces of furniture either. The functions of furniture are based on cultural knowledge of conventions as reflected by the definition given in *OED Online* for the word *furniture*: "[m]ovable articles, whether useful or ornamental, in a dwelling-house, place of business, or public building" (OED Online). Thus, the knowledge of the category FURNITURE is basically the knowledge that certain movable articles are used for equipping a space for residing in it for certain purposes and also the knowledge about what these articles commonly are. Subordinate categories, like KITCHEN CHAIR for instance, also involve cultural knowledge of conventions, including that certain chairs are used in kitchens to sit on in order to perform activities that are normally performed in kitchens while seated, i.e., their basic level function plus some special function not directly deriving from their structure.

Due to the effect of being coded in language, such cultural knowledge components are also included in the meanings of basic level terms. These components may even cause differences in the conceptual content of basic level terms between cultures reflected in divergences in the level of categorization for certain objects. Kövecses mentions an example for the fact that there can be cultural differences in basic level categorization, namely "that TREE is basic level category only in urban cultures", whereas for indigenous people rather different kinds of trees, like OAK, MAPLE, etc. appear at the basic level, as revealed by their use of these terms (Kövecses 2006: 46). Theoretically, and from a logical point of view, such examples go against the definition of basic level and also in general against what categorization (or classification) is about in logical terms. However, here we have to do with categorization from a cognitive point of view, i.e., modelling the particular environment for the sake of functional interaction. Even if this environment is the natural environment, it is the environment of a cultural community and because of this the shared cognitive model of the community will be influenced – if not determined – by their culture: their customs, traditions, beliefs, life style, etc., which all affect their view and perspective of their environment. In the following I will examine how – beside perceptual information – cultural knowledge also contributes to the formation of linguistic categories, i.e., how "[v]erbal labels change (modulate) 'nonlinguistic' representations" (Lupyan, 2012: 256).

The cultural effects in the linguistic coding of categories are responsible for the fact that there is no complete overlap of the semantic contents of the corresponding lexical items across different languages, as usually found in dictionaries, even in the case of basic level terms. When comparing the meanings of these lexical items, beside this non-overlap, we often find considerable discrepancies also in the hyponymy hierarchy in the semantic structure even in cases of genetically closely related languages. In other words, terms that are at the basic level in one language may behave as superordinate or subordinate ones in other languages. This reflects a form of cultural adaptation facilitated by the nature of linguistic meaning. In linguistic categorization the original cognitive categorization processes relying purely on perception are supplemented or even overridden by symbolic representational processes. The purpose of this is to allow a more flexible way of adapting the structure of the lexicon to the requirements of the environmental conditions and circumstances under the influence of the particular culture in which the actual language is spoken. In order to demonstrate these states of affairs, below I will look at some differences in basic level categorization as testified by the meanings of basic level terms based on comparisons of examples from various languages. The analysis of the data will show that cultural and linguistic 'non-universality' is quite common even at the basic level. One of the main reasons for this 'non-universality' can be found in Tomasello's claim according to which "[l]inguistic symbols [...] embody the ways that previous generations of human beings in a social group have found it useful to categorize and construe the world" (Tomasello's 1999: 8). In other words, lexical meaning reflects socio-cultural perspectives, and lexicalization is not some kind of objective form of a category that is given a name in such an act. Word meanings have a cultural and linguistic history reflecting the influence of socio-cultural factors during their development parallel to the emergence of the categories themselves. Consequently, it is essential to take this into consideration when teaching or learning an L2, L3, etc., because in the course of vocabulary acquisition learners have to acquire a categorization of reality that does not necessarily match the one in their mother tongue in all respects.

In the following I will take a look at some basic level terms and examine how these basic level categories behave in their different languages respectively when they become lexicalized under the influence of culture. This influence may also occur as a result of some cultural event in the history of a language. An interesting example for such a case is when the conceptual categorizations differentiating CHAIR and STOOL resulted in language change due to an accidental event in the history of English. As a result of the early French cultural influence on the

English language the word *chair* was borrowed from Old French, the original form being *chaëre*, which actually derives from Latin *cathedra* 'seat'. This example shows that even borrowing may play a crucial role in influencing the status of words in the lexicon with regard to taxonomy. The borrowing of Old French *chaëre* into Old English affected the semantic evolution of the English word *stool* with regard to its possible range of referents, and this event is responsible for the semantic discrepancy between English *stool* and its German cognate *Stuhl* meaning 'chair'. As a consequence of the Old French word entering the English language, the semantic development of English *stool* ('a seat without any support for the back or arms') could not run in parallel with that of its German cognate *Stuhl* 'chair'. This resulted in different cultural conventions with regard to what types of objects should be included in these linguistic categories.

The category CHAIR and the basic level terms for designating it in various languages, which are in theory semantically equivalent to the English basic level term *chair*, can serve as good examples for pointing out the differences in the cultural conventions of how basic level categories are designated. Thus, the English term *chair* is used to refer to both of the categories that the German terms *Stuhl* and *Sessel* 'upholstered armchair' designate. It is worth mentioning here that the same discrepancy exists between English and Hungarian, i.e., Hungarian *szék* and *fotel* are both designated by the English word *chair*. While the German terms *Stuhl* and *Sessel* as well as the Hungarian terms *szék* and *fotel* are basic level terms, and therefore designate coordinate categories, the English term *armchair* designates a subordinate category of the basic level category designated by *chair*. All this is due to the difference in the range of referents. But if we look at the range of referents in more detail, then we find that *armchair* does not only designate the categories that *fotel* and *Sessel* do, but also the categories designated by German *Armstuhl* and Hungarian *karosszék*. This shows that the hyponymic relations between semantically corresponding words in terms of dictionary definitions may often be rather controversial. Looking at some other languages we find that the taxonomic relations are similar to German, i.e., e.g., Chinese *yĭzi*, Hungarian *szék*, Russian *stul*, Spanish *silla*, Turkish *sandalye* all have a range of referents comparable to *Stuhl*. In other words, all these terms designate the same basic level category, i.e., have the same range of referents, while the English term *chair*, though basic level without doubt, has a wider range of referents. It does not designate the same category, since an armchair is conceptually a kind of chair while objects designated by German *Sessel* are conceptually not a kind of chair, i.e., are not included in the range of objects designated by German *Stuhl*.

If we now look at the category designated by Hungarian *fotel* and German *Sessel*, we can see that in most other languages, except English, it is a basic level one. However, the situation is not that unambiguous. The Chinese equivalent of Hungarian *fotel* and German *Sessel* – based on its dictionary definition and not on exact examination of the types and range of referents of the word – is *dānrén shāfā*, which is morphologically a compound and its literal meaning is 'single sofa', *shāfā* being a borrowing of the English word *sofa*. This indicates that these types of objects are culturally conceptualized and categorized as subordinates to the category SOFA, i.e., they are considered a kind of sofa and not subordinates to CHAIR as is the case in English. Actually, the same taxonomic relation is true for Turkish as is for Chinese with the difference that the linguistic expression designating this particular category of objects is a syntactic phrase and not a compound, and it literally means 'sofa for one person': namely *tek kīşīlīk koltuk*. Spanish does not use a totally separate lexeme for this category either but also resorts to a morphological solution. The term for 'armchair' is formed by attaching the augmentative suffix *-ón* to *silla* yielding *sillón*, which derivative form means approximately 'big chair' but represents a separate conceptual category in itself.

Conclusion

The analysis of the above examples points to the fact that the basic level is not universal across languages, even though from a purely cognitive point of view it is on the basis of common perceptual attributes that objects are consigned to particular basic level categories. The reason for this is that cultural influences on categorization play an important role when categories surface in a language by way of being coded linguistically. As Kövecses writes, "we cannot explain categorization simply as a cognitive process – culture plays an equally important role" (Kövecses 2006: 46). The non-universality resulting from this state of affairs holds for all conceptual categories that underlie the meanings of words, i.e., for linguistic categorization. Basic level terms do not exactly correspond to what we categorize as basic level on purely perceptual grounds. They do not match our non-linguistic cognitive categories that our general cognitive categorizing capacity produces based on the perceived structure of the world.

Linguistic categorization enables a more flexible way of socio-cultural adaptation to the environment because language, as a symbolic form of representation, allows conceptual categories to include knowledge other than knowledge based on the

perception of shape, and on basic function and motor movement. This knowledge becomes conventionalized in language in the form of cultural categorization during lexicalization processes. This is why the meanings of basic level terms, the words most often used in everyday communication and therefore having primary significance in vocabulary learning in foreign language acquisition, do not match the perceptual attributes on which a simple basic level category relies. Language supplements the perceptual basis of basic level categories by various types of cultural knowledge giving rise to cross-cultural and therefore also cross-linguistic differences in the conceptual categories underlying the meanings of basic level terms. Thus, the non-universality of basic level terms reflects an adaptation to the diverse conditions of particular human cultures. This is the main reason why Rosch also found in her experiments that the perceptual "nature of many of the attributes listed by [the] subjects […] presented a problem for […] a realistic view" about the universality of basic level categories because even these categories "require knowledge about humans, their activities, and the real world in order to be understood" (Rosch 1978: 41).

Word meaning does not reflect an objective view of the world, not even at the basic level of categorization, because language embraces various types of socio-cultural knowledge, mostly incorporated in lexical meaning. Consequently, knowledge of language cannot be separated from cultural knowledge. This circumstance will influence foreign language learning, primarily in the case of vocabulary acquisition. Therefore, in the first place, cross-linguistic influence must be taken into account for the sake of successful teaching and learning for the learner to be able to acquire a proper knowledge of an L2. This will also promote the acquisition of cultural knowledge and competence, which in turn will also enhance the learner's linguistic and communicative competence in the foreign language. All this together will expand the language learner's awareness of the culture where the foreign language is spoken and foster the acceptance of cultural differences. Ultimately, this will also help exclude the likelihood of negative transfer from the learner's L1 and further the probability of positive transfer.

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3.

Higher education challenges

Promoting intercultural awareness in a university English Speaking Cultures seminar

Francis J. PRESCOTT-PICKUP[49]

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an attempt to promote increased intercultural awareness in students in a BA seminar course on English-speaking cultures in a large Hungarian university. The 15 students on the course were almost all international students from 11 different countries with diverse cultural and educational contexts. A single student came from the university's home country, Hungary. The course was focused on England and the question of identity within that country, but by taking a student-centred approach and inviting the students to also think about their own identity and culture through a number of different tasks, I encouraged students to make comparisons and connections between their own cultures and the topics that we looked at in the course. The paper will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the different tasks as well as the points-based evaluation system which was used for grading the course. The overall success of the course will be considered with reference to the students' own written evaluations and implications will be drawn for the creation of future courses involving students from highly diverse cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: Intercultural competence, intercultural awareness, teaching culture, student-centred teaching, points-based assessment

Introduction

The teaching of culture in the language classroom, especially the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, has grown in importance with the rapid increase in the teaching of the English language around the world encouraged by globalisation

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at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. This can be seen in the national curriculums of countries throughout Europe. In Hungary, for instance, the curriculum framework for English as the first foreign language for grades 11-12 lists intercultural topics such as connection points between English and Hungarian history, the English version of Hungarian recipes, what other languages are spoken in the UK, and debate tasks on whether it is important to keep traditions alive or preserve different cultures (Office of Education, 2020: 36). The growth in the importance of teaching culture can also be seen in the curricula of English departments in universities in non-English-speaking countries who wish to train their students to be global citizens:

> It is therefore an important task of university programmes to educate global citizens, with competences which enable them to deal with local, global and intercultural issues and which help them to engage in appropriate interactions with people from different cultures. In this endeavour English language programmes have an exceptional role since English undeniably functions as the *lingua franca* of global communication in all walks of life. (Károly et al., 2020: 7)

In order to achieve this goal of creating global citizens and facilitating interaction across cultures, the construct of *intercultural competence* is of key importance in higher education (Guillén-Yparrea & Ramírez-Montoya, 2023). This construct is part of a comparatively recent focus on educating learners through the acquisition of competencies (Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an educational approach to the development of language programmes that first emerged in the US in the 1970s but is also at the centre of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) developed by the European Council of Europe in 2001 (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)). Put simply, intercultural competence is a term which describes the set of skills required for a person of one culture to be able to understand and communicate with people from other cultures who use "significantly different linguistic codes … [and hold] significantly different sets of values and models of the world" (Beneke, 2000: 108-109). An obvious way to achieve the development of students' intercultural competence is through courses based on studying cultures other than the students' own.

The aim of the present paper is to describe a culture-based course for BA undergraduates within the school of English and American studies in the faculty of arts of a large university in Hungary. The course was aimed at exploring the notion of contemporary English identity while also developing the language proficiency of the students. What made it particularly suitable for an approach based on the notion of *intercultural awareness*, a related construct to intercultural competence,

was that the students on the course were from many different nationalities, therefore providing an opportunity for intercultural comparison between multiple cultures and the target culture. The paper will describe the methods used to make these comparisons and consider the success of the various tasks and activities that the students were asked to do as well as the overall success of the course, using the students' own words.

1. Teaching culture in the classroom

There have been numerous attempts to define culture, and here I will focus only on a few which are relevant for the language classroom. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993), in their book on teaching culture in the EFL classroom, distinguish between "big C" culture to mean the traditional view of culture present in school curricula in Europe and North America which focuses on what has been achieved by western countries throughout their history, and "little c" culture which relates to the behaviour and customs of different groups. This second view of culture accords much more with that of anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, who said, "Culture means the whole complex of traditional behavior which has been developed by the human race and is successively learned by each generation" (Mead, 1937: 17), and Clifford Geertz, who used the idea of texts to define culture: "The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong" (Geertz, 1973: 452).

However, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) point out that in education the "big C" view of culture has been dominant because it is easier to present in terms of clearly defined topics in the curriculum and units in course books, whereas topics to do with "little c" culture are more complex and have tended to be sidelined or treated as if they were of less importance. This fits neatly with Kumaravadivelu's (2003) view that the traditional approach to teaching culture in the language classroom ignores the vast potential offered by the cultural diversity that the learners themselves bring with them. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) recommend an approach to teaching culture which involves three distinct elements: Products, such as literature, folklore, and music; Behaviours, such as customs, habits, and dress; and Ideas, such as beliefs, values, and institutions.

Moran (2001) also discusses the "big C" "little c" distinction in terms of culture viewed as civilization and culture viewed as customs, traditions, and practices, but also points out the essential part that language has to play in transmitting and

performing culture. He puts the ability to use language to enter into other cultures and communicate appropriately and effectively with the people of these cultures, an ability termed *intercultural communication*, as being central to the study of culture in general. He presents a model of culture which has five dimensions: Products, Practices, Perspectives, Communities, and Persons (Moran, 2001: 24). His view builds on earlier attempts, such as Tomalin and Stempleski's, to define culture in terms of its artifacts, its behaviours and actions, and its beliefs, values, and attitudes (Products, Practices, and Perspectives). Moran adds the dimension of Communities, meaning "the specific social contexts, circumstances, and groups in which members carry out cultural practices" (25), giving examples from the broad – national culture, gender, race, religion – to the narrow – a social club, a sports team, a family. The fifth dimension is Persons, which he defines as "the individual members who embody the culture and its communities in unique ways" (25), pointing out that "all persons take on a particular cultural identity that both links them to and separates them from other members of the culture" (25).

To this five dimensional model, which can be used to describe any cultural topic, Moran adds a further useful construct by presenting these dimensions in the form of the cultural iceberg (see figure 1), the point of which is to present which dimensions of culture are explicit and therefore easily visible and which are rather implicit and therefore understood (tacit) rather than out in the open. This is a very useful metaphor for thinking about how to approach a culture which is well-known by other cultures for its more explicit elements, but whose various deep-seated perspectives are rather more complex and often hidden from outside view. This certainly applies to the culture of the course I was teaching, that of England and the English.
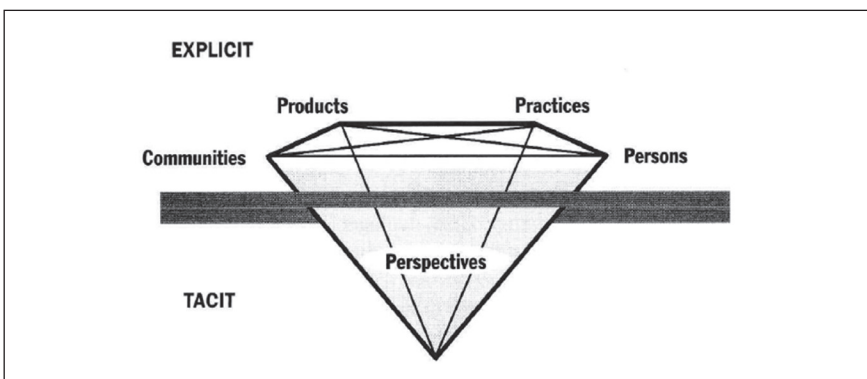

Fig. 1. Moran's drawing of the Iceberg of Culture (Moran, 2001:28)

For my course I did not explicitly present a theory of culture to the students but instead encouraged them to make their own exploration of various aspects of the target culture and compare and contrast them with their own cultures. However, I was influenced by Moran's five dimensions and his cultural iceberg. It was one of my principal aims for the students to become more aware of the tacit, less visible aspects of the target culture, while at the same time seeking to encourage them to think about their own cultures in the same way. To do this, the idea of *intercultural awareness* seemed to be the most appropriate to use as an aim alongside the wish to develop the students' overall language proficiency. In the next section I will discuss this construct in more detail.

2. Intercultural communication, intercultural competence, and intercultural awareness

The study of *intercultural communication* has arisen as a response to an ever more diverse and multicultural world (Bennett, 1998; Jandt, 2021). It aims to facilitate communication between people from diverse cultural backgrounds, which is now a common challenge in our globalised, interconnected world (Jandt, 2021). *Intercultural competence* is a closely related term which describes the set of skills needed to communicate successfully in an intercultural context. It is seen by some (e.g., Saville-Troike, 2003) as an extension of Dell Hymes idea of communicative competence, which became the basis of communicative language teaching (See Canale, 1983). Barrett et al (2014) give the following detailed definition:

> Intercultural competence is therefore a combination of attitudes, knowledge,
> – understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others, to:
> understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself;
> – respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people;
> – establish positive and constructive relationships with such people;
> – understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural "difference". (16-17)

Rather than taking intercultural competence as my main aim in this course, I chose the more limited idea of raising the students' intercultural awareness because that seemed more appropriate to a course focused on exploring topics based on different types of texts and getting students to research topics for themselves as opposed to

a course focusing explicitly on cross-cultural communication. The general concept of cultural awareness is found in many books and articles about intercultural communication (e.g., Byram, 1989; Byram & Fleming, 1998; Shemshadsara, 2012), and can be viewed as a part of intercultural competence. For example, Williams (2001) talks about teachers "introduc[ing] their students to new cultural values and beliefs as part of the development of intercultural competence" (111) in a chapter about a teacher training course aimed at developing cultural awareness, and several practical teaching books present activities designed to develop cultural awareness (Corbett, 2010; Johnson & Rinvolucri, 2010; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). In the companion volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020), in Chapter 4 which presents scales relating to plurilingual and pluricultural competence, there is a discussion of "notions that appear in the literature and descriptors for intercultural competence" (124), and in the scale entitled "Building on pluricultural repertoire" which follows this (125), we can find several mentions of awareness of cultural differences and of "the implicit values on which judgments and prejudices are frequently based" (125). Del Villar (2017), in a discussion of the dimensions of intercultural communicative competence (254), identifies one dimension as cultural awareness and defines it as "a deeper understanding and responsiveness to the new culture" (255) and goes on to say that it "takes time because it involves not only knowing something about the new culture but being perceptive to what lies beneath the surface" (255).

Taken together, all these sources support the understanding that intercultural awareness is an important component of intercultural competence and can be the object of study and learning in and of itself. But in order for learners to have the opportunity to become more aware of implicit values and meanings, they must be engaged actively in their own learning and for this to happen an appropriate teaching methodology is necessary. What that methodology should be will be discussed in the next session.

3. Developing a learner-centred approach

In order to promote learner engagement and active learning on any topic, it is important to take a learner-centred approach, and for this to happen the role of the teacher is paramount. Paolo Freire expressed the difference between teaching where learners are passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge and active learning where the teacher engages in a dialogue with the learner as they explore a question together by using the twin concepts of the banking approach to education, or

education as an act of depositing knowledge, and the problem-posing approach to education, or education centred on communication and acts of cognition (Freire, 1996). Whereas he saw the first approach as a form of oppression, the second one enables a kind of liberation and enlightenment for both parties:

> [The teacher] does not regard cognizable objects as his private property, but as the object of reflection by himself and the students. In this way, the problem-posing educator constantly reforms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and reconsiders her earlier considerations as the students express their own.
>
> … Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality. (Freire, 1996: 61-62)

Hedges, in a more limited discussion of teaching methodology in the language classroom, sees learner-centredness as a matter of giving learners roles and responsibilities for their own learning. She identifies four main "perspectives" in learner-centred English Language Teaching (ELT) (Hedges, 2000). The first perspective is "that of asking learners to contribute to the overall design of course content and the selection of learning procedures" (34). The second one involves asking learners to contribute to the design of specific learning activities. The third perspective involves asking learners to take more responsibility for their own learning, both within and outside the classroom through various means. Hedges maintains that it is the fourth perspective that is most frequently associated with learner-centredness and that is using a methodology which offers learners the possibility to have much more control over the learning process. Such a methodology would be remarkably similar to the problem-posing approach described by Freire. Hedges goes on to point out that a strongly student-centred methodology is often not possible or very difficult to implement due to contextual constraints such as following a set curriculum and the cultural expectations of students and other stakeholders which have been inculcated in many school classrooms. However, at university level such constraints tend to be weaker and the individual educator tends to have more autonomy to adopt their own teaching style.

In the present case, principles of student-centredness were implemented in the course by giving students as much choice as possible in choosing topics and in negotiating deadlines. An online learning management system (Teams) was used for communicating with each other and for sharing information about weekly

assignments and upcoming deadlines. The students were also asked to create their own folders in which they could upload their work. Special folders were created for the writing assignments so that everybody could share and read each other's pieces. Students were notified on Teams of the weekly readings related to the topics which were discussed in class and had responsibility for preparing annotated personal vocabulary lists based on the readings, which they were later tested on.

Another feature of Teams which enables easy communication between teacher and students was the chat function. This meant that students could contact the teacher and get a response quickly if they were unsure about something or had a problem. Some students became so comfortable using this form of communication that they used it to notify me if they were going to be a few minutes late for a lesson or if they were feeling unwell and could not attend. Overall, it greatly enhanced the frequency and quality of communication between teacher and students and may well have done the same for communication between the students. The use of Teams as a conduit of communication also gave more responsibility to the students for keeping in touch and being aware of what deadlines were approaching.

4. Alternative assessment methods – the points-based evaluation system

One aspect of learner-centredness already mentioned is giving learners responsibility for their own learning. The use of a points-based evaluation system was an attempt to do just this but it was also motivated by a discontent on my part with a traditional grading system which puts an undue emphasis on outcomes rather than process. In Hungarian state education a grading system of 1 to 5 is standard, with 1 being a fail and 5 being a top pass. This grading system has been in use since the nineteenth century and has been the subject of many calls for reform. As early as 1912, at a pedagogical conference in Budapest, Dr Gábor Kemény called for grades to be abolished because of their inability to accurately reflect students' knowledge and their harmful effects on students' mental and intellectual development (Kemény, 1912). While the 1 to 5 system is still in place in public education in Hungary (as are similar systems in many other countries (OECD 2023)), there are many teachers within the public education system who use various kinds of alternative assessment techniques to work around the obligation to give standardised grades to their students (Barbarics, 2023). I wanted to do something similar and use a points-based approach to engage the students in thinking about and making decisions on how they were going to be evaluated.

Many definitions of alternative assessment can be found, commonly citing ideas of increased fairness and the empowerment of students compared with traditional standardised assessment, with an underlying view of knowledge construction rather than transmission (c.f. Freire, 1996), as well as being suitable to implement in the classroom in a longitudinal way to help learners develop (Bailey & Curtis, 2015; Elliott, 1995; Janisch et al., 2007). I decided to use a points-based evaluation system because it has many of the advantages of other alternative assessment techniques, in particular, it gives clarity as to what elements are most important, it offers flexibility, and it has good face validity (Weimer, 2017). At the same time, I was aware of some possible drawbacks, such as it being a primarily extrinsic motivation technique and still having a degree of subjectivity (Weimer, 2017). Nevertheless, it offered the possibility of being relatively easy to incorporate into the existing obligatory grading system while at the same time lending itself to a student-centred approach. Indeed, the very act of agreeing on and implementing the system became one of the tasks I used to bring the students together and give them greater responsibility for decisions about their own learning. How the system was actually implemented will be described in detail in section 5, which describes all aspects of the course.

5. Describing the course

The course which is the subject of this paper was taught in the spring semester of the 2023-24 academic year. It was a part of the BA programme for students studying English and it was a specialisation seminar course offered by the Department of English Language Pedagogy, which could be taken by the students as an option after completing their first year. The specialisation was in English-speaking cultures and this particular course focused on the question of Englishness and what constituted an English identity as opposed to a British one. As the course was part of an English programme, another important aim was for the students to use English as much as possible in order to develop their language proficiency. There were 15 students who enrolled for the course and they came from 12 different home countries. Only one of them was from Hungary.[50] The teacher, myself, was

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50   Prior permission was obtained from all the students whose work or feedback is reproduced on condition that their names will not be given and no information that could identify them will be included. I have also offered to share the published article with them.

from England, but I have been a permanent resident of Hungary for many years, so I have a foot in both camps, so to speak, and was thus well placed to understand the multiple hidden perspectives and meanings of the target culture as well as those of the university's home culture.

5.1. The beginning of the course

In the first lesson of the course, more than half the 90-minute class was spent in getting to know something about each other and learning each other's names. The purpose of this series of activities was to begin the group-forming process which is essential to building group cohesiveness, and as part of this knowing each other's names is paramount (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). For this purpose a simple game was played using a soft toy which was thrown from person to person while making eye contact and saying each other's names, and this was followed up by another short activity the following week, repetition being essential to learning names, as with any other task involving memory. The point of working on building good group dynamics is that for a learner-centred approach to work well then the learners need to work together willingly and trust each other.

Fig. 2. One group's picture of ideas they associate with the UK

Another activity that was done in the first class was to activate the students' schemata about the target culture (Yule, 1996). They were asked to discuss what ideas they associated with each part of the United Kingdom in small groups of three or four and to write them down or draw them on a sheet of paper (see figure 2 for an example). The first homework assignment was to read a short extract from an essay on the topic of Englishness by George Orwell.

The main aim of this first introductory class was for the students to get to know each other and to start working together in groups, as well as to bring out their existing ideas of Englishness in preparation for exploring other facets of English identity.

5.2. Creating the points-based evaluation system

In the second meeting, apart from discussing the first reading and listening to the first short presentations about a contemporary news story (see 5.3 and 5.4), the main task was to introduce the points-based evaluation system. This was done as a group activity in four groups. Each group was given a set of coloured slips of paper with the separate compulsory tasks for the course on each slip (see figure 3). They were given a total of 150 points to divide amongst the 10 tasks and were asked to discuss how many points they thought should be given to each task. After giving them enough time to do this, and answering their questions about what each task involved, I asked the groups to come together and give their points for each task and I took notes.

For the following week, I prepared a table with suggested points for each task based on their ideas and the number of total points they had to reach for each grade (entering the seminar grade for each student in a 1 to 5 form onto the university online platform is compulsory at the end of the semester). This was offered for the students to consider and make any suggestions for changes in the following weeks. In the end some changes were made but they were initiated by me – the number of tasks was changed from 10 to nine because the introductory task was developed into the first written task. The other change was that everyone was awarded a bonus of 5 points which in effect lowered the required level for the top grade. This was done in recognition of the effort that all the students had made during the course.

Handling course evaluation in this way had several advantages. Firstly, it ensured the students themselves were more invested in the process of their own learning in terms of the successful achievement of tasks, albeit this was clearly an extrinsic motivation (Harmer, 2007). Secondly, it allowed the students to have control over
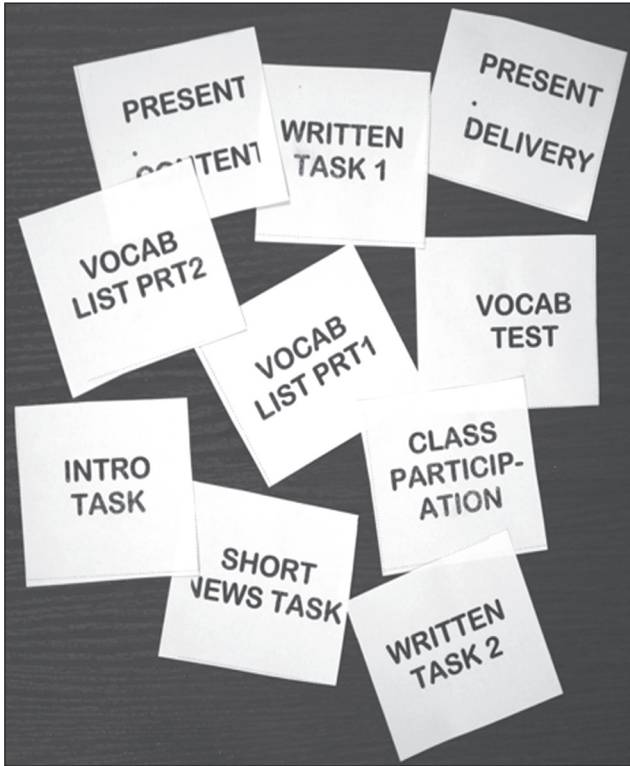
Fig. 3. The points-based evaluation slips

the relative importance of each task, and by keeping the evaluation system open for negotiation, it gave the students the chance to change the points and the levels if they felt they were unfair, thereby involving them in decision making in a way that recalls several of Hedges' (2000) principles for learner-centredness. The students were also given the responsibility of awarding themselves points for their classroom participation at the end of the course. Finally, it served a practical function as a means of introducing the students to the contents of the course and allowing them to find out more about them in a natural way as opposed to just giving them a course description and asking them to read it (which was also done). The success or otherwise of this attempt to innovate around a fixed and old-fashioned existing system of evaluation can be judged to some extent by the students' own evaluation of the course described in section 6.

5.3. Weekly readings

The first reading for the course, as already mentioned, was an extract from George Orwell's provocative essay "England Your England" (Orwell, 1962). In the second lesson the students were given extracts from this reading on cards and invited to discuss them in pairs or threes and then give their thoughts on the extracts to the whole class. Each extract (there were six altogether) consisted of a paragraph or two of the essay and contained at least one key point. This created some very interesting observations about how Orwell's views on what Englishness is compared to their own views. To give an example of the extracts, here are the first few lines of one of them:

> Here are a couple of generalizations about England that would be accepted by almost all observers. One is that the English are not gifted artistically. They are not as musical as the Germans or Italians, painting and sculpture have never flourished in England as they have in France. Another is that, as Europeans go, the English are not intellectual. They have a horror of abstract thought, they feel no need for any philosophy or systematic 'world view'. (Orwell, 1962: 65)

The purpose of using these extracts was twofold: firstly to focus the students' attention on discrete and somewhat controversial points from Orwell's essay and secondly to allow any students who missed the opening class or who had not read the piece to be able to engage in a meaningful activity. The activity produced several interesting observations from the pairs or small groups, including a discussion about stereotypes.

The second reading, given for week three and shared through a post on the course Teams, was much more up-to-date and was about a television drama concerning the wrongful conviction of British sub-postmasters because of a glitch in the new computer system that had been installed in post offices all over the nation in the 1990s. This scandal had recently become a national talking point in the UK because of a drama series about it broadcast on one of the main television channels over the Christmas holiday period in 2023 and starring a well-known actor, Toby Jones. The article was about how a television programme had managed to create a political crisis in less than a week when decades of campaigning about the miscarriage of justice had failed to achieve any meaningful progress in the case (Martin, 2024). It also served as the first reading from which the students had to pick 15 lexical items and begin their personal annotated vocabulary list.

In the class, we started off with a short exercise in pairs or small groups where the students had to try and explain the meaning of expressions taken from the article. Then we watched the first 20 minutes of the first part of the television

drama, breaking it up into scenes with some comprehension-checking questions for the students to answer to help orient them with what was happening in each scene. After this viewing, the students discussed the drama in groups and then the whole class came together and listened to each other's ideas. In this part of the class, the teacher was mostly just an auditor and facilitator, the students providing the content and sharing their ideas. This very contemporary reading allowed the students to see some of the hidden parts of the cultural iceberg by examining perspectives about justice or the lack of it and how individuals can be mistreated by institutions, something that had also been mentioned in Orwell's essay.

The other readings for the course mostly followed on from the topics that the students presented in each of the classes, and because the students' presentations took up more time there was less time to work with the readings as we proceeded, but from the students' evaluations it was clear they still enjoyed them, even if they did not all enjoy doing the vocabulary lists. There were readings about two contemporary English poets, a review of a classic English film by an English and Hungarian filmmaking team, an article about wassailing, a form of morris dancing, in the west of England, an article looking at conspiracy theories about the death of Princess Diana, Orwell's famous essay about his 11 golden rules for making a perfect cup of tea, an unusual story about a house in which every room had been turned into a piece of "outsider art", that is, art produced by an ordinary person, in their rented house in Liverpool, some short pieces about hit pop songs from the 1980s, and an article about the Windrush generation of Caribbean immigrants. All of these articles offered different and unusual perspectives on English beliefs, customs and values.

5.4. Presentation tasks

There were two different kinds of presentation task that each student had to do. The first was to give a short oral presentation of a more or less contemporary news story. The presentation should last only a few minutes and consist of a summary of the main points of whatever the story was about as well as a personal response to it. The students were given complete freedom to choose what sort of story they wanted to share and as a result the range of topics and types of story was extensive. The first two stories in the second week were about new rules for the English language part of the UK citizenship test raising the requirement from B2 to C1, thus making it much more difficult, and the possibility of the retirement age in the UK being raised to 71 in the near future. Both these stories offered perspectives seldom if ever found in course books and led to interesting and interested discussions in the

class. Subsequent stories covered topics as diverse as changes in abortion rights, Birmingham city council having to cut services because they have gone bankrupt, and a Kenyan student at the University of Brighton winning a grant to build a nightclub in his home country. Again, the students' choice of stories opened up aspects of the target culture that are seldom discussed in mainstream materials and often sparked interesting comparisons with the students' own cultures.

The second presentation task was to give a 10-15 minute interactive presentation on a cultural topic of the students' own choice (students who asked to do the presentation with a partner were allowed to do so but the presentation had to be at least 20 minutes long). Again, the range of topics was wide: the Royal Family, Exploring English Identity Through Cinema, The Evolution of English Tea Culture: A Symbol of National Identity and Unity, Exploring English Dishes and Culinary Tradition, A Stylish Review of British Fashion, Introduction to British Building History, Today's Subcultures of the English, British Climate, Unveiling the Beatles: The Rise and Impact of Musical Legends, Ethnic Diversity in the United Kingdom, Iconic British People, and Exploring Unusual British Customs and Traditions. The presentations did not begin until half way through the course in the sixth class. This was to give the students more time to prepare and also to give them some examples of different ways of making presentations interactive so that they could understand what was expected. In the event, the level of interactivity varied from presentation to presentation but in the most interactive ones volunteers were asked to do a role play acting out a scene from a film, to work on brief tasks in pairs, or to fill in a world map with all the countries that are in the Commonwealth of Nations.

5.5. Writing tasks

It was in the two written assignments for the course that the students were most directly required to engage in the task of making cross-cultural comparisons. There were two pieces of obligatory writing for the course, both of which invited the students to reflect on their own cultures as well as the target culture. The first piece followed on from the work we did at the beginning of the course on the characteristics that form a national culture and the degree to which each person's identity is formed in terms of their nation's culture. This was a highly personal piece of writing because it asked each student to look inwards and ask themselves difficult questions about who they were, as the following examples show[51]:

---

51   Names of countries and nationalities have been blanked out in these extracts in order to protect the identity of the student.

> It is hard for me to describe my national identity because it's a bit all over the place. I was born in _____ to a _____ father and a _____ mom. I came into the world with a duality of languages and cultures. When I was six years old, my parents decided to add another country into the mix when we moved to _____. This is where I have spent the majority of my life. (Extract from My Identity assignment)

> The topic of this essay put me in crisis. I have never questioned myself and my identity, or better, I have never thought about it. I was just born in _____ and that made me _____, didn't it? But now that I am pondering it, who am I? (Extract from My Identity assignment)

This assignment also allowed the students to express themselves in creative and unexpected ways as this intriguing opening paragraph shows:

> Sundays are for barbecues and war documentaries. And if the weather allows it, a walk on the beach with friends or family. A nice chat with strangers. Ask them which village they are from, who their parents are and where they live. (Extract from My Identity assignment)

For the final version of the assignment, the students were asked to add some pictures and upload their writing in a special folder, so that they could read each other's pieces. In retrospect, it might have been better to do this in class in order to promote further interaction and discussion (see section 6).

The second piece of writing invited students to take a small piece or an aspect of English culture and compare it with what is done in their own culture. This stimulated some very interesting and imaginative pieces of writing with topics ranging from the terms used by supermarket cashiers to address their customers and the significance of inviting someone for a coffee in two different cultures, to comparisons involving carnivals and festivals and the parallels between two countries in terms of their tea or coffee drinking and their football culture. Like the first assignment, the length of this piece was 300 words but that was just a rough guideline.

After uploading the final version of this task in its own folder on Teams, I asked the students to read at least five of the pieces and leave a comment on each one in a couple of sentences. The comments should be related to the topic of the writing. It could be seen from the comments that reading other students' comparisons created a further level of thinking and thus deepened the cross-cultural exploration going on. Here are a few examples:

> I love that you get into this topic when comparing cultures with the British! I really get you with both aspects when meeting British people and those back in your hometown. (Comment on Cultural Comparison assignment)
>
> Very interesting topic! I'm not the biggest fan of tea but I don't think I've seen _____ tea anywhere, here or in _____. I'm very tempted to try it now! (Comment on Cultural Comparison assignment)
>
> I can understand you a lot on the coffee tradition. Even in _____ it is seen as a sacred moment, and if you decide to have a coffee at the café with a friend, for sure you will be there almost all afternoon. (Comment on Cultural Comparison assignment)
>
> I really like the two carnivals you introduced, because for me, they are very niche festivals, in my country such festivals are traditions only for many minorities, and I haven't known and participated in carnivals in other countries as well, but I'm very interested in this from your description! (Comment on Cultural Comparison assignment)

This use of peer feedback served two purposes. Firstly, such feedback has been shown to promote increased student engagement and is another aspect of learner-centred teaching (To, 2021), and secondly, as mentioned above, it encouraged the students to continue the work of making cultural comparisons. The next section will discuss the role of different kinds of feedback in the course.

5.6. The role of feedback

Feedback played an important role in the course in several ways. In addition to using an alternative evaluation system that gave more information on performance, I also wanted to give meaningful formative and summative feedback on all the students' tasks. I did this using the Teams chat function mostly or in the case of the written assignments, I gave written feedback on the first draft of their paper which had to be handwritten. The aim of the feedback was to give constructive and specific advice on how to improve the writing but to limit it to only two or three points (what Harmer (2015: 151) refers to as "selective marking"), which the students could easily act on.

I also encouraged students to give each other feedback in different ways. In addition to the comments on the second writing assignment discussed in the previous section, students were also required to give feedback on each other's presentations in the form of a simple form allowing them to comment on what they liked and give a suggestion for something to work on (see figure 4).

Fig. 4. the peer-feedback form for student presentations

When using peer feedback as a means of supplementing teacher feedback, it is very important to create a good classroom climate which can promote "trust and willingness to accept criticism" Ur, 1991: 172). The work done at the beginning of the course on getting to know each other and regular group and pair work was important in creating a positive "general classroom climate" (Ur, 1991:172). As far as I could observe, this work was successful and the students' course evaluation also lends support to this belief (see next section).

6. Course evaluation and implications

Student evaluation of any course is important but even more so on a course that aims to be student-centred and from which the teacher would like to learn in order to make improvements in the future (Mandouit, 2018; Shafer, 2017). In this course, simple evaluation forms were given to the students in the last meeting (and administered online for one student who missed the class) asking three questions about what they had learnt about English culture and culture in general, what they had enjoyed about the course and what they had not, and how the course could be improved (see the Appendix for an example of one of the evaluation forms).

Judging from the responses to the first question, "What, if anything, have you learnt about English culture and identity? And what have you learnt about culture in general?", the course was successful in raising awareness of cultural differences and dimensions:

> I have learnt many traditions and social context and norms about English culture which I've never heard before. I learnt that under different culture, there're different norms people have to follow and I noticed the diversity of traditions through cross-cultural comparison. (Answer to Question 1)

> I got an insight from multiple perspectives and I got to learn how global it is. How massively diverse it is and how nice it can be, not just the stereotypes. I have seen how the past can influence today's culture and how globalization changed it in a nice way. (Answer to Question 1)
>
> I can say I really learned a lot from this course, from my classmates and teacher. Such as English weather, traditions, bands, which are very interesting. Even though I have never been to England, but from this class, makes me feel like I am in England. (Answer to Question 1)
>
> I learnt a lot not only about English culture, but about others too, which is great! During presentations and news stories, I had a chance to learn almost about every part of English culture, because we covered various aspects. (Answer to Question 1)
>
> I was more familiar with the literary aspect of English culture, so through this course I think I learnt more everyday things that form the English identity. About culture in general, I've learnt several things from my colleagues and had the opportunity to expose myself to a multicultural environment that was very welcoming and pleasant ☺ (Answer to Question 1)

It was also clear, both from the feedback and from my own observations during the classes as well as from the quality of the work that they produced, that the students enjoyed the course. A composite of several answers to the second question illustrates this:

> I really enjoyed all the group conversations that we had. It was very interesting to get such diverse perspectives on different topics because almost every student originated from a different country; I enjoyed how interactive it was, and how it felt like a workshop at times. There was lots of freedom when it comes to expressing oneself as well as regarding the assignments, which I found very refreshing compared to what I was used to; I really liked the news story part and I think it's a great idea to begin the lessons in this way because everyone could present something brand-new to the class and discuss about it; interactive seminar, international group of people. Morris dancers – I love traditional dance ☺; I enjoyed that we could choose our own topics, the weekly news were entertaining and peculiar; I really enjoyed how interactive this course was, it made it very engaging; I enjoyed the tasks we have done during the class. News sharing, preparing for the presentation, learning new words from some relevant articles... It helped me to practise more and know more about English culture. Nothing I haven't enjoyed. (Answers to Question 2).

Despite this predominantly positive feedback, it is important to mention those aspects of the course that students said they did not enjoy or could be improved. The most frequently mentioned point was the vocabulary lists. Four of the students

said that this task was "a bit too much", that it "could easily get boring" because it was a repetitive task, that the weekly lists and test "are a bit out of place in the context of this course" and "would fit better in an English Practice course", and that how it was done could be changed to "something more dynamic". This seems to indicate that there is a need to harmonise the two aims of the course, intercultural awareness raising and language development, more effectively. Some other points that were mentioned were providing "some documents on who will present what topic" to ensure a more general coverage of subjects, providing "more specific instructions about the form of the identity essay, for example", and having more "group or peer discussions on some topics". Another student mentioned that they would have liked to get feedback from others on their first writing task: "we can discuss in groups or let everyone write short comments on our paper." This idea seems well worth considering as it would promote further interaction and stimulate more discussion of cross-cultural features.

Only one mention was made of the points-based evaluation system and it was positive: "the point evaluation system also made it easier to comprehend the evaluation itself." Of course, the fact that there were no negative comments about the evaluation system does not mean that everyone was satisfied with it, but it at least suggests that it was not something that created significant dissatisfaction. However, the next time I run a course using this means of evaluation it would be worth adding a question asking the students directly for their opinion.

Overall, the students' feedback indicates that the course was largely successful in terms of creating student engagement and raising their awareness of both the target culture and their own cultures in comparison with it and with each other. In terms of what can be improved in future iterations of the course or in other similar courses with a multicultural student group, several implications can be drawn. Firstly, I need to think about how to handle the vocabulary learning element of the course in a more engaging way. More time should be spent on practicing interactive task design for presentations, so that all presentations would be truly interactive. With regard to the points-based evaluation system, I need to find an effective way to keep students informed of their points during the course, perhaps by providing them with a suitable form and asking them to keep track individually. I should also ask for their opinion of the system at the end. Another potential improvement would be to ask for evaluation halfway through the course and not just at the end, to allow for adjustments and negotiation of tasks and outcomes. In terms of the classroom time, which in this semester was limited due to two of the classes being lost due to public holidays, more time could be spent on discussion of presentation

topics and the written tasks could also be read and discussed in class. Of course, no two courses are ever the same, but by using a learner-centred approach and giving students choice and responsibility for the contents of the course, similar positive results should be possible.

Conclusion

In order to promote intercultural learning in the classroom, many aspects must be considered, and by no means the least of these is the students' own cultural background. In the course described in this paper, a valuable opportunity was presented by the fact that the students formed such a diverse group, coming from 12 different cultures, and with the addition of the teacher, the target culture was added to the mix. This provided a very rich basis to work on raising the intercultural awareness of the whole group, the teacher included. It is hoped that the detailed account of the student-centred methods used in the course and the outcomes and understandings achieved by the students may have some transferability for other teachers of culture and language, whether they work in an EFL context or any context involving intercultural learning. Such situations as the one presented in this case are now much more common in universities and schools in many parts of Europe and certainly within the European Union than they were a few decades ago (European Commission, 2023), and they represent an important opportunity for promoting better understanding and communication across the diverse cultures which coexist in all parts of our continent and without which we will not be able to solve the many pressing problems that face us within and beyond the classrooms we teach in.

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I would give myself 8 for the participation point, or a little more, as I come to every class. I believe and always pay attention in class, just not participate in discussion much.

Exploring English identities – Evaluation

1. What, if anything, have you learnt about English culture and identity? And what have you learnt about culture in general?

Many interesting customs and tradition, important bits of facts that I didn't know before about England and the Britain. I had a chance to look at food culture on my presentation, and more of the tea culture on the article. The Royal family and conspiracy theory also get me into the attention. Many new difficult words from the articles that add up my vocabulary knowledge.

2. What have you enjoyed about the course and what haven't you enjoyed?

I enjoyed the class as it is not a stressful and purely informative class, but mostly filled with discussion and illustration with videos, pictures, and article to get into the English culture and some other culture as well. I particularly enjoyed the enthusiasm of the teacher, always lively and cheerful in the class, and also when talking about some certain topic which adds more interest to me. Also with every week update post about the class on teams.

3. How could the course be improved?

I was thinking that if there are more of group or peer discussion on some topics, or more chance to get to know the classmates that would make me enjoy the class and feel engaged in the class with them more.

Appendix A – an example of the course evaluation form

Analysis of inclusiveness in the mission statements of public universities in Slovakia

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ABSTRACT

The level of inclusivity at Slovak public universities was analyzed and evaluated based on two key aspects. The first aspect is the explicit presence of inclusivity in mission statements, which examines how prominently themes of diversity, equality, and support for underrepresented groups are featured in the universities' official objectives and strategies. The second aspect identifies the category of social inclusiveness into which the various commitments of the mission of universities fall. This includes support for students with special needs, those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, accommodation for minority groups, and efforts toward promoting gender equality. Together, these two dimensions offer a comprehensive view of how Slovak public universities approach inclusivity, from formal commitments to practical support for diverse groups of students. While some universities have adopted structured approaches to inclusivity, many still focus primarily on meeting legal requirements, leaving ample room for further development and growth.

Keywords: inclusion, mission statement, tolerance, equal opportunities, cultural pluralism, public universities, Slovakia

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Introduction

Social inclusion ensures that all individuals, particularly those from underrepresented groups, can participate fully in society. Its objective is to eliminate exclusion and create equal opportunities in economic, social, and cultural life. This includes addressing discrimination, establishing support systems, maintaining social safety nets, and ensuring equal access and participation for marginalized communities (European Commission 2024, Nagy et al. 2024). Inclusiveness is a fundamental European value and principle that is applied across all levels of education (UNESCO 1994).

Our research team at J. Selye University (JSU) has extensively studied this issue, principally focusing on primary schools and the problem of segregation (Nagy et al. 2024, Nagy et al. 2023, Kocsis et al. 2023a, Kocsis et al. 2023b, Kocsis et al. 2024, Tóth-Bakos et al. 2023, Inclusion4Schools 2024, Nagy 2021, Tóth-Bakos 2021, Csehiová and Tóth-Bakos 2022, Nagy et al. 2022, Tiszai 2016, Strédl 2017). Our investigation and analysis have been extended to examine the inclusiveness of public universities in Slovakia, examining how inclusivity is embedded in their mission statements.

1. Theoretical background

Inclusive education in higher education is a complex approach that covers several key dimensions: support for students with special needs, cultural diversity, socioeconomic inclusivity and broader policies related to equality. Each aspect contributes to creating an equitable and accessible learning environment for all students, regardless of background or ability.

The foundation of inclusive education is often based on providing accommodation for students with special needs. As Meskhi et al. (2019) highlight, establishing a robust social and cultural infrastructure within educational institutions is crucial for reducing isolation and fostering participation among students with disabilities. Korbel et al. (2011) emphasize the need for collaboration among university staff to ensure that students with special needs receive the support they need to thrive. These efforts are echoed in universities all over the world.

Another essential facet of inclusivity is cultural diversity. Universities must support students from various backgrounds and incorporate cultural elements into their curriculum and university life. This aligns with the findings of Mushaathoni

(2023), who underscores the importance of intercultural communication in universities, particularly in fostering collaboration among culturally diverse populations. Incorporating diversity into university curricula also prepares students for a globalized world. Collins et al. (2018) assert that inclusive education should promote participation for all students, enriching educational experience by making it more reflective of societal diversity.

In the socioeconomic realm, universities must ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to higher education. Bernasconi (2015) notes that institutions in countries like Chile face challenges in balancing access and quality, both in elite and non-elite universities. Institutions can implement scholarships, financial aid, and targeted programmes to reduce socioeconomic barriers. Silva (2018) identifies similar issues in Brazil, where public policies significantly promote access for underrepresented groups.

Lastly, broader inclusivity policies such as gender equality and LGBTQ+ support ensure that all students feel welcome. Phipps (2020) points out that while efforts to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion in universities are growing, they are still inconsistent. A more comprehensive approach to gender and sexual diversity, as also advocated by Cembranel et al. (2023), can help universities integrate inclusivity more effectively into institutional policies.

2. Legislative framework

As amended, the mission and responsibilities of universities in Slovakia are outlined in §1 of Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education Institutions. Universities are considered as the highest-level institutions for education, science, and arts. Their role is to develop knowledge, science, and culture in accordance with societal needs. As part of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, they are tasked with fostering knowledge, skills, creativity, and the well-being of individuals, ultimately advancing a knowledge-based society.

The primary responsibility of universities is to provide higher education that meets societal demands while also conducting scientific research and creative artistic activities. Universities aim to prepare graduates who uphold strong moral principles, civic engagement, and social responsibility. Education is delivered in a democratic, humanistic, and tolerant environment, ensuring that students expand their knowledge across various disciplines and cultures, which supports lifelong learning at the highest levels.

Universities also play a crucial role in preserving and promoting national cultural heritage and recognizing diverse cultural traditions, supporting cultural pluralism. Their contributions extend to research, development, and artistic work, which spread and deepen knowledge. In addition to higher education, universities are involved in lifelong education and provide professional certifications, especially for educators and professionals.

Furthermore, universities are expected to participate in public discourse on social and ethical issues, contributing to shaping civic society. They create societal, economic, and cultural development models, offering expertise to governmental bodies, municipalities, and regional authorities. Collaboration with public institutions, cultural organisations, and the economic sector is also part of their mission.

Lastly, universities are required to engage in international cooperation, mainly within Europe. They support joint projects with foreign universities and institutions, promote staff and student mobility, and ensure mutual recognition of academic achievements. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate actively in the self-governance of universities.

This legislative framework is binding for all universities in Slovakia. The standards set by the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education under Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on Quality Assurance in Higher Education expect universities to define a more specific profile for their missions in line with these principles.

3. Methodology used in the analysis of inclusivity at Slovak public universities

Inclusivity analysis across the twenty public universities in Slovakia was conducted through a multistep approach. The primary methodology involved reviewing the description of each university's mission statements in the Statute of the University document. Specifically, the analysis focused on identifying references to inclusivity, support for students with special needs, and broader diversity commitments in these documents. This helped assess how inclusivity was positioned within their institutional goals.

Based on the content analysis of these documents, universities were categorized according to the extent of their commitment to inclusivity. Three distinct groups were formed: universities with strong institutional commitment to inclusivity (institutions where at least three forms of inclusion are embedded in their mission); universities with moderate commitment to inclusivity (institutions where less than

three forms of inclusion are embedded in their mission); and universities with limited or basic commitment to inclusivity (institutions where forms of inclusion are not addressed in the mission statement, focusing mainly on procedural compliance for special needs support with no broader inclusion efforts). The findings were compared across universities to understand common trends and differences in addressing inclusivity. The reviewed Statute documents covered the most recent strategic cycles (usually within the past five years) to capture the latest shifts in how inclusivity is approached at different institutions.

Regarding categories of social inclusion, the activities of public universities in Slovakia can generally be classified into the following key areas: support for students with special needs, cultural inclusivity, socioeconomic inclusivity and gender inclusivity. It was examined and analyzed whether public universities in Slovakia provide accommodation such as accessible facilities, learning resources, and specialized services for students with disabilities, as required by law. To what extent do these accommodations ensure that students with disabilities can fully participate in academic life? How do Slovak public universities promote cultural diversity? Do they explicitly integrate multiculturalism into their mission statement and provide support for students from minority backgrounds including the Hungarian and Roma communities? Which universities have measures to support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds? Do they offer scholarships, financial aid, and other programmes that aim to reduce economic barriers to higher education? Have Slovak universities begun to integrate gender equality and LGBTQ+ inclusivity into their policies, aligning with broader European Union standards and initiatives? These categories reflect the multidimensional approach to social inclusion at Slovak public universities with varying levels of emphasis depending on the institution.

4. Characteristics of public universities in Slovakia

Public universities in Slovakia are autonomous and self-governing institutions, established and dissolved by the law (Table 1). Their name, classification and location are also determined by the law. If a public university comprises of faculties, these are established at the same time as the university. Public universities operate within a legal framework that ensures their governance, funding and academic freedom and allows them to serve as key institutions for higher education and research in the country.

Comenius University in Bratislava (Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave) is the oldest and largest university in Slovakia. It offers a wide range of study programmes in sciences, humanities, and social sciences and is recognized as a leading institution in research and academic excellence.

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach) – a prominent university known for its strong focus on medical, scientific, and legal studies, it is one of the most important educational institutions in the eastern region of Slovakia.

University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice (Univerzita veterinárskeho lekárstva a farmácie v Košiciach) – a specialized university focusing on veterinary medicine, pharmacy, and related sciences, it is the only university in Slovakia dedicated to veterinary education.

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici) – a comprehensive university offering programmes in various fields, including economics, law, education, humanities, and natural sciences. It plays an important role in the educational development of Central Slovakia.

Technical University in Zvolen (Technická univerzita vo Zvolene) specializes in forestry, wood sciences, ecology, and environmental studies. The university is recognized for contributing to sustainable development and natural resource management.

Technical University of Košice (Technická univerzita v Košiciach) – known for its focus on engineering, technology, and applied sciences, the university supports Slovakia's industrial development and technological advancement.

University of Žilina (Žilinská univerzita v Žiline) – a leader in transportation, engineering, and technical sciences, the university has a strong reputation for its research in logistics, electrical engineering, and telecommunications.

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Slovenská technická univerzita v Bratislave) is the leading university for technical education in Slovakia. It offers degrees in engineering, architecture, and computer science and is heavily involved in research and development projects in these fields.

Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (Slovenská poľnohospodárska univerzita v Nitre) is a specialist institution in agricultural sciences. The university plays a key role in agricultural education and research in Slovakia, contributing to innovation in food production and environmental sustainability.

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (Univerzita Konštantína Filozofa v Nitre) – known for its focus on humanities, social sciences, and education, this university provides comprehensive education that meets the educational and cultural needs of the region.

Trnava University in Trnava (Trnavská univerzita v Trnave) – Although founded in the modern era, it continues the historic seventeenth-century Trnava University tradition focusing on law, philosophy, theology, and public health.

Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (Vysoká škola múzických umení v Bratislave) – Slovakia's leading academy for performing arts, offering programmes in music, theatre, and film. It plays a central role in cultivating artistic talent in the country.

University of Economics in Bratislava (Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave) – Slovakia's leading economics and business studies institution, providing education and research in finance, management, marketing, and international trade.

Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (Vysoká škola výtvarných umení v Bratislave) – this institution focuses on fine arts, design, and architecture. It has a strong reputation for promoting creativity and innovation in visual arts and design disciplines.

University of Prešov (Prešovská univerzita v Prešove) – a comprehensive university in eastern Slovakia offering a wide range of programmes in theology, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences.

Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín (Trenčianska univerzita Alexandra Dubčeka v Trenčíne) – focuses on technical, management, and healthcare programmes with a strong regional influence aimed at developing the economy and industry of Trenčín.

Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica (Akadémia umení v Banskej Bystrici) – specialises in fine arts, drama, and music, providing professional education for artists and performers.

University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave) – a dynamic university focusing on media studies, philosophy, and applied computer science. It plays a key role in preparing students for careers in the communications and media industries.

Catholic University in Ružomberok (Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku) – a Catholic university offering education in theology, philosophy, pedagogy, and public health, focusing on integrating Catholic values into education.

J. Selye University (Univerzita J. Selyeho) – the only university in Slovakia offering all study programmes in Hungarian. It focuses on preserving the cultural and educational needs of the Hungarian minority.

Tab. 1. Public universities in Slovakia

No	Public universities	Number of faculties	Aprox. number of students
1	Comenius University in Bratislava	13	23000
2	Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava	7	12000
3	Technical University of Košice	9	9000
4	University of Žilina	7	8500
5	University of Prešov	8	8000
6	Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice	5	7500
7	University of Economics in Bratislava	7	7500
8	Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica	6	7000
9	Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra	6	6500
10	Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra	5	6000
11	Trnava University in Trnava	5	5000
12	University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava	4	5000
13	Catholic University in Ružomberok	4	4000
14	Technical University in Zvolen	4	3200
15	Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín	4	2500
16	University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice	-	2000
17	J. Selye University	3	1700
18	Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava	3	1000
19	Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava	3	650
20	Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica	3	400

5. Results

All twenty Slovak public universities address inclusivity under Slovak law, yet commitments vary in explicitness across mission statements. Comprehensive analysis demands inspecting official documents outlining each institution's dedication to students with diverse needs.

Beyond legal compliance, several universities prioritize inclusiveness more clearly. Some specifically welcome "non-traditional" learners in published missions. A small number of universities highlight commitments like cultivating understanding across student differences. Most universities integrate obligations to diversity tacitly into broad pledges of social responsibility, rather than naming special requirements directly.

5.1. Categorization of Slovak public universities based on their commitment to inclusivity

Based on how prominently inclusivity features in official aims and strategies, institutions exhibit varying levels of dedicated emphasis on this issue.

Universities with strong dedication to diversity: These institutions showcase a transparent and proactive approach to inclusion, clearly represented in their missions. Specific measures and strategic targets work to promote equal access regardless of background and foster an inclusive learning space. At Comenius University in Bratislava, diversity is emphasized as core to its mission of providing fair chances and cultivating varied surroundings. The university has adopted an inclusive manner for all students, different in age, gender, orientation, race, faith, politics, ability, origins, social and economic status, nationality, or ethnicity. Non-prejudiced policies and tolerance are nurtured as fundamental values in its educational framework. Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra is characterized as an open university, where multicultural principles are vividly practised. It plays a sizable role in tutoring citizens from ethnic minorities, notably Hungarian, Roma, and German communities. Portions of instruction occur in minority languages, reflecting the university's strong dedication to diversity and multicultural learning. At J. Selye University, multicultural education principles are integral to the institution's mission. The university actively takes part in educating citizens, particularly from the Hungarian minority, promoting tolerance and multiculturalism throughout its academic spaces. These institutions demonstrate a firm commitment to inclusion through policies, pedagogy, and support for national minorities, contributing to a more diverse and equitable academic landscape.

Universities with various levels of dedication to inclusiveness: The University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice, Žilina University, Prešov University, Slovak Agricultural University in Nitra, Trenčín University of Alexander Dubček, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, and the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica emphasize comprehensive values, specifically concentrating on nurturing an environment that accepts diversity concerning social, cultural, and individual dissimilarities. Some of these universities also place significance on the acknowledgement and esteem of cultural pluralism, though not all involve broader inclusive policies. These universities represent a fundamental yet wide-ranging dedication to fostering surroundings that welcome everybody, with a particular focus on non-discrimination and the approval of divergent cultural backgrounds.

At the remaining universities, there is *no explicit reference to inclusiveness in their mission statements.* In any case, this does not imply that inclusive practices are absent. All universities in Slovakia comply with legal obligations concerning non-discrimination and support for students with special needs, ensuring an inclusive approach through various services and regulations. Overall, inclusivity is more of a procedural obligation rather than a strategic priority in these universities.

5.2. Inclusivity efforts in Slovak public universities: a multidimensional examination

In the examination of the twenty public universities in Slovakia, various aspects of inclusiveness were present across all institutions, but the depth and breadth of inclusivity efforts varied. The following inclusivity groups were recognized:

Support for students with special needs: While none of Slovakia's universities explicitly mention accommodating students with unique requirements within their mission statements, this absence does not demonstrate a lack of support. In reality, all public universities comply with legislation requiring assistance for those with disabilities or learning differences. Schools routinely supply amenities including barrier-free amenities, individual advising, scholastic reinforcement, and specialized services to guarantee affected students can equally participate in and be successful within tertiary education. Accommodating students with specific needs is regularly built into institutional policies, offerings, and adherence to appropriate rules, regardless of absence in their mission. Therefore, the mission statements' failure to directly address this matter does not mirror unwillingness or insufficient resources.

Cultural inclusivity, or acknowledging diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, is clearly present in the guiding principles of several Slovakian universities: Comenius University in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, J. Selye University, University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice, University of Žilina, University of Prešov, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra and Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín. These institutions emphasize multiculturalism, tolerance, and, in some cases, assistance for minority populations. This indicates that cultural inclusivity is an inherent part of their missions, aiming to foster an inclusive environment for diverse student bodies.

Socioeconomic inclusivity: Comenius University in Bratislava explicitly focuses on socioeconomic inclusivity, standing alone amongst Slovak institutions, formally integrating this into their mission. While most universities do not formally prioritize socioeconomic inclusion, they rely on national programmes to assist economically disadvantaged students rather than dedicated institutional efforts promoting inclusion.

Gender inclusivity: Although not featured in the mission statements of public universities, some institutions have begun to integrate gender equality into their policies, aligning with broader European Union standards and initiatives, such as those promoted by Horizon Europe.

Inclusivity across Slovak public universities commonly centres on legally required disability support, but cultural and socioeconomic inclusivity diverge more substantially. Some universities adopted broader approaches to inclusivity. Notwithstanding, ample opportunity remains for growth – particularly cultivating formalized policies supporting cultural diversity, socioeconomic enrolment, and marginalized communities beyond bare legal demands.

6. Discussion of findings

Our analysis of the inclusivity strategies of Slovak public universities revealed a range of approaches, from strong institutional commitments to inclusivity to more limited or compliance-based approaches. These findings align with global research, highlighting specific regional challenges unique to Slovak institutions.

Strong Commitment to Inclusivity: Three Slovak universities demonstrated a deep institutional commitment to inclusivity, embedding these values in their mission statements. These universities reflect global best practices similar to the models in various regions, where inclusivity is integrated into the core identity of

institutions. Like the case study in Meskhi et al. (2019), these Slovak universities have developed supportive infrastructures that address not only physical but also cultural and socioeconomic inclusivity. Similarly to efforts observed in Chile and Brazil (Bernasconi 2015, Silva 2018), these universities prioritize ensuring equitable access to education for underrepresented groups.

Moderate Commitment to Inclusivity: The five universities in the second group provide good support for students with special needs, though inclusivity is not fully integrated into their mission. This mirrors Bernasconi's (2015) findings in Chile, where many regional universities adopt legal compliance measures but lack comprehensive inclusivity strategies. Korbel et al. (2011) emphasize the need for collaboration among staff, which is partially implemented in this group. However, these institutions often focus on providing accessibility and basic support services without a broader commitment to fostering inclusivity in all aspects of university life. This is reflected in similar management gaps observed in Indonesian universities (Riswari et al., 2022), where formal commitments exist, but actual implementation and resources lag behind student expectations.

Limited or Basic Commitment to Inclusivity: Most Slovak universities fall into this third category, where inclusivity efforts focus primarily on procedural compliance for special needs students. While these universities meet legal obligations, they do not emphasize broader inclusivity policies such as those related to LGBTQ+ students or gender equality. This situation parallels the gaps highlighted by Phipps (2020) in UK university sports programmes, where support for marginalized groups is often insufficient and sporadic. Similarly, Cembranel et al. (2023) found that while some universities are making strides in gender and LGBTQ+ inclusion, many efforts remain in the early stages, with significant room for improvement. In Slovakia, inclusivity is often viewed as a service rather than a core value, limiting its potential to transform university culture.

Our findings suggest that while Slovak public universities are progressing, especially in meeting legal requirements for special needs support, there is a significant gap in broader inclusivity initiatives. Unlike samples from Brazil or Chile, where socioeconomic inclusivity is a major focus (Silva, 2018; Bernasconi, 2015), Slovak universities generally lack comprehensive strategies for addressing socioeconomic barriers. However, efforts to integrate gender and LGBTQ+ inclusivity are beginning to emerge, though they remain at a nascent stage compared to more developed models seen in countries like the UK or Brazil (Bencivenga et al., 2021).

Slovak universities that show strong institutional commitment to inclusivity are closer to models observed in institutions like Birzeit University in Palestine (Ramahi et al. 2021). These universities not only meet basic needs but also foster an inclusive environment that helps students build a positive sense of self. This aligns with the findings of Riddell and Weedon (2014), who investigated the experiences of disabled students in higher education, highlighting the challenges and opportunities they face in constructing their adult identity and obtaining qualifications. The study emphasized the importance of social context in shaping the identity of disabled students and the impact of positive and negative discourses of disability on their experiences.

Nagase et al. (2020) found that in Japan, teacher efficacy in inclusive practices significantly reduced emotional distress, suggesting that investments in training for educators could improve inclusivity practices at Slovak universities. This insight is crucial, as many Slovak universities lack the infrastructure or trained staff to fully support students with disabilities, a challenge also observed in a study of Indonesian universities conducted by Junaidi et al. (2022).

Salmi & D'Addio (2021) emphasize the importance of equity promotion policies in higher education, noting that effective strategies often combine financial aid with non-monetary interventions such as affirmative action and retention programmes. Slovak universities, particularly those in the limited-commitment group, could benefit from adopting a more comprehensive approach to inclusivity, incorporating financial and non-financial support mechanisms to remove barriers for underrepresented groups.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that in public higher education institutions in Slovakia, inclusivity is predominantly viewed as support for students with special needs. Few universities address cultural inclusivity, socioeconomic inclusivity, or broader inclusivity policies related to gender equality. While some Slovak universities have deeply integrated inclusivity into their mission and strategic goals, many focus primarily on providing necessary support services without incorporating inclusivity into their mission. The level of commitment to inclusivity varies across institutions, indicating room for improvement in adopting more holistic and proactive approaches. Comparisons with institutions in Indonesia, Japan, and Palestine demonstrate that achieving true inclusivity requires more than legal compliance.

It requires a cultural shift within universities, where inclusivity is embedded in policies, training, and everyday practices. By learning from international models, Slovak universities can enhance their inclusivity frameworks, which will lead to fostering a more diverse and equitable student population.

Acknowledgements

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Long-term teacher motivation, tools for creating a successful professional identity

Krisztina STREITMAN NEUMAYERNÉ[57]

ABSTRACT

This study addresses a crucial question in twenty-first-century pedagogy and positive psychology: how to empower educators to develop successful self-concepts, effectively support and inspire their students, manage stress and burnout, and face career challenges with autonomous and resilient strategies. The research focusses on teacher motivation and coaching. This paper explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of the Zsigmond Simonyi orthographic competition questionnaire research, conducted by Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, emphasizing the role of reflection in teacher learning and the importance of building a strong professional identity. Key frameworks such as Korthagen's Core Reflection model are scrutinized and Simons and Ruijters' Model of Professional Identity and Characteristics of the Learning Professional are also analyzed, illustrating the connection between learning and professional development in teaching. The study aims to unravel the complexities of motivating teacher learning by synthesizing various theories, models, and positive psychological coaching tools to develop proficient and inspired professional educators.

Keywords: professional identity, reflection, long term motivation, positive psychological coaching tools, Zsigmond Simonyi Carpathian Basin spelling competition

Introduction

Self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-reflection, and resilience must be revitalized in both teachers and learners. This necessitates building a strong professional identity, enabling teachers to learn and adapt constantly to new situations, view themselves

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realistically, and handle conflicts effectively. For teachers to lead by example, establish a successful professional identity, and remain lifelong professional learners, they need various forms of support to inspire both themselves and their students. This includes ongoing reflective practice and the application of positive psychological coaching approaches and tools.

Therefore, the main focus of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE) research project, specifically the Zsigmond Simonyi Carpathian Basin Orthographic Competition Questionnaire Research (Tóth, 2021a; Tóth, 2021b: 122-124)[58], is teacher motivation and the coaching approach. This research is supported by KRE within the framework of the project "Language Competences in Space and Time" (2022-2024).[59]

There has been a series of articles (Neumayerné Streitman, 2023a; Neumayerné Streitman, 2023b; Neumayerné Streitman, 2022)[60] on this topic by our team aimed at unraveling the complexity of long-term teacher motivation. Previous articles have discussed Korthagen's models of reflection and their relationship to positive psychology, as well as Kata Csizér's research, and the learning professional models by Ruijters and Simons. I was delighted to have the opportunity to visit two of the Dutch teacher training partner institutions of the Károli Pedagogical Faculty, CHE in Ede and Driestar in Gouda, with the help of Erasmus+ in 2023.[61] In the Netherlands, the coaching approach is an integral part of (higher) education and teacher training. There is a strong tradition and practice of motivation, reflection and coaching models incorporated into the courses (Vloed, 2021). The Core Reflection model by Korthagen and the Professional Identity models by Ruijters,

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58   The Simonyi Competition website: https://simonyi.kre.hu/

59   The questionnaire for the research on teacher motivation has been developed with the contributions of our research group members at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, primarily Etelka Tóth and Júlia Szarka, as well as Tamás Csontos.

60   Neumayerné Streitman: Az ideális, teljesítendő és félt nyelvtanár énképek szerepének tudatosítása a hosszú távú tanári motivációban; A sikeres professzionális identitás kialakításának és megvalósításának fontossága a tanárképzésben; Neumayerné Streitman, K., Szarka, J., Tóth, E.: Spiritualitás, elkötelezettség és identitás: az önsegítő eszközök szerepe a vezetésben. To be published in the volume *Language Competences in Space and Time*, edited by Károli University (KRE).

61   In addition to being a cultural historian, my interests also lie in positive psychology and language coaching. The approach I have developed in these fields is evident in my university work and English teacher training.

both Dutch researchers, have significantly influenced professional teacher learning, identity and reflection, as well as related theories and research findings. These will be described in this paper.[62]

1. Reflection and teacher learning

In the realm of English language teaching, Kata Csizér's research on teacher motivation brings forth a compelling revelation. Reflection, despite being relatively underexplored in motivation studies, emerges as a singular factor with a profound positive impact on teacher behavior and professional development (Csizér, 2020: 169-173, 177, 197-201). Recognizing the pivotal role of reflection in motivating educators sets the foundation for a more profound examination of its implications for teacher learning (Korthagen, 2017: 392-393; Kubanyiova, 2009: 325-326; Reinders & Lázaro, 2011). This section of the paper examines the dynamics of reflection and its multifaceted dimensions, shedding light on its potential to enhance professional growth.[63]

1.1. Korthagen's Core Reflection and positive psycological coaching tools

Korthagen's ALACT model, which includes the stages of *Action*, *Looking back on the action*, *Developing awareness of essential aspects*, *Creating alternative methods of action*, and finally *Trial*, represents a cyclic approach to reflection, with the Trial phase serving both as a conclusion and the start of a new cycle (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010; Korthagen, 2014). Complementing this is the Onion model, which offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the levels of learning within the reflective process. The model consists of six layers – Environment, Behaviour, Competencies, Beliefs, Identity and Mission – and an additional seventh layer known as the Core, representing an individual's intrinsic core qualities (Korthagen, 2017; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010).

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62 I owe a debt of gratitude to Kees van der Vloed for his professional advice in outlining the theoretical background for this paper. Vloed's motivational model is also reflected in his book *Samenspraak 30 communicatiemiddelen voor het onderwijs* (Vloed, 2021).

63 Neumayerné Streitman: Crafting a Professional Teacher Learner through Models of Learning and Positive Psychological Coaching Tools. Forthcoming in *Argumentum*.
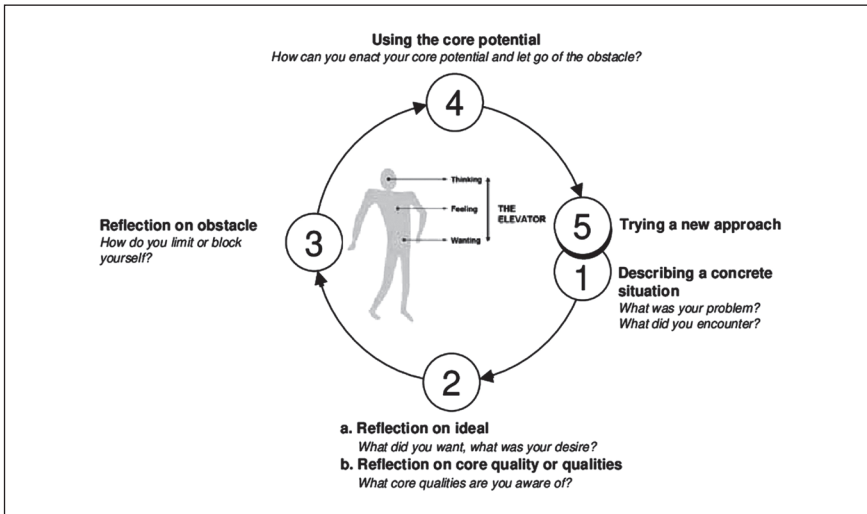
Fig. 1. The five steps of core reflection (Korthagen & Nuijten, 2018: 93, Figure 10.2)

Korthagen (2017) asserts that delving into the inner levels of the onion model during reflection enhances a teacher's understanding of underlying processes within a teaching situation, contributing to effective behaviour. Aligning all layers of the onion model is recommended to enhance teacher effectiveness. Additionally, Core Reflection, identified as a catalyst for positive outcomes in teacher learning and effectiveness, promotes awareness of ideals and core qualities linked to the situation under reflection (Korthagen, 2017: 395). It emphasizes recognizing internal obstacles hindering these ideals, fostering cognitive and emotional awareness, and encouraging autonomy in applying core reflection (Meijer et al., 2009: 300).

1.2. Positive psychology in education: Embracing Core qualities for strength-based approaches and fostering 'good teaching'

In the field of positive psychology, Korthagen proposes a shift in perspective from problems to strengths, focusing on the significance of teacher's core qualities – instead of competencies – in fostering "good teaching." "Good teaching," according to Korthagen, encompasses fostering meaningful connections with students, cultivating a supportive learning environment, and promoting holistic

development. It focuses on understanding individual students' needs, strengths, and challenges, while incorporating reflective practices to improve teaching methods and outcomes. Empathy, communication, and adaptability are emphasized to respond effectively to diverse learning styles, ultimately empowering students to become lifelong learners equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in an ever-changing world (Korthagen, 2014: 80-82).

Core qualities include positive personal attributes such as creativity, care, kindness, courage, commitment, decisiveness, trust, sensitivity, spontaneity and flexibility (Korthagen, 2017: 396). Positive psychology posits that, rather than fixating on weaknesses and problems, attention should be directed towards an individual's positive traits, known as character strengths, as conceptualized in the VIA (Values in Action) classification by Martin Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman & Adler, 2018; Neumayerné Streitman, 2022: 75). Central to this perspective is the growth mindset, introduced by Carol Dweck, which emphasizes the importance of viewing abilities and intelligence as developable through effort and perseverance (Dweck 1999, Dweck 2006).

Moreover, this philosophy asserts that individuals can use their strengths not only for effective actions but also for personal fulfilment (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997: 72-89; Schüler & Engeser, 2009). Korthagen contends that core reflection, centered on core qualities, facilitates the experience of a state of flow, a concept developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, which describes the immersive and fulfilling state of being deeply engaged in an activity (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014: 129-151; Shernoff et al., 2003). By focusing on positive attributes and encouraging a growth mindset, educators can foster environments that promote both academic success and personal well-being (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2005; Lee, 2005).[64]

1.3. Integrating emotional, motivational, and future-oriented dimensions in reflection

Within the framework of Korthagen's core reflection approach (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010), a departure from the conventional view of reflection is proposed, involving a re-evaluation of several fundamental principles. Traditionally, reflection has been retrospective, delving into past actions, experiences and events

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(Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010). This approach has historically prioritized problem-centric perspectives, accentuating challenges and difficulties. Additionally, it has highlighted rationality, emphasizing logical analysis and reasoning within the reflective process, and primarily focused on the outer layers of the onion model, exploring observable behaviour and environmental factors (Szivák, 2010: 19-20; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010).

In contrast, Korthagen proposes a paradigm shift that encourages reflection on one's ideals, which goes beyond mere cognitive engagement to include emotional and motivational dimensions (thinking, feeling, wanting) (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010). This new approach argues that reflection is not limited to past experiences; positive anticipation of future outcomes, as shown in the ALACT model, is also considered essential. Moving beyond the exclusive emphasis on rationality, the revised perspective underlines the importance of emotional and motivational considerations, necessitating a focus on the inner layers of the onion model and core qualities. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of contemplating the (ideal) future within the reflective process (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010; Szivák, 2010: 19-20).

Furthermore, alongside future-oriented reflection, attention to the present is seen as crucial in addressing teaching situations. Connecting with one's core qualities in the present is considered an effective strategy for overcoming internal and external obstacles hindering the realization of future ideal outcomes. Mindfulness is identified as a valuable tool in fostering a state of presence (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2010; Perczel-Forintos, 2017; Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

2. Model of professional identity – learning professional

After extensive research and publication (Ruijters & Simons, 2001; 2015; Simons & Ruijters, 2004; 2008; 2014), Dutch researchers Manon C. P. Ruijters and P. Robert-Jan Simons aimed to integrate their prior models into a unified conceptual framework for professional learning and work-related learning (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 32-56). Defining *professionalism*, as Ruijters and Simons (2020: 37-38) articulated, goes beyond traditional associations with specific occupations. It is characterized by a mindset that prioritizes continuous learning in practice, which is applicable to individuals in various professional fields. This mindset includes a clear vision, distinctive methodology, and a repertoire of high-quality tools and techniques. Professional learning and work-related learning involve three main functions: engaging in practical work with students or clients, which provides an

opportunity for experiential learning; maintaining connections with or conducting research in one's field, and conveying knowledge through teaching (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 37).

Professionals (in teaching and other fields alike) face the challenging task of delivering "good work" while staying up to date of numerous developments within their profession, their organization, interprofessional interactions, and society at large (Nolin, 2008; Simons & Ruijters, 2014: 956). Organizations, in our case educational institutions, particularly those involved in teacher training, have the responsibility to effectively shape the learning and development of teaching professionals (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 33), thereby supporting the delivery of "good teaching" and "good work".

According to Nolin who examined the history of professionals especially in the 20th century (Nolin, 2008) the priority is to collaborate with professionals, to produce theoretical instruments that help them in their practice. This is the aim of Ruijters and Simons' works, as well as this paper and our research questionnaire: to examine concepts and models in both international and domestic literature, unifying them and identifying their similarities and differences.

Throughout history, professionalism was often connected to high quality, however, at other times it had negative connotations (Nolin, 2008; Ruijters & Simons, 2020, 32-34). Nowadays in both Hungary and the Netherlands, professionalism carries a positive connotation, almost synonymous with high quality, and is regarded as an honorary title. The significance of interprofessional collaboration and collective professionalism is increasing (Simons & Ruijters, 2014: 958; Ruijters & Simons, 2020, 33-34), accompanied by extensive debates on enhancing professional autonomy and providing professional space. In our work and research, we have incorporated perspectives from the Netherlands as well as insights from international literature, using the questionnaire research of our project to gather data.

2.1. Social, personal and professional selves within the concept of professional identity

As Kubanyiova (2009) notes, teacher motivation and learning is closely linked with various self-related constructs and personal goals, thereby making it relevant to take *identity* into consideration in research domains regarding professional development. The model of *professional identity* proposed by Ruijters presents three principal components, depicted in Figure 2. One half of the model stands for

the collective *social self*, while the other half represents the individual *personal self*. Overlaying these dimensions is the *professional self*, which consists of the individual "I" as a professional, as well as the *professional frame*, integrating both personal and social identities (Ruijters, 2015; Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 47-48).

The *personal self* encompasses the material aspects that one claims ownership over and feels accountable for, the spiritual dimensions that drive personal motivation, and the individual's representation within social groups. Simultaneously, the *professional self* comprises one's theory of practice – articulating personal insights into practical scenarios – and professional norms and values. Additionally, it includes a personal knowledge base, encompassing theoretical and contextual knowledge, self-awareness, and developmental processes. It also incorporates the individual's area of expertise, delineating competencies that contribute to professional communities (Ruijters, 2015; Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 47-48).

The *professional frame* manifests through collaborative interactions with colleagues, shaping collective perceptions of "good work" (Shaffer, 2006). The *institutional frame*, on the other hand, pertains to the organizational context, professional and religious communities that influence professional conduct (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 47).
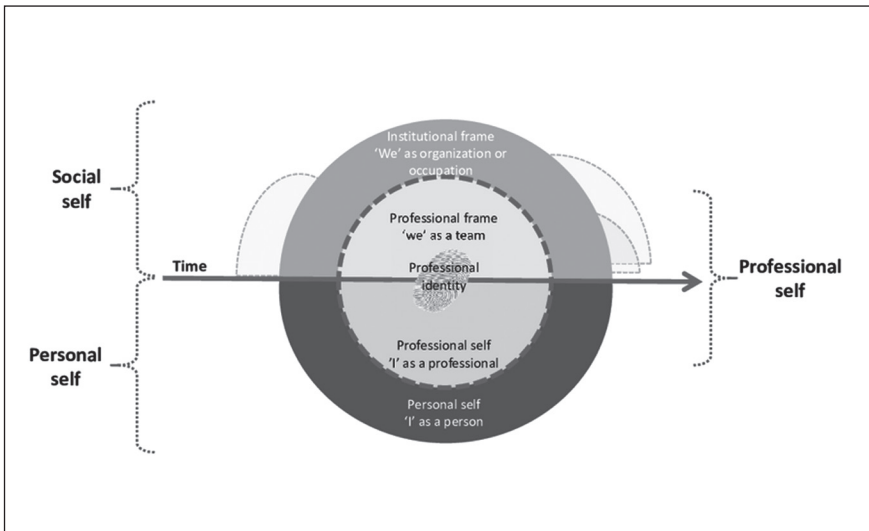

Fig. 2. Professional identity (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 48, Figure 3.)

Professional identity is thus formed through the interactions between professionals and their environment, linking the individual to other professionals, the context and the profession itself. The professional is uniquely defined by this dynamic process. Although professional identity plays a crucial role in various stages of professional development, its relevance is often overlooked. One's status as a professional is a deliberate choice rather than a fixed state, and professional identity is continually evolving, therefore requiring ongoing effort and reflection to maintain it (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 46; Simons & Ruijters, 2014, 970).

2.2. Eight characteristics of the learning professional

Simons and Ruijters (2014: 960-968) identified and described eight characteristics of a professional, building on Gardner and Schulman's six characteristics (Gardner & Schulman, 2005) and drawing from international literature. They then examined these eight characteristics in the context of learning professionals. This led to a unified, extended definition, encapsulated in their assertion that "the real professional is a learning professional"[65] (Simons & Ruijters, 2014: 955).

Simons and Ruijters (2014: 967-968, 971; 2020: 44-46) outlined eight characteristics that define a learning professional. Firstly, *commitment* is essential for learning professionals to demonstrate a commitment to serving the interests of clients and society while taking their own learning and development seriously. Secondly, *integrity* is crucial; they possess the will and ability to handle "not-knowing" and unexpected situations with integrity, and they consciously reflect on these experiences. Learning professionals also possess a substantial *body of knowledge*, which they are able to put into practice while keeping up-to-date with new findings in science, theory and research. Additionally, they are able to draw conclusions from practical contexts and create new knowledge. Their *theory of action* includes a unique set of professional skills and "theories of action," along with a commitment to be reflective practitioners. Their expertise is further defined by their specific *field of expertise*, which they stay closely connected to. Furthermore, learning professionals belong to one or more *professional communities*, where they have a willingness to work collectively to manage complex issues.

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65   This is the title of their article.

Autonomy is another key characteristic; learning professionals are willing and able to make self-directed decisions regarding both their work and learning. Lastly, their expertise and professional skills enable them to hold a certain level of *authority*, as their opinions are often considered more valid than those of non-professionals. They play a crucial role in shaping the profession by leading and mentoring fellow professionals (Simons & Ruijters, 2014: 967-968, 971; Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 44-46).

A strong professional identity empowers individuals with further essential capabilities: *self-management* entails the ability to navigate professional trajectories while considering organizational dynamics, personal aspirations and broader professional contexts. *Resilience* enables professionals to adapt and thrive amidst change and uncertainty, preserving their core identity. *Wisdom* involves a discerning clarity that distinguishes personal values and contributions, thereby enhancing professional efficacy. Finally, *excellence* reflects a continuous pursuit of learning and achievement, striving for personal and professional growth (Ruijters & Simons, 2020: 46-47).

Awareness of the characteristics listed above contributes to our understanding of the complexity and versatility of one's role as a professional, while also providing an opportunity to identify our personal strengths and weaknesses, thereby promoting professional development.

Conclusion

Due to the scope of this article we cannot depict and elaborate our whole, unified model that incorporates the aforementioned Ruijters' models and theories, Kubanyiova's Possible Language Teacher Selves: the ideal, the ought-to and the feared self (Kubanyiova, 2009), along with Ruijters' personal, social, and professional selves as well as additional historical, spiritual traditions, and pedagogical models from our Faculty at KRE.[66] This integrated approach offers the opportunity to gain a comprehensive understanding of professional identity and to delve deeper into its various aspects. The resulting model can contribute to the development of pedagogical practices and educational systems, as well as support the personal and professional growth of teaching professionals. Self-help tools – specifically positive psychological coaching tools in our case – also play an important role in this model.

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66 Neumayerné Streitman, Szarka, Tóth: Spiritualitás, elkötelezettség és identitás forthcoming.

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Updating the knowledge base of EFL teacher training programmes: Developing cooperation and reflective thinking in literature courses

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ABSTRACT

Teacher training study programmes are constantly updated and adjusted to the latest international and national requirements. The content of English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher training programmes is designed according to the knowledge base an EFL teacher is required to possess. Based on this knowledge base, EFL teacher training study programmes offer a variety of courses usually including courses on methodology, linguistics, literature, history and culture. Drawing on recent studies and publications, the paper aims at outlining the most significant components of an updated EFL teachers' knowledge base and considers implications for teacher training proposing concrete tips and practical solutions for improving trainees' reflective knowledge and cooperation skills in higher education literature courses. A concrete lesson plan is provided to demonstrate how the outlined framework and tips can be implemented in practice.

Keywords: EFL teacher training, knowledge base, cooperative learning, reflective and critical thinking, literature courses

Introduction

Training programmes for pre-service EFL teachers must meet the latest social and educational challenges and must be designed in accordance with the most recent research findings. The knowledge base of EFL teachers is a complex construct that encompasses a blend of several different elements. Recognizing

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and addressing these components and providing EFL pre-service teachers with appropriate, useful and usable knowledge base is crucial, since their knowledge base has a direct impact on the efficiency of the teaching-learning process, learner motivation and engagement. EFL teacher training programmes are responsible for preparing teachers who can adapt to diverse educational environments, who can foster creativity, cooperation, critical and reflective thinking because they themselves practised these skills and competences during their training and had direct experiences with them.

Literature courses have been the part of EFL teacher training study programmes from the very beginning of such official training. Literature is suitable both for improving language proficiency and for developing emotional intelligence, critical and reflective thinking. Literary texts encourage discussion and the examination of several perspectives and provide opportunities for exploring cultural differences and similarities enabling intercultural encounters. The classroom practices of literature courses must incorporate techniques and tasks through which trainees can practice and develop problem-solving skills, ask relevant questions, cooperate with peers and come up with creative solutions.

1. EFL teachers' knowledge base

During the 1990s, special attention was paid to EFL teacher training programmes and the knowledge base an EFL teacher trainee should acquire. One of the most significant advocators and specialists of EFL teacher training was Richard Day, who elaborated a complex system of the knowledge base for EFL teachers based on a series of categories. These categories were *content knowledge* (the knowledge of EFL referring to language, literature and culture in the given subject), *pedagogic knowledge* (referring to the general knowledge, strategies, techniques and practice of teaching in general, for example classroom management techniques, writing a lesson plan, handling discipline problems, motivation, etc.); *pedagogic content knowledge* (by this Day meant the methodology of the concrete subject, the approaches, methods and techniques of teaching EFL, this refers to, for example, the application of the communicative approach, how writing or speaking is taught in the EFL classroom, testing grammar or the strategies of preparing learners for language exams, just to mention a few examples); and finally, *support knowledge* (by this Day refers to the disciplines that support the teaching of EFL, for example psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, research methods, etc.).

Day's system of the knowledge base pre-service EFL teachers need to acquire is still in use and is considered as a fundamental basis of all teacher training study programmes. Of course, during the more than thirty years that have passed following the publication of Day's theory in 1993, this knowledge base has been adjusted to the needs of contemporary education and society.

A very basic element of EFL teachers' knowledge base is *language proficiency* or *linguistic knowledge*, which refers to the teacher's mastery of English. It should be on a highly advanced level (as supported by Lavender, 2002; Cullen, 2002; Barnes, 2002). Lavender (2002) emphasizes the significance of incorporating language improvement in pre-service teacher training programmes to improve trainees' linguistic skills. A high level of language proficiency is required not only because an EFL teacher is a language model in the classroom, but also because s/he has to diagnose learners' errors and must be able to explain and analyse linguistic structures (the significance of this requirement is also confirmed by Andrews, 2007).

Malderez and Wedell (2007) expand the list of components in EFL teacher knowledge base with elements such as curriculum knowledge, knowledge of the learners and their characteristics, knowledge of the educational context and the knowledge of the educational purposes, values and their philosophical and historical background (Malderez & Wedell, 2007). These elements make the knowledge base of an EFL teacher more learner-centred and context-specific, because by underlining the importance of the educational context, they suggest that there are differences between educational environments, groups of learners and also types and levels of motivation and purposes of learning.

In the beginning of the twenty-first century, various publications arguing for the importance on EFL teachers' *technological skills* appeared (Kearsley, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2003; Chapelle, 2009) and educators and scholars started to observe and examine topics such as digitalization, tools of digital learning and online learning communities in more details (see for example Weigel, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 2005; Weller, 2005). EFL teachers needed skills that went beyond the mastery of classroom projectors and using educational websites on the Internet. The pandemic years of the 2020s have confirmed the increasing importance of EFL teachers' technological knowledge, skills and competences. Today, they need to manage online learning/teaching environments, synchronous and asynchronous platforms, digital assessment tools, online resources, web-based language learning applications and online resources and materials.

Farrell (2007) points out that in addition to the knowledge base components listed until the beginning of the twenty-first century, another element must be added, and this is *reflective and adaptive knowledge*, which can help teacher development to a great extent. Farrell explains that EFL teachers need reflective skills to reflect on classroom challenges, adapt their teaching methods and strategies to learners' needs and diverse learner characteristics. Reflective and adaptive knowledge also refers to flexibility and the EFL teacher's ability to first recognize changing leaner needs and learning environments and then the ability to adjust the teaching process accordingly. Farrell explains that reflective practice is not an isolated event, it is "evidence based, in that teachers need to systematically collect evidence (or data) about their work and then make decisions (instructional and otherwise) based on this information. Reflective practice, then, is a compass that allows us to stop for a moment or two and consider how we can create more learning opportunities for students" (Farrell, 2012: 16). Reflective knowledge and skills do not only refer to reflecting on learners and classroom practices, it also means the teacher's ability to reflect on his/her own activities, decisions and choices during the teaching process. This involves improved levels of critical thinking, self-reflective skills, self-assessment and high level of autonomy, since the teacher needs to look for further ways, methods and techniques to improve his/her teaching and find resources to improve. Therefore, reflective and adaptive knowledge also involves teacher's autonomy (as compared to the frequently used term of learner autonomy), the ability to expand his/her own professional knowledge base by further research, finding relevant materials, which incorporates lifelong-learning skills, too.

In order to respond to social changes and demands, it is vital to pay special attention also to the trainees' twenty-first century skills and competences. The frequently discussed 4 Cs (referring to creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication) have now been transformed into the so called 6 Cs (by adding two more elements: character education and culture) and teacher training programmes must provide trainees with plenty of opportunities to develop these skills and competences.

1.1. Implications for EFL teacher training programmes

The elements of EFL teachers' knowledge base must be taken into consideration when designing and implementing EFL teacher training programmes, since pre-service teachers need to be, first, informed about, then, of course, trained according to the requirements an in-service EFL teacher must fulfil during their future career.

Programmes need to incorporate courses that improve the language proficiency of the trainees, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, support knowledge, content knowledge (involving linguistics, literature, culture and the history of English speaking countries), technological knowledge, twenty-first century skills and competences as well as reflective and adaptive knowledge. The development of the above listed areas cannot occur in isolation, but must be carried out in a well-balanced way already from the beginning of the study programme and must be implemented in all courses.

EFL teacher training programmes must consider the following principles and concrete practices to improve the components of EFL knowledge base:

Linguistic proficiency – training programmes must build in language practice courses to increase the proficiency level of trainees, however, indirect language practice must be incorporated in literature, culture and history courses as well (improving listening, reading, writing and speaking skills, indirect way of practicing grammar structures and enhancing vocabulary).

Content knowledge – training programmes should incorporate courses on the history and literature of English-speaking countries with special emphasis on culture and cultural awareness, pointing out cultural differences and similarities and exploring intercultural dynamics.

Knowledge of the methodology of teaching EFL – diverse teaching approaches, methods, procedures and techniques must be demonstrated to trainees, not simply explained in theoretical forms, but these approaches and techniques must be practiced by the trainees themselves. It is not enough to show videos about other educators and teachers teaching lessons with innovative, learner-centred methods, trainees must be provided with opportunities to try and experience them directly by participating in demo-lessons during practical lessons or seminars.

General pedagogic knowledge – in addition to traditional courses teaching pre-service teachers the most crucial pedagogical topics and practices (e.g. writing lesson plans, management techniques, ways of increasing motivation, etc.), training programmes must incorporate up-to-date issues such as recognizing and handling (cyber)bullying, inclusion and differentiation, working with socially disadvantaged learners, learning disorders and how to deal with them in the classroom, just to mention a few, so that trainees are ready to face the most critical and common challenges of contemporary schools.

Technological knowledge – EFL study programmes must offer courses on teaching EFL in an online environment, but teaching trainees how to work with technology and online tools must be incorporated in other courses as well. The

teacher trainers must use these online devices, tools and platforms themselves so that trainees get used to them and get inspiration from these processes. Trainees should be asked to design activities and use online tools during seminars and practical lessons at other courses as well (e.g. using a Kahoot game during or after a presentation).

Reflective and adaptive knowledge – all courses offered by EFL teacher training study programmes must include reflective practices in order to promote critical thinking, self-assessment and flexibility. This can be carried out by incorporating activities such as perspective-taking, debates, practicing asking questions or evaluating different opinions and solutions. Implementing group work and cooperative teaching helps to foster collaboration and communication skills and demonstrates how group dynamics can be improved in the classroom.

2. Literature in higher education EFL teacher training

Literature courses in EFL teacher training have a unique place. Firstly, the two basic approaches to teaching literature are usually both reflected in EFL study programmes. As pointed out by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000), firstly, literature can be approached as content or object of study. This understanding involves the study of literature, literary history, theory and criticism, learning about literature, the literary texts, authors and movements of English-speaking countries. This approach provides pre-service teachers with appropriate literary and cultural (content) knowledge and requires teachers and trainers to use various methods and techniques when teaching different genres or theories of literature (several practical ideas were suggested by Showalter, 2003 and Vischer Bruns, 2011). The second approach to teaching literature is 'literature as instrument', using literature as a tool for language improvement, for example, for enhancing vocabulary, practicing grammar, developing reading, writing, speaking or listening skills (see for example Lazar, 1993; Collie & Slater 2000, Puskás, 2020). While the first approach can be characterised as 'learning about literature', this second one is definitely about 'learning with literature', since literature has an instrumental function there.

The borderline between the two approaches must not be drawn very sharply, since they are interconnected, especially in the case of EFL pre-service teachers, who are all foreign language users and learners. Using literature to teach language can be the part of any language practice course, but it can be integrated into literature classes as well.

In addition to its linguistic value and potential, literature provides an insight into a countries culture, traditions, and it can increase cultural enrichment, awareness and the understanding of life and customs in the country where the language is spoken (Collie & Slater, 2000). Literary texts also fosters personal involvement and engages the readers – students emotionally, intellectually and imaginatively. Many times, literary texts encourage emotionally coloured responses. Obviously, the choice of texts and careful lesson planning have a significant impact on the level of learner engagement.

3. Literature courses at the Department of English Language and Literature JSU

The EFL teacher training study programmes (both at bachelor's and master's level) at the Faculty of Education, J. Selye University in Slovakia were updated and adjusted to the latest state and accreditation expectations and criteria and were eventually approved in 2023. When redesigning the programmes and courses, the most up-to-date knowledge base was taken into consideration.

Literature courses were redesigned by taking both approaches to teaching literature into consideration. When creating the syllabi of literature courses, one of the central priorities was to incorporate sessions that focus on language improvement, improving reflective and critical thinking, cooperation, reflective and adaptive knowledge, improving trainees' problem-solving skills and helping them to formulate relevant questions. It was very important that the elements of an updated EFL knowledge base are implemented not only on a theoretical level, but also in practice, during seminars. Lessons, more specifically, seminars were designed to include group work, pair work, solving a task and often create a risk-taking atmosphere where students need to move physically (abandoning traditional seating arrangement) and must carry out or solve tasks that require critical thinking, stepping out of their comfort zone and examining diverse perspectives. In groups, trainees are encouraged to examine their own and other trainees' interpretations and reactions to literary text

In the following subsection, an example of a concrete lesson plan is provided in order to demonstrate how the above described principles and priorities were integrated into course content and implemented in a concrete literature class. The lesson plan was designed for a 90-minute seminar, but despite the restrictions of

time limitation, the lesson aims at improving cooperation and reflective thinking, implements physical movement, drama techniques such as frozen image, miming and improvisation and encourage trainees to reflect on serious topics.

3.1. Ray Bradbury's Short Story *The Veldt*

A lesson plan
Time: 90 minutes
Age of learners: 20-23
Number of learners: 16
Aids: white board, marker, sheets of paper, pens
Lesson objectives:
By the end of the lesson a successful learner will be able to:

- express his/her opinion on certain topics: child rearing, parenting and the appropriate use of digital technology
- work in groups and class effectively: argue and convince peers
- cooperate and collaborate to reach a commonly accepted conclusion and solution regarding certain tasks such as designing a Happylife Room.

Warm-up: Variations on Bobity Bob
Time: 5 minutes
Organisation: whole class work
Aids: none
Description: Students form a circle with one student/leader standing in the middle. The leader turns to different people in the circle and gives 'action commands' (in the form of simple words, names of objects: washing machine, refrigerator, toaster) which involve three people who must make a correct formation before the leader counts to five (very quickly), otherwise the person, who makes a mistake goes to the middle. The formations are connected to the topic of the titular short story: machines, household appliances.

Washing machine: the addressed squats while the people on the sides make circles with their arms.

Refrigerator: the addressed pretends to be frozen while the people on the sides are doors with one hand held up in the air and the other down.

Toaster: the addressed jumps high while the people on the sides stand with arms wide.
Source: (adapted from Puskás, 2016: 65)

Activity name: 'Happylife' tennis
Time: 13 minutes
Organisation: pair work
Aids: none
Description: This game is played in pairs and is scored like a game of tennis, but the 'ball' is words. Student A 'serves' a word to student B who 'returns' a word in the same topic. The pairs get different topics, but all the topics related to *The Veldt*: gadgets, family, and housing. The game continues until someone 'misses', which means that they cannot think of a word. For example: Student A: laptop, Student B: TV; Student A: parents, Student B: children; Student A: kitchen; Student B: nursery room. When the game ends, the pairs change places to 'play' with other players and the other two topics.
Notes: Drawing from their memory of Ray Bradbury's short story *The Veldt*, students can get inspired and use words from the story, but they must not read directly from the text.
Source: (Puskás, 2016: 78)

Activity name: Brainstorming for a happy childhood
Time: 10 minutes
Organisation: whole class work
Aids: white board, marker
Description: The class has to come up with ideas for what children need most to live a happy and mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy life. They have to collect as many ideas as possible. Whoever has an idea, comes to the board and writes it down. Finally, the students compare their list with the conditions parents provided to their children in the titular short story.
Possible answers: loving and caring parents, daily routine, rules, consistency in education, attention, freedom to (be able to) express emotions and opinions, etc.
Note: The teacher makes sure everyone has at least one idea written on the board.

Activity name: The silent home (still image)
Time: 15 minutes
Organisation: group work (four groups of four)
Aids: none
Description: In groups, students have to create a frozen image, a live 'photo' of any scene from the short story. Each member of the 'photo' must think about one sentence that the character says when s/he comes alive. They have 8 minutes to prepare the 'photo'. Then, they show it to the other groups, which have to guess the scene.
Notes: Students can use whatever props they want to create their photos.
Source: (Puskás, 2016: 52)

Activity name: Angel(s) vs. Devil(s)
Time: 15 minutes
Organisation: whole class and pair work
Aids: none
Description: The class chooses four people to play Wendy and Peter from the titular short story, an Angel and a Devil. If they cannot decide, the teacher chooses four people – picks up four names previously put in a box. Wendy and Peter sit down with an Angel on their right and a Devil on their left. The Angel's task is to convince Wendy and Peter to leave their room and live a happy, machine-free life again. The Devil's task is to make them stay in the room and want to use it for something evil. The Angel and the Devil continuously change places – the first actors give away their places to other students, and it continues until everyone has his/her part. In the end, there must be one single and clear conclusion: Wendy and Peter have to agree on giving up their addiction or using the room as before. During the game, they mime based on how the Angels and the Devils instruct them.

Activity name: My Happylife Room
Time: 25 minutes
Organisation: group work (four groups of four)
Aids: a sheet of paper, pen
Description: Students have to design their own Happylife Room. Each group has to think about what would be essential in that room to make them happy and satisfied and prepare a list of ten criteria. The room can function similarly to that of the short story, or the students can imagine it in an entirely different way. They have to create one list, so every group member must agree to it. They have 15 minutes to prepare the list and 10 minutes to present and discuss their ideas with the class.

Calming-down activity: Finish the story
Time: 7 minutes
Organisation: individual work and whole class work
Aids: none
Description: Each student comes up with ideas about a possible ending of the story. They have 4 minutes to summarise their ending in a sentence. The teacher takes notes and writes down key words on the board. Finally, the class votes for the most creative ending.
Notes: The teacher makes sure everyone participates in the activity with his/her ending.

Conclusion

The knowledge base of EFL teachers is multifaceted, embracing linguistic proficiency, content knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge, support knowledge, technological knowledge, reflective and adaptive knowledge as well as improved twenty-first century skills, competences and abilities. All courses offered in EFL study programmes, including literature courses, must pay special attention to these components so that pre-service EFL teachers receive efficient training that equips them with knowledge, skills and competences that live up to contemporary social and educational demands and equip trainees with the ability to face the challenges of diverse educational environments. More research is needed on the specific frameworks and tools that foster the development of reflective thinking in diverse educational contexts. By examining these tools and factors, more support can be provided to educators and EFL teacher trainers to create models that can serve as foundations of professional development (even after graduation) making EFL study programmes more effective.

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The effect of volunteering on an individual's professional and personal development

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ABSTRACT

Social responsibility and volunteering is gaining significance in Hungary, following international traditions. The attitude of volunteering is ab ovo present in some professions, mainly the supporting ones. As helping is a basic value, participants often disregard their own volunteer actions and do not realize what this gives to the volunteering person. Our study aims at highlighting the beneficial effects of volunteering on personal gain and achieving professional pride in a group of students helping as volunteers for Special Olympics. In the analysis we conducted focal group interviews that were processed with content analysis. It was verified that voluntary work without remuneration resulted in strengthened professional pride and started personality progress that individuals considered as positive. Voluntary work resulted in the development of several intra- and interpersonal competences. In addition to this, volunteering has become a way of life for quite a number of the participants.

Keywords: volunteering, social responsibility, professional pride, Special Olympics

Introduction

In 2019, the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Debrecen concluded a cooperation agreement with the Hungarian Special Olympics Association (hereinafter SO HU). The declared cooperation was followed by substantial

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professional work. Our lecturers and students have been involved in a number of programmes, which were professional and socially inclusive activities of either the Hungarian Federation or the international organisation, Special Olympics International (hereinafter SOI).

This work and experience has led us to investigate with our students and other young people preparing for a helping profession who volunteer with the SO HU and if so, what impact volunteering has on students' sense of vocation, professional or personal development.

There is a long tradition of social responsibility and volunteering in the international scene, and in recent years it has also gained a strong foothold in the lives of Hungarian people. However, while in Western European understanding it is a part of everyday activities and even a leisure activity independent of work and studies, in Hungary it is more typically an externally motivated, mostly career-oriented or work-related activity. Nevertheless, the idea of volunteering has given rise to new ideas and it is now clear that it can also provide a basis for personal and institutional links that go beyond the above.

1. Social responsibility and volunteering

The idea and practice of social responsibility is mainly linked to the corporate sector, since the social commitment of entrepreneurs is the most regulated (Bene, 2016). Firms and businesses assume a general responsibility in terms of ecological, economic and social aspects in the spirit of sustainability, which is mostly exhausted in donations and charitable activities (Barát, 2012). At the same time, it contains an important idea that can even be applied to the individual, since the concept of responsibility means that the individual takes responsibility for his or her decisions, is able to take account of the consequences of his or her own actions, "and is therefore responsible if he or she does not pass on the consequences of his or her decisions, judgments, actions, deeds, conduct and behaviour to others, if he or she consciously assumes the consequences of his or her principles and moral concepts" (Freund, 2012: 27).

As described above, social responsibility is nothing more than when individuals take responsibility for the progress of their daily lives in the light of an ethical system that their actions should benefit society as a whole. Thus, a socially responsible person makes moral choices and uses prudence to avoid harmful socially irresponsible behaviour.

It may be an interesting question whether a responsible society can emerge from the practice of socially responsible volunteering, if it is built up with sufficient foundation. A characteristic feature of a responsible society is that groups of people and individuals within groups, separated by their particular circumstances, must make informed choices. However, this requires factual information and a continuous exchange of information, as the consequences of using information can be not only individual but also collective.

Our study targeted a planned, structured, regular volunteering activity in a world organisation, and the focus was on the individual volunteer. Although there are many definitions in the literature, most researchers agree that volunteering is an activity:

- for which there is no financial reward
- work done for others (non-family members), usually for the purpose of helping others or for a cause
- the individual participates voluntarily and of his or her own free will
- includes direct and organisation-based volunteering
- is not limited to a specific beneficiary
- motivation can be internal or external
- based on mutual benefits and advantages (ILO, 2011, Fényes & Kiss, 2011).

Voluntary work is a one-off and non-repetitive activity (Bene & Móré, 2017). Even if the individual works with the same people or team week after week. This is because the volunteers involved do not always participate in the tasks with the same frame of mind and in the same state of mind, and new situations arise as a result. This leads to a specific personality change and development, which makes the individual more conscious. At first, this is naturally embedded in the family, but later the change is also reflected at the social level. Thus, in the process of volunteering, the individual willingly or unwillingly takes on something to make society a better and more liveable place. Active citizenship is also essential for older people, among other things because it contributes to maintaining a good quality of health (Ghanem et al. 2023).

2. Volunteering in the Special Olympics movement

The Special Olympics Movement (SO) has been shaping social attitudes since 1958. Its mission is the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, using sport as its primary means of achieving this. The SO is traditionally a volunteer-based organisation, with volunteers as its mainstay. They are the coaches, the officials, the partners and the mentors, who of course, in addition to professionals, can be students, family members, anyone the SO can involve and who is suitable. The work takes place at all times of the year, through competitions, training camps, training sessions, events, sensitisation and integration programmes, and health promotion programmes. The Association has a centrally developed volunteer recruitment programme "Get Involved", adaptable to the country and target group, which is mainly aimed at high school and university students. Volunteering can take place at different levels, from simple occasional help to regular and even advocacy and international activities.

Through the Association's Volunteer Programme, volunteers of all ages can find the tasks that suit them best, while at the same time – for internal motivation and continuity, as well as effective cooperation – volunteers receive constant feedback and have the opportunity to learn new tasks, which means continuous development. It is important to note that, although volunteers are not expected to be professionals or to have a knowledge of special needs education, openness to the world of people with special needs and unconditional help, attention and empathy are essential qualities for finding one's place within the Association.

3. The study

The aim of our study was to investigate the impact of volunteering on university students studying the helping profession and volunteering in the Hungarian Special Olympics Association, to examine how their personality and their sense of vocation are shaped in a positive or negative direction.

Our experiences were in line with the literature, which shows that volunteering has many benefits not only for the target group but also for the volunteer. Through volunteering, the individual becomes part of a close-knit community. As a result of working together, the volunteer can embark on a journey of self-discovery, with a possible positive sense of personal change. The community can provide a sense of belonging, feedback and recognition for the work done, which can give the individual a sense of self-confidence and happiness, and as a consequence,

can have a positive impact on mental health, which can help to strengthen social relationships and positive experiences of volunteering. In addition to this, volunteering allows individuals to develop skills such as communication, problem solving and creativity, however, these valuable experiences can also be useful in the labour market (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

Volunteering can also have negative effects. Individuals who volunteer have to learn the art of helping, which can be fraught with setbacks. This requires the organisational preparation and appropriate assistance of the host. A further disadvantage may be that volunteering does not always produce visible results, or the results may not be as significant as the volunteer would expect. This is particularly true when the volunteer's work is part of a larger organisation, where the individual's work is only a small part of the organisation as a whole (Haski-Leventhal, 2009).

4. Method of the study

In our study, we used a focus group interview to explore the experiences of the participating university students regarding volunteering and SO. The interview material was analysed using the content analysis method.

The interviews were conducted on two occasions (1 March 2023 and 8 March 2023) with 5 and 7 participants respectively. All participants are active volunteers of the SO HU, all of them are university students preparing for a helping profession. The interviewed students were all women and of almost the same age.

The participants are students at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Debrecen, the Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education of ELTE and the Széchenyi István University. All of them are preparing for a helping profession. 5 of them are studying for a bachelor's degree in nursing, 2 are studying to become physiotherapists, 1 is a teacher, 2 are teachers and 2 are physiotherapists.

Tab. 1. Presentation of the focus group interview participants

Volunteers	Age	University	Major
1	21	University of Debrecen	health visitor
2	21	University of Debrecen	health visitor
3	22	University of Debrecen	health visitor
4	25	University of Debrecen	health visitor
5	23	University of Debrecen	health visitor
6	22	Eötvös Loránd University	special educator
7	21	University of Szeged	special educator
8	24	Széchenyi István University	teacher
9	23	Eötvös Loránd University	teacher
10	22	Eötvös Loránd University	teacher
11	22	University of Debrecen	nursing
12	21	University of Debrecen	nursing

5. Results

During the interviews, the participants were a little tense at first, but they soon relaxed and this helped the interview to run smoothly and in a good atmosphere. As time went on, the listeners became more open and quick to reflect on each other's statements and opinions. The easing of inhibitions and possible anxiety was also evident in the non-verbal communication, gestures and a growing positive mood. Very often, they would chat together, recalling shared experiences.

During the interview, questions focused on volunteering and social responsibility. The question sets were used to map a process that followed volunteering in the lives of the participants from its roots, from the beginning to the present day, pointing out key milestones that were essential, either in their volunteering, their personality or their commitment to their vocation.

5.1. Community service

In Hungary, 50 hours of community service is compulsory for secondary school students. As this is a form of voluntary work and aims to introduce career guidance and social responsibility into the lives of young people, we felt it important to address this issue. All of the respondents have done some kind of helping or support activity in this context. Five of the participants had volunteered in a church service, three had chosen one of the options offered by the local authority and four had spent the period in a non-governmental organisation, choosing one of the options offered by the school.

The reports showed that for most of them community service did not influence their decision to become volunteers and that they did not volunteer somewhere else in addition to the 50 hours. At this stage, it was clear to only one person, who is studying special education, that volunteering was a way of life and he has worked as a volunteer helper in several organisations since then.

According to young people, this compulsory volunteering does not provide an attitude-forming background that could be supportive either in terms of career choice or in shaping volunteering attitudes. Six young people confessed that their choice of field was dictated either by the scarcity of opportunities or by friends and peer groups. In their case, another criterion for doing community service was to be able to do it "quickly and easily".

5.2. Volunteering in the Special Olympics Hungary and other organisations

The vast majority of the participants, 11 of them, had encountered the opportunity that actually led them to volunteering during their university studies. It appears as a conscious, motivated choice of activity in their lives. Based on the collected data and the interviews, we concluded that a certain level of maturity is necessary for a young person to be able to decide and choose between the options, which in this case for the majority came during their period of higher education.

The table below summarises who is volunteering with which organisation, for how long and in what kind of activities.

Tab. 2. Voluntary activities carried out by the interviewees

	Organisation	Beginning of volunteering	Activities
1	SO HU	2021	active participation in education programmes. training together with special athletes
2	SO HU	2021	helping at young athletes' training, training together with special athletes, being partners in unified sports, sensitizing
3	SO HU	2021	active participation in education programmes, training together with special athletes
4	SO HU	2021	helping at young athletes' training, training together with special athletes
5	SO HU	2021	helping at young athletes' training, training together with special athletes, competing in unified sports
6	SO HU	2018	youth programmes, conducting sporting events, being camper staff
	Maltese Charity Service	2014	helping the homeless, being camper staff for children
7	SO HU	2022	conducting sporting events
8	SO HU	2022	conducting swimming training

9	SO HU	2019	being partners in unified sports, participating in events
10	SO HU	2020	being partners in unified sports, organizing and conducting youth programmes
11	SO HU	2020	participating in youth programmes, assistant coach in young athletes' training
12	SO HU	2021	participating in youth programmes, conducting sporting events

As shown in Table 2, the earliest person to join the SO HU as a volunteer was in 2018, the majority have been involved for 2-3 years, and the most recent two people joined in 2022. For all but one person it is the only organisation where they volunteer. However, it can also be said that they are stable in the organisation and are involved in a wide range of activities. All of the sports and extracurricular activities offered by SO HU which may be appropriate for this age group are included in those listed.

Four students are partner players within a unified sport framework, not only attending regular training sessions but also competing in tournaments and playing and competing as without disability partners alongside the specialist athletes. Another four students, although not certified partner players, regularly participate in recreational sport with their disabled peers. The SO HU aims to be inclusive with unified sport, as with many of its extra-curricular activities. Sport and other related programmes provide an opportunity to show the wider community that people with intellectual disabilities can be involved in social activities and in many ways add value to the community.

All interviewees are linked to some kind of non-sporting programme of the SO HU. Mostly, these are youth, sensitisation or education programmes.

During the interviews, some of them emphasised that for them the SO HU is a community where they have found a home. They consider it important that they can choose the tasks that suit them, and that the organisation has confidence

in them and is open to their ideas and suggestions for solutions. In their work, even if they do not always feel competent, they are helped to develop. These sentences seem to confirm that a stable link with the volunteering activity and the organisation where the individual is doing it depends to a large extent on the preparedness of the organisation to coordinate and motivate its volunteers. This is because it can be concluded that the free choice and the openness and readiness of the host organisation to receive volunteers have a great influence on the willingness to volunteer.

5.3. The impact of volunteering on personal development

Another key focus of the interview was to explore the changes in the personalities of the volunteers and the impact of volunteering on their sense of vocation. As a university student preparing for a helping profession, realistic self-awareness and continuous reflection on experiences and knowledge is an important expectation.

Each of the interviewees mentioned several areas that they identified as areas for improvement in their own lives and personalities, and in which they had clearly developed during their volunteering. One group of these characteristics can be classified as social skills. Some of them mentioned a reduction in the difficulty of interacting with others, the acquisition of effective communication strategies, the development of cooperative skills and the ability to work in teams.

Another group was made up of intrapersonal skills, which were strongly emphasised as an area that supports everyday life. By being in a community with people with disabilities, they have a better understanding and appreciation of difference, including their own difference. There is less of a problem of trying to fit in. Some quotes from participants: 'we can be ourselves', 'we don't have to play a role', 'they accept us and we accept them'. In general, the interviewees reported that they had a more positive outlook on life, had become more accepting, more tolerant, more open and flexible in their dealings with everyday life, with other people and with themselves.

5.4. The impact of volunteering on job satisfaction

A further question of our study was how student volunteers perceive the impact of volunteering on their sense of vocation. Here, interviewees reported that volunteering not only adds to their personality, but also contributes greatly to their sense of vocation and helps them to acquire skills through being in this specific environment that they may not have acquired or learnt in their practice.

It was particularly important for the students in the health visitor course to highlight that in their interactions with the parents concerned, they realised that those already working in the profession, perhaps as a result of their lack of experience, were not able to help them develop professionally with special needs carers. Some of them expressed the importance of ensuring that students and future health visitors also gain practical experience with children with special needs and their families during the compulsory course. According to them, this would not be important in order to increase theoretical knowledge, but would mainly give an added value in practice, deepen theoretical knowledge and in the care process, which affects both the child and the parent or sibling, and support the defender in dealing with potentially difficult situations with appropriate communication, courage, openness and flexibility.

One of the students of special education reported that she had chosen a specialisation in intellectual disability and somatopedagogy as a result of her voluntary work, as the Association itself was involved in the employment and sports training of people with intellectual disabilities. For her, volunteering is "first of all a way of life and although it gives professional knowledge, it is not the essential element, but the fellowship with the guys I want to work with in the future". Similar thoughts were expressed by another student on a special needs teacher training course, with the addition that for her, both courses are aimed at helping people with intellectual disabilities. "I vividly remember a moment in my first SO experience when a very beginner swimmer had the whole crowd cheering him on. You could feel the throb, the pulse. That's when I decided that I wanted to work with children with intellectual disabilities, including schoolchildren and adolescents, so that I could stay in the SO for the most part".

The student teacher trainee reported that her studies mostly involve teaching children with typical developmental milestones. But she knows that more and more children have different developmental trajectories, which makes it necessary to have not only theoretical but also practical knowledge about children with special educational needs and their employability. "For me, inclusion is also an important goal, I would like to teach in a school that accepts children with disabilities and as a teacher I want to give the best to them and to the community", said the student.

For the interviewees, volunteering with the SO HU has not only given them professional development and practical experience, but also the confidence and courage to provide support to families in need of care with a belief in themselves in the event of different development or disability. "Working with children has strengthened my ability to help in difficult situations", said one student with a degree in nursing. "Before, I was afraid of how I would cope in a situation that was

painful for me, I thought I would feel sorry for them, but here I have experienced that there is nothing to feel sorry for", added another student in a nursing course. "When we talk to parents, it makes me happy that they trust us." "This trust is very important in our work".

Overall, their experience confirmed the participants' confidence that they will be successful and enjoy their chosen profession. In fact, for the special needs students, their voluntary work also played a decisive role in their choice of profession. Volunteering with disabled athletes has opened up the professional world for them and revealed details that they had not been able to learn during their internships.

5.5. Feelings of life experienced through volunteering

The next topic of our study was an area that is less obvious than the previous, and is often relegated to the background. However, according to our assumptions, one of the most decisive pieces of information is the question of how the interviewees felt during and after a given event. After all, this can provide a basis for everything else, it can determine their belonging to the community and their commitment to the voluntary activity undertaken. The students reported that one of these occasions, being together with the athletes, gave them a special social experience, they feel that it is a "parallel universe" and they wished every day of the week would be like the ones they participated. Several people could not formulate what they were feeling at first. "There are no words for this." When we talked about the spiritual surplus, it was difficult for them to express their feelings, everyone was looking for some special expression. They got into a heightened mood, and after the flood of words started, they started telling stories, with which they tried to give back the experience they went through. During this phase of the conversation, emotional outbursts, laughter, and occasionally tears were more intense.

It is perhaps due to emotional overload or recharge that they firmly stated that when they leave the university and have an independent family, they do not want to give up voluntary work at the Association, since they see it as their second family. One of the students emphasized that "a partnership is essential for the realization of everything, which we get from the coaches and parents" and the willingness to compromise, and that a common set of values must be developed and supported. Among the students, there are those who would like to be members of SO HU not only as volunteers in the future.

In the case of helping professions, the danger of burnout is a particularly big problem, as a result of which the specialist may become less motivated or even leave the profession. The feelings and thoughts expressed by the students show that voluntary work, if it stems from an internal motivation on the part of the volunteer, can be a recreational and at the same time supervisory activity, which protects against burnout and provides the motivation necessary to practice the profession in the long term.

Conclusion

Our study focused on the interviewees' experiences with volunteering, focusing on their motivations, their feelings related to volunteering, their personality and skill development observed during a deeper examination of themselves, and the formation of their professional awareness. Based on the reports of the interviewees, the assumptions that underpinned our investigation can be factually established.

In addition to the pilot study, the focus group interview gave all participants the opportunity to go from the level of feelings to a conscious level, and to systematize the benefits of their voluntary work at SO HU, the surplus that has an impact on many areas of their lives.

Based on the above, it can be stated that the opportunities for voluntary work arising from internal motivation broaden the vision of individuals, have an impact on the fulfilment of their personality, and deepen their professional awareness. As stated by the interviewees, we consider it important to offer the widest possible range of voluntary work opportunities among students who choose a helping profession.

Our study presents a pilot study, but already based on this, proposals and ideas can be formulated, which aim to present a wide range of voluntary activities and expand the free choices of young people, such as volunteer exchanges, workshops, round tables favouring the exchange of experiences, as well as the introduction of a course that supports responsibility and builds conscious volunteering among university students choosing a helping profession.

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Practice-oriented environmental engineering: Education at the Óbuda University

Rita BODÁNÉ-KENDROVICS[73]

ABSTRACT

The new strategy of higher education – Graduation in Higher Education, Guidelines for the Development of Performance-Based Higher Education – expects a higher proportion of practice-oriented education in engineering education, as it provides the basis for the development of professional competencies. This includes in particular the co-emergence of knowledge, skills, attitudes and the ability to take responsibility. The competency development of students majoring in environmental engineering needs to be supported by field work and practical activities based on examples taken from real-life problems and solutions. Practice-oriented education promotes the development of internal, self-regulatory motivation, which is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge in an individual way, and for the development of the ability of lifelong learning.

By providing an opportunity to expand the teaching-learning space and considering fieldwork as an integral part of the training, project education creates the conditions for competence-based training, contributes to the development of responsible, environmentally conscious behaviour towards the environment, as well as the system approach that is essential for engineering activities. The study shows an example of project-based education at the Institute of Environmental Engineering and Science. It can serve as a model for the project planning and implementation process in the teaching of professional subjects taught in the basic training of environmental engineers, or even in solving a complex environmental problem.

Keywords: project education, environmental attitude, field work, systems approach, environmental engineering education

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Introduction

The modification of the training and output requirements for the basic training of environmental engineers already takes into account and emphasizes the implementation of competence-based training at several points. In this, special emphasis is put on interoperability – the graduate "can cooperate with social organizations dealing with environmental protection, but ready to debate in order to develop optimal solutions. Open to professional cooperation with specialists working in other fields related to their profession. Strives to solve tasks and makes management decisions by getting to know the opinions of employees, preferably in cooperation. Shares experiences with the staff, helping them to grow" – self-education – "Strives to continuously improve knowledge through self-education and to keep knowledge up to date about the world. By participating in organized trainings, s/he continuously develops his/her knowledge in the field of environmental protection" – and about responsibility for the environment: "undertakes and authentically represents the social role of environmental protection and, its fundamental relationship with the world; responsibly professes and represents the values of the engineering profession, openly accepts professionally grounded critical remarks" (1785/2016 Gov. decree).

In addition to teaching scientific theoretical knowledge, the task to be solved in education is to develop a system approach, problem recognition and solution, the ability of lifelong learning and responsibility for the environment. Recognizing and solving global and regional environmental problems cannot be without technical intelligence with a high level of scientific knowledge and responsible behaviour towards the environment. "Environmental protection is especially a profession that can only be performed with solid professional knowledge, scientific readiness and ethical engineering thinking. Environmental education is based on the respect and responsibility we feel for human life, the natural environment and the domestic 'gray stock' of knowledge as the best values" (18/2016 (VIII. 5.) EMMI).

Pedagogical methods used in higher education must be chosen and renewed in accordance with this goal. Education, which is primarily based on lecturing, should be replaced by practice-oriented pedagogical methods, one of these methods, which has been proven to be effective for decades, is the project method.

The study intends to present project education in practical environmental engineering undergraduate education, in the teaching of a compulsory subject, Water Quality Protection.

1. Project education is learning to learn

"Project education is a problem-oriented open education strategy" (Kováts-Németh, 2010) in which activity-oriented, task-oriented organizational forms and methods appear. Its aim is to guide the student from the formulation of the problem to its solution through the teaching-learning process, the end product of which proves the understanding of the contexts and the development of problem-solving ability. In addition, it provides an opportunity to develop an environmentally conscious, responsible lifestyle, which requires real life situations and experiences. The aim of the self-directed, self-regulated learning process implemented in connection with the independent exploration of topics is to develop the ability of lifelong learning. During self-regulated learning, the student is able to formulate his/her personal goals in accordance with his/her own needs, to work to achieve them and to set new goals in connection with the experience of success, to motivate himself/ herself. Internal motivation encourages learning.

Project education is theoretically suitable for the acquisition of all learning units, but it is indispensable in those complex topics where the task is to understand the contexts and to acquire behaviours that presume the acquisition of specific experience in the cognition process.

1.1. Strategic steps in project education

During project education, the path to achieve personal goals can be divided into three well-separable spheres of activity (Fekete, 2010).

1. Students choose a topic (or the teacher chooses a topic in a guided way) and in connection with the chosen topic they recognize, understand the problems related to the given project topic, their cause effect contexts and designate the main goal leading to the solution. They form groups and formulate further specific problems and sub-goals within the group or individually, whichever is necessary to achieve the main goal. They select the sub-topic they feel they are able to solve.

2. During the elaboration and planning process, the tasks that are necessary to achieve the sub-objectives are formulated and their solution plan is elaborated. Data is collected, work is distributed, appropriate work form and duration are specified. They appoint responsible team members.

3. In the execution phase, they analyse facts, systematize and process data, solve the problem, and present the finished product.

Within the three main areas of activity, the steps of the teaching-learning strategy of project education are the following:

- Students recognize and understand the problems of a given or chosen project topic (project), their cause effect contexts, and identify the main goal leading to the solution.

- With the help of the teacher, students formulate additional specific problems in groups or individually and formulate goals (sub-goals) to achieve the main goal.

- In the voluntary groups, students choose topics from the problems coming up and formulated, which they feel they will be able to solve.

- Students make a plan for the solution process and formulate the tasks.

- They discuss the distribution of tasks in groups, the locations of data collection, the selection of potential informants, they plan potential sponsors and contributors, and appoint team members responsible for such sub-tasks.

- Active implementation is completed with – optional – teacher assistance in group, pair or individual work.

- The product presentation, presentation of the project process takes place in front of the teams.

- Project evaluation: self-evaluation focuses on the project preparation process, the team evaluation focuses on the presentation, the jury evaluation focuses on the project activity and the product.

- Make the necessary adjustments based on the suggestions made during the evaluation.

- Final publication of the project after completing the corrections.

In the process of project education, learning basically takes place in groups or individualized organizational forms. When organizing an activity and solving the tasks, the emphasis is on working together, helping and accepting each other, and acquiring communication skills and techniques.

Project planning should meet the following criteria (Bodáné Kendrovics, 2015):

- The project should focus on a problem.

- Problem solving during the activity should be related to real situations.

- Provide opportunities for individualized work (portfolio).

- Give opportunity to work in groups.

- The duration of the project should cover the diligence period of one academic semester.

- The goal should be to solve a real environmental problem.

- Create a connection between subjects, characterized by multidisciplinary.

- The relationship between the student and the instructor should be characterized by partnership.

- Students should make their own decisions and be responsible for their decisions.

- Roles of the teacher are the encouragement, organization, consultancy, guiding works from the background.

- Students should be able to collaborate.

The defining method of project teaching is the project method, which is always purposeful, problem-oriented, based on interest and the active engagement of students. Its direct connection to the real world presupposes the expansion of the school learning environment. In the project method, there is a high level of interaction about the events of the project, thus the project activity becomes a real created activity (Frei, 1991).

2. Application of the project method in the basic training of environmental engineering

2.1. Project education in the teaching of the subject Water Quality Protection

Based on the strategic steps summarized above, we implemented the Water Quality Protection Project for *Load of impurities in low water streams* in the basic training of environmental engineers.

During the project, our main pedagogical goals were the following:

- formation and development of ecological thinking,
- helping to develop environmentally conscious behaviour and lifestyle,
- education for a system approach,
- developing a holistic and global approach,
- education for sustainability and promotion of identification with its principles,
- the effective development of environmental ethics and thus ethical engineering thinking,
- developing tolerance and a supportive lifestyle,
- awakening civic responsibility,
- developing the ability to recognize causal relationships,
- developing problem-solving thinking and decision-making skills,
- developing communication skills,
- developing cooperative skills and helpfulness,
- developing organizational skills, strengthening self-confidence,
- developing critical thinking and creative problem solving-skills,
- developing responsibility.

The tasks related to the project aim at the gentle use of water, the reuse of water, and the protection of aquatic ecosystems, thus helping to develop environmentally conscious behaviour, the development of an ecological approach and responsible

behaviour. The final output of the project, the product, is the status assessment of the selected small watercourse, the preparation of a water quality map, in which the requirements of the WFD (Water Framework Directive) come to the fore, also serving as an example for the assessment of similar small watercourses.

During project teaching, we use activity- and practice-oriented pedagogical methods. It is an important aspect for students to perform water analytical measurements, evaluations and participate in joint field trips both in the field and in the laboratory. Starting from a real problem, they can gain experiences by examining the environment directly, which they can use in their subsequent works.

The basic unit of the study is *analysis*, during which we can draw conclusions about the quality of the small watercourse by comparing the obtained data with previous measurement results and the limit values prescribed by the law. However, the analysis may relate to the content analysis of a literary work, journal, film, interview, etc., which generates input for further research.

Research significantly helps students to set a positive attitude, to motivate them, to explore causal relationships, which are achieved by applying the method of observation. Observation is a prerequisite for understanding cause effect relationships. Personal attachment to the environment and nature is an indispensable element of attitude formation (Kováts-Németh, 2010).

Case study guides students from the recognition of the problem to the solution, so their chosen project work is also a case study, which can be attached to their portfolio as documentation at the end of the project. During work, objectivity, reliability, and decision-making skills develop while getting a lot of information. Within the module group, students independently process the topic they have chosen and agreed on with the others, thus contributing to the realization of the common goal. During independent work, a sense of responsibility and a sense of duty develop. In the process of working, group members recognize that they are interdependent within the group, and effective cooperation is a prerequisite for the success of their work. To this end, they come into personal and everyday contact with each other, which makes a positive impact not only on project work. Group activities provide an opportunity to create a future work situation in which they can test their adaptability and practice work distribution. Working together improves helpfulness and develops tolerance and empathy.

With the method of *loud thinking* used in the sessions, the thought processes accompanying the formation of opinions and judgments can be explored. As they listen to each other's opinions, their behaviour becomes more tolerant. A *discussion* that develops or is consciously formed (directed) while discussing a topic has a

positive effect on communication and collaboration skills. The method based on intrinsic motivation promotes the need for as much knowledge as possible and thus achieves the development of lifelong learning skills.

Among the tasks chosen for the evaluation of the project, *lectures* develop verbal expressiveness, communication, while *written work* gives opportunity to practice the preparation of written materials, wording, written expressiveness, formal and content structure, and literary reference.

Regarding the tasks requiring *statistical evaluation*, the student gets acquainted with the data sources (e.g. environmental databases) and with Excel and other computer programmes that can be used for evaluation. Success at the completed work causes joy, increases the student's confidence and arouses the desire to do further research work, while developing the skills that are necessary during the work of an engineer.

Project location: University of Óbuda (ÓE), Sándor Rejtő Faculty of Light Industry and Environmental Engineering (RKK)

Field location: Aranyhegyi stream and catchment area, as well as catchment area of small watercourses in and around Budapest (freely chosen)

Target group: ÓE RKK Department of Environmental Engineering, second grade students

Number of participants: number of courses ≈ 30-40 people (changing every six months), project groups: 4-5 people

Project duration: 14 teaching weeks (one academic semester)

Evaluation: Evaluation at the end of the project consists of three parts: self-evaluation, group evaluation and jury evaluation. Based on this, the module groups distribute the obtained scores among themselves based on the work and attitude, which forms the grade of the project and at the same time the grade of the students in the middle of the year.

In the first practical session of the semester, students jointly create the modules of the project and the module units with the help of the concept map (Table 1), during which the aim is to assess and get to know their prior knowledge. They then form groups of 4-5, choose a group leader and within the group they formulate the problems they want to address during the semester in their chosen study catchment area. Within the groups, they prepare their own concept map, set the goals, distribute the tasks necessary for implementation, and then during the office hours of the semester they continuously report on their partial solutions and

results to each other and to the project leader instructor. At the end of the semester, in the closing session of the project, the groups present their products to each other and to the professional jury (instructors), present their completed tasks and results.

Tab. 1. Module units of the Load of impurities in low water streams Project

Modules units of the Load of impurities in low water streams project			
I. Nature water - A natural aquatic ecosystem module units	II. Module units of the role of wastewater discharge in determining water quality	III. Impact of agricultural activities on water quality	IV. Effects of urbanization processes module units
River basin exploration	Sewage generation and composition	Pollution effects of animal husbandry	The process and effects of urbanization
Ecological water classification based on the examination of macroinvertebrates	Wastewater cleaning	Impact of crop production on water quality	Effects of riverbed management
Ecological water classification based on the study of macrovegetation	Impact of treated wastewater on the recipient	Organic farming	Sustainable water management, rainwater management

The basis of the project's product – preparation of the water quality map – is to get to know the catchment area, to explore its main characteristics, and to explore the anthropogenic impacts affecting water quality.

Tasks and products that help to solve the problems formulated within the individual modules for the catchment area of the Aranyhegyi stream, are summarized in Tables 2-5. The presented methodology can be applied to catchment areas freely chosen by students, based on which the process of status assessment can be repeated.

Tab. 2. Problem statement, objectives, tasks and products in the
"Nature water - Natural aquatic ecosystem" module

Modules	Problem raising	Goals	Tasks	Products
Nature water	"The biological status and background of small watercourses are not properly controlled."	Assessment of the biological status of Aranyhegyi stream.	Exploration of a catchment area.	Plant-determining collection of small watercourse macrophytes and coastal zone vegetation.
		Getting to know the composition and material of the riverbed. Exploration of data for hydromorphological characterization.	Exploration of the geology of the Aranyhegyi stream.	
		Study of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan.	Classification of Aranyhegyi stream according to WFD.	Macroinvertebrate definite collection of small watercourses.
	There is no uniform, standardized testing procedure for macroinvertebrates.	Review and comparison of Hungarian macroinvertebrate testing procedures.	Macroinvertebrate-based ecological classification of Aranyhegyi stream based on the BISEL method	
			Investigation of the effects of pollutants on surface water fauna.	Report on the BISEL analysis of a water sample from the estuary section of a small watercourse and the boundary section of the bp.
			Investigation of bioindicator plants at the Aranyhegyi stream.	

Tab. 3. Problem statement, goals and tasks in the module
"The role of wastewater intake in determining water quality"

Module	Problem raising	Goals	Tasks	Products
Wastewater	"There is a negative opinion in the public consciousness about wastewater treatment plants - the impact of treated wastewater on the recipient cannot be good."	Confirmation or rebuttal of the assumption. Investigation of the effect of treated wastewater on the receiver in connection with two wastewater treatment plants operating at different efficiencies.	Measuring the impact of wastewater on the receiver. Sampling, measurement above and below both wastewater treatment plants.	Measurement report on the examination of a water sample taken from the section above and below the Pilisvörösvár Wastewater Treatment Plant.
			Review of legal requirements.	Collection of surface water legislation.
			Get to know wastewater treatment technology.	A uniquely designed and constructed rotary flow meter is a "prototype".
			Learn about sludge treatment technologies.	Interview with the director of the Solymár Wastewater Treatment Plant. Publication of a newspaper article about the conversation in Solymár Hírmondó.
			Investigation of the efficiency of the Solymár and Pilisvörösvár Wastewater Treatment Plants based on the data of the long-term time series measured at the plant.	Measurement report on the examination of a water sample taken from the section above and below the Solymár Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Tab. 4. Impact of agricultural activities on water quality objectives,
tasks and finished products of the module group

Module	Problem raising	Goals	Tasks	Products
Agriculture	Agricultural activities have been shown to cause several environmental problems across the country.	Learn about pollution from agricultural activities and their effects	Pilisszentiván mine and the to study the impact of fishponds on the Aranyhegyi stream on the example of five lakes in Pilisvörösvár	A poster and leaflet for reducing water consumption.
	Pesticides are detectable in surface waters and have long-term adverse effects.		Investigation of the harmful effects of chemicals on the example of strawberry fields.	Interview with the owner of the strawberry land.
			Organic farming as a research into the possibility of prevention.	
	The water quality of Aranyhegyi stream is affected by the soil improvement procedures used in the surrounding fields.		Demonstration of quantitative data on fertilizer use	Protocol for the examination of water samples from pre- and post-reed sections.
			Search for alternative solutions to replace the fertilizer	
			Investigation of the reed-covered section of the stream between Solymár and Pilisvörösvár.	

Tab. 5. The effects of urbanization processes are the goals
of the module group, the wall data and the finished products

Module	Problem raising	Goals	Tasks	Products
Urbaniza-tion	Urbanization disrupts the hydrological cycle	*To get to know the process of urbanization and the factors that affect water quality.*	Collection and analysis of population data. Investigation of area-specific precipitation. Overview of the history and structure of Óbuda.	Protocol on population data and rainfall in the area
	Large amounts of contaminants enter the stream from paved urban surfaces during heavy rain.	To get to know the pollutants entering the stream with rainwater and their effect.	Examination of the water quality of the stream before and after the influence of the precipitation channel	The test report of the Aranyhegyi-patak Óbuda Bus Bus Garage above and below the rainwater discharge and before the discharge of the rainwater collected from the site on the canal.
		Explore artifacts to introduce precipitation.	Rainwater sampling and testing. Study of the precipitation collection and drainage system of Óbuda Bus Garage.	
	River management has a detrimental effect on the aquatic ecosystem.	To explore the purpose and technological possibilities of riverbed management.	Visiting the Budapest Sewerage Works responsible for the riverbed planning, data collection, map copy of the riverbed planning plans.	
			During the traversal of the bp. Section of the Aranyhegyi stream (estuary-Budapest boundary), take into account the artefacts, take photographs and identify them.	Study on cological riverbed management
		Knowledge oflegislation in connection with riverbed management.	Collection of riverbed management legislation.	

The modules and module units of the project are formulated with a number of tasks, from which students are free to choose and even can set new problems, goals and tasks related to the topic. Project work can be considered truly successful if all of these are articulated by the students during joint discussions, thus becoming open and receptive towards new knowledge.

Conclusion

One of the cornerstones of engineering education, in addition to high-level scientific theoretical training, is whether we can implement practice-oriented training in the future, which creates an opportunity to develop the abilities and skills expected from engineers – responsibility, environmental awareness, and ethical thinking. The drive to do this seems to be reflected in the training and output requirements, which clearly articulate the need to develop the competencies expected from education. However, this is only possible with well-chosen pedagogical methods, so in addition to lecturing and explanation, which were the most important in education so far, activity-oriented methods must also appear, as they provide the opportunity for independent and group work, research and experiments, where students can gain experience.

The Load of impurities in low water streams project was excellent for meeting the educational content of the subject and the development of training competencies.

During the project, students processed the professional curriculum independently with a flexible schedule, helping each other's work in a group activity. Their knowledge has become applicable knowledge, which is due to a greater proportion of activity-oriented methods built into the educational process. Working together developed interoperability, human relationships, social competencies, and adaptability. The students' portfolios and work diaries testify that the students enjoyed the work, they had motivation to learn, in which success also appeared as an important factor.

The results confirm that project education is suitable for the implementation of competence-based environmental engineering basic training and in the future, based on developed educational methodology, it should be gradually applied within more and more professional subjects. However, an important condition for this is that instructors must be prepared to apply new pedagogical methods.

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