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## **Transdisciplinarity and Reterritorializing Tendencies in English Studies: Introduction to *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies***

The second volume of our journal presents a selection of contemporary trends in the field of English studies whose common denominators are transdisciplinarity and reterritorialization. The first issue of the journal published in March 2014 set out “to map contemporary trends within the field embraced by the (post)postmodern zeitgeist of today,” a goal which the present volume continues to strive toward. We hope that the articles presented here contribute to the dynamically evolving field of Anglophone studies.

Much like its predecessor, the second volume opens with the literary and cultural studies section, whose topics vividly overlap and span across genres and fields. The opening two articles of *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies* invite the readers to be more indulgent and obedient; such appeal is executed via intertextuality or transtextual references as argued by Jela Kehoe who asserts the value of diversity in the training of intertextual analysis. While in her close analysis of *The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse*, arguably the best-known narrative of Dorothy Kilner, Eva Čoupková advocates that the “adventures of a cute little animal strove to improve the everyday conduct of their readers,” ultimately enforcing a moral lesson which was itself reflective of a growing moral sensibility in the culture of the period. The importance of adherence to that we may be losing is explored in the third paper. The genuinely moral aspect of reading via interdisciplinary approach and ensuring we continue to contextualize literature through religious and theological grounding is highlighted by Helena Tampierová in her article titled “Coming to Terms with the Transcendent.”

On the darker side, the final three papers present in the section explore politically twisted events and interpretations and their (almost nonsensical) aftermath both in Britain and USA: Ivan Lacko’s study focuses on “depersonalized political themes in scenes where the personal aspect was dominant” as to be found in Elliot Leffler’s *Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year* read via Aristotelian character logic. Likewise, Josef Pecina tackles the issue of racist undercurrents or “overtones” perverting and misinterpreting Southern history as exemplified in the popularity and wide-reaching influence of Thomas Dixon’s Reconstruction novels. Alice Tihelková closes the section with her contribution accentuating the phenomena of the Precariat as being a “clear reversal of the post-war development towards greater equality, inclusion and social mobility” within the traditional British social structure.

The linguistics and methodology section, whose articles greatly outnumber those of the literature/culture section, equally manifests the diversity of the field with similar features that eagerly employ prefixes such as “inter-”, “hetero-” or “trans-”. The cluster of studies that reinforce the abovementioned includes Edita Hornáčková Klapicová’s treatment of “hell” with plurality showing the effect of semantic analysis on our understanding of a word’s substitutability, and Monika Hřebacková’s urge for the development of intercultural competences to trigger respect and benefit from natural cultural and social diversities. Petra Jesenská’s highly accomplished article gives an innovative view of blending which stresses heterogeneity, unpredictability (blendability) and its uniqueness.

Spontaneity and uniqueness are similarly given prominence by a number of articles devoted to methodology: Michal Bodorík gives us an insightful introduction to Slovak teachers’ responses to verbal errors in the Slovak educational system; equally Eva Skopečková’s paper addresses the importance of self-awareness in language education methodology. In the subsequent two contributions, both Jana Němečková and Jan Němec seek a future-viable solution to the problems



of ELT and intercultural awareness, either through the Erasmus+ platform in the case of the former or pedagogic translation in the latter.

Originality and uniqueness are further tackled by the two following papers; Eva Reid's analysis of intellectually gifted children and their needs as well as the contribution of Katarína Zamborová advocating the importance of learner-centredness within ELT. Both critically warn against oversimplification and propose further research into this issue, which, according to Zamborová, appears as "a continuum of development of the teacher and their learners." The last two essays provide contextual analyses of two diverse phenomena - Václav Řeřicha focuses on the ability-provoking translations of "to be able to" and compares their meaning; Antonín Zita insightfully highlights the function of tagging – imbuing new contexts that shape the overall discourse– which proves utterly revealing and leads to the conclusion that while tagging obfuscates our understanding of discourse theory as presented by Foucault and de Certeau, it essentially "enhances our understanding of discursive formation as a whole."

Indeed, we believe the rapidness and reterritorializing force of Anglophone Studies are self-evident in the diverse plurality of possible trends and approaches. The present volume hopefully maps and captures some of the transient moments in the field of English studies. The absurdity and impossibility of its full comprehension is embedded into seven micro-stories, which were devised by prominent thinkers and appear in the form of mini-dialogues between The Shard, The Gherkin and The London Eye; three iconic examples of contemporary English cultural architecture.

In closing, we would like to thank all contributors and journal associates for their inspiring work, helpful comments, valued advice and kind support. As in the previous volume, we shall finish by wishing you a pleasant and inspiring read through the articles present.

James David Clubb and Jan Suk



## **LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

## **“The Mouse of Feeling.” A sentimental mouse in Dorothy Kilner’s *The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse* (1784)**

**Abstract:** *The paper discusses themes and topics present in one of the best-known works of children’s literature that appeared in the second half of the Eighteenth Century in Britain, and also one of the first which employs an animal narrator. In this episodic story, the mouse, Nimble, and his brothers travel through various households experiencing a series of misfortunes while interacting with child and adult inhabitants of the homes, overhearing their conversations, and making moral judgments on them. However, the novel cannot be viewed only as an instructional, didactic text for children; it also reflects the tendencies seen in the British literature of the period, especially the influences of sentimentalism and the popularity of picaresque novels, as well as the emerging interests in animal rights.*

### **Animals in Literature**

Peter Hunt cites *The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse* (1784) as one of the first books with an animal narrator in British Literature (45). But animals, even if not necessarily as narrators, have appeared in visual art and literature throughout time and across most human cultures. As Brian Boyd explained in his article of a telling name, “Tails Within Tales”, there is an anthropomorphic tendency or urge to tell stories with characters who are not human, but behave in human ways; these are not only animals, ghosts, vampires, androids, or aliens, but, especially in literature for children, they can be cars, fire engines, or even furniture (217). This anthropomorphism, that is “the assignment of human characteristics to objects, events, or nonhuman animals” (Horowitz 68), is largely prohibited in science, but very popular in folk mythology and culture in general.

Animals appear very often in literature of many genres. Boyd notes that unlike other inanimate objects, which gradually lose their anthropomorphic characteristics as children become adults, animals, especially pets in the Western culture, still retain their human-like qualities for some adults who live with them (237).

But it is true that animals are best suited to attract the attention of children. One possible explanation is, again, offered by Boyd: “Infants naturally identify with animals – find them a natural metaphor for themselves – in that they are less equipped with language than the adult human world” (224). Since animals are, in the view of humans, less able to express themselves due to the lack of language people understand, it is easier to project ourselves into animals and attribute to them various motives and purposes; in short, we see animals as agents as much as we are (Boyd 227).

Animals and children are often depicted together in visual art. The connection of children and animals perhaps implies innocence, simplicity, and nostalgia (Mierek 17). However, the role animals play in literature and the ways in which they are portrayed are varied. There are at least two tendencies in the featuring of animals: firstly, they can be seen as “symbolic humans” (Mierek 17) which stand for their human counterparts, acting like people, not animals, thus exposing both positive and negative human qualities. Examples of metaphorical animals acting this way can be seen in Aesop’s *Fables* or Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. These are often satires or allegories, which do not reflect animals in our real world, but rather an aspect of humanity which the writer wants to reform or criticise. This technique

involves the emotional distance of the reader who is usually unable to identify with the animal as a character.

Secondly, animals can be portrayed more or less realistically. They may be animal protagonists, often even narrators, telling the story from their own perspective, describing adventures and obstacles they have to overcome in the world populated and ruled by humans. This method is predominant in children's literature, as it is easy for children to identify with these characters and learn to understand and pity them. These animals usually display a mode of behaviour typical for their species, but, apart from that, they are capable of self-reflection and expression of their feelings. One such protagonist is the mouse Nimble in Kilner's book which will be discussed later, or the horse in Anna Sewall's popular classic *Black Beauty* (1877), which presents the animal's own account of its suffering. This sympathetic rendering of the animal has become a typical feature of children's literature from the Eighteenth Century onwards (Introduction).

### **Eighteenth Century British literature and animals**

Around the middle of the Eighteenth Century animals started appearing in novels, poetry, and children's books with a considerable frequency. The Eighteenth Century portrayal of animals in literature, especially the development of the non-human narrator in the novel, was informed by the notion of metempsychosis - the idea of the transmigration of souls, according to which the soul is transformed and educated as it passes through many bodies, also those of animals (Corrigan 2). Equally important was the emerging humanitarian movement which strove to prevent cruelty to animals. This movement was closely linked to sentimentalism of the period. As Rachel Swinkin notes, "in sentimental texts of the middle to late Eighteenth Century, the ability to shed tears for a dying animal tended to be viewed as an immediately recognizable sign of moral goodness - the mark of the man or woman of feeling." (2)

Many Eighteenth Century writers portrayed animals sentimentally, urging their readers to treat animals with kindness. Sentimental feelings for animals are expressed in a novel of Henry Mackenzie entitled *The Man of Feeling* (1771). In this novel, the old servant describes his compassion for a dog: "I called to him; he wagged his tail, but did not stir: I called again; he lay down: I whistled, and cried Trusty; he gave a short howl, and died! I could have lain down and died too; but God gave me strength to live for my children" (66). Similarly telling is the main protagonist's (whose name is Harley) reason for walking instead of taking a couch: "It saved the trouble of provision for any animal but himself" (63).

Perhaps the best-known sentimental novelist Laurence Sterne shows kind feelings to animals in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1761-1767) in the notorious anecdote featuring Uncle Toby and the fly. This kind and benevolent man refuses to kill the fly asserting that "this world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me" (74). Sympathetic response to a dead animal is most famously presented in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) when parson Yorick watches the German traveller lamenting the death of his beloved ass. Sterne indicates that the compassion for animals can be extended to the benevolence towards human beings: "Shame on the world! Said I to myself - Did we love each other, as this poor soul loved his ass - 'twould be something-' " (64).<sup>1</sup>

However, this implies that the process can also go in the opposite direction. There was the common belief that acts of cruelty towards animals committed by children hardened their hearts and made them likely to behave in a similar way to fellow humans when they became adults. This view already appeared towards the end of the Seventeenth Century - John Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning*

*Education* (1693) mentions the corrupting effects of cruelty to animals and the importance of compassion:

One thing I have frequently observed in Children, that when they have got Possession of any poor Creature, they are apt to use it ill: They often torment and treat very roughly young Birds, Butterflies, and such other poor Animals which fall into their hands, and that with a seeming kind of Pleasure. This, I think, should be watched in them, and if they incline to any such Cruelty, they should be taught the contrary Usage. For the Custom of tormenting and killing of Beasts, will, by Degrees, harden their Minds even towards Men; and they who delight in the Suffering and Destruction of inferior Creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind. (Locke 100–101)

The clear illustration of this principle is present in William Hogarth's set of engravings entitled *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751). In the first two panels, Tom Nero, first as a boy, torments a dog, and then, as a young coachman, tortures his horse. Hogarth commented on "that barbarous treatment of animals, the very sight of which renders the streets of our metropolis so distressing to every feeling mind" (Hogarth 65). This recreational cruel behaviour of Tom develops into a serious criminal activity in the third stage, where he murders and robs his pregnant lover. In the final stage, "The reward of cruelty", Tom had been hanged and his body is publicly dissected; therefore cruelty breeds cruelty (Swinkin 22).

### **Sentimental Mouse**

The rise of sentimental feelings towards animals in Eighteenth Century Britain was influenced by the extended practice of pet-keeping. As Bernadette Paton argues, "from the mid-1700s compounds attesting to the dog as a favoured and nurtured pet begin to appear, and they multiply and flourish throughout the nineteenth and into the Twentieth Century" (Paton). But tender feelings were not devoted only to dogs or work animals such as horses. Tiny creatures like insects were also included, as exemplified by Uncle Toby's case.

Robert Burns devoted one of his poems entitled "To A Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church" (1786) to a pest. A mouse as an object of pity appears in Burns' famous work "To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough" (1785). It tells how the poet, while ploughing a field, destroyed a mouse's nest. He admires the weak creature which seems to be so slender, cowering and timorous (Crawford 164–168). The resulting poem is an apology to the mouse, with the parallel drawn between the hard lot of men and mice:

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane  
In proving foresight may be vain:  
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men  
Gang aff a-gley,  
An'lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,  
For promised joy. (Burns 14)

Comparison between the fate of people and mice is present also in Dorothy Kilner's novel for children *The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse*. The writer explains the reasons for choosing a mouse as a narrator and deciding to record his story instead of his own – "I...only wrote the following narrative as

being far more entertaining and not less instructive, than my own life would have been"(*The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse* 2-3). The story of a mouse, Nimble, records the wanderings of four mouse brothers from house to house, looking for provisions and gaining their first experience with human inhabitants and cats. Their adventures slowly develop into a sad outcome – two of Nimble's brothers meet their tragic deaths, and the last one gets lost.

The word "Perambulations" in the title of the book suggests the picaresque nature of the narrative. At least two characteristic features of this genre are employed – it is an autobiographical account written in the first person, and the story is told in a series of episodes (Mancing 275–278). Character development is largely limited to Nimble's reflections on the serious consequences of his and his brothers' actions.

The didacticism of the story is based on the premise that disregarding parental advice should be most severely punished. The only instruction the mouse brothers are given by their mother is that they should not appear often in the same place. But, due to the abundance of provisions in their first abode, the mice brothers stay there for a long time. In this house, they also enjoy their early encounters with humans. This first meeting is doubly instructional – both for the mice and the little girl, that is animals and a child equally pure and innocent. The girl, seeing a mouse for the first time in her life, shrieks in alarm, and her mother scolds her: "It is certainly foolish to be afraid of anything, unless it threatens us with immediate danger; but to pretend to be so at a mouse, and such like inoffensive things, is a degree of weakness that I can by no means suffer any of my children to indulge" (*The Life* 4–5). In other words, a child must first learn not to fear the otherness of an animal before she is able to express compassion for it. But for the mouse brothers, this incident leads to tragic consequences, since they receive the false impression of general benevolence of people and their own safety.

The first predictable serious calamity befalls the mouse brothers after they have been staying in the same pantry for a week – one of them is caught in a trap. Nimble identifies with his unfortunate brother, and narrates all the sufferings this condition causes to an animal - like being shaken by the attending servant, who placed the trap near the fire, so that the caught mouse suffered from heat; or being suspended on his tail while the weight of his body caused him pain. Here the narrator Nimble does not hesitate to give some drastic details of his brother's tragic end:

I had the inexpressible affliction of seeing the inhuman wretch hold him down upon the hearth, whilst, without remorse, he crushed him beneath his foot, and then carelessly kicked him into ashes, saying, "There! The cat will smell it out when she comes up." My very blood runs cold within me at the recollection of seeing Softdown's as it spurted from beneath the monster's foot; whilst the crunch of his bones almost petrified me with horror (*The Life* 12).

This is almost a gothic account of horror and terror which may possibly frighten even children of our times. But more troubles are still waiting for the remaining three mice. The didacticism of the novel emerges again, as, in the second case, the cruelty does not come from a primitive and unfeeling servant, but from two boys – sons of this upper-class family. Nimble and his brother Brighteyes are caught and put to most severe torture. Nimble again observes his brother being suspended at one end of a string by his tail, swinging backward and forward, while a cat is trying to catch him. This horrible procedure is interrupted by the arrival of boys' father who orders them to release the mouse. Unfortunately, this does not bring the liberation of the creature, since it is immediately snatched by the cat and taken away. Thus the mouse does not benefit from father's intervention, but the boys should, since their father tries to instruct them, repeating the aforementioned Locke's argument: "I never knew a man, who was

cruel to animals, kind and compassionate towards his fellow-creatures" (*The Life* 16). Then a hint of sentimentality comes, when he says that: "any good man always takes delight in conferring happiness on all around him; nor would he offer the smallest injury to the meanest insect that was capable of feeling" (*The Life* 16). Uncle Toby or parson Yorick would not have expressed it better.

Nevertheless, Kilner is more realistic in her attitude to animal killing since she tries to maintain a certain balance between the excessive pity presented by Sterne and the practical side of the animal-human relationship. When the boy objects that he has often seen his father kill wasps and spiders, and that the father also bought a mouse-trap to get rid of these difficult intruders, the father explains: "I am not condemning people for killing vermin and animals, provided they do it expeditiously, and put them to death with as little pain as possible" (*The Life* 16–17). This corresponds surprisingly well to the modern, Twenty-First Century view on animal rights, as expressed by Donna Haraway, who argues that it is not right to make the lives of nonhuman animals "unsacrificeable"; rather, people "must learn to kill responsibly" (81).

After the catastrophes described above, the two remaining mouse brothers travel from house to house, finding out that it is safest to keep far from people – when they enter the barn filled with corn, they congratulate themselves on being in a place "where we could in security reside, free from any danger of traps, or the cruelty of man" (*The Life* 24). They live happily there for a long time, but then decide to leave, both being tired of the same place and food, and also remindful of their parent's advice. As it turns out, this is not a good strategy, since upon entering a new house, they are immediately attacked by the cat and have to go in hiding. The moral dilemma is clear – acting both according or contrary to their mother's instructions can result in disappointment. This leads to the feelings of nihilism and negativism, when the mice complain: "The life of a mouse was never designed for perfect happiness. Such enjoyment was never intended for our lot; it is the portion only for beings whose capacities are far superior to ours" (*The Life* 28). The first part of the narrative leaves the mouse Nimble alone, since he loses his last brother never to see him again.

In the second part of the story, Nimble travels the world as a lonely and deserted creature, building on the experience gained in the previous tragic episodes. He is now able to recognize dangers, like cats and traps, and effectively avoid them. Also the comments on the observed actions of people grow more expert. Again, the topic of absurd fear emerges, when the mouse comments of the fright he occasioned in two little girls: "I could not help thinking how foolish it was for people to permit themselves to be terrified for nothing...What a pity it is that people should so destroy their own comfort!" (*The Life* 49-50) Or another conclusion he can draw - "what pity is it, that human creatures, who are blest with understanding and faculties so superior to any species, should not make better use of them; and learn, from daily experience, to grow wiser and better for the future" (*The Life* 60). So it is, after all, not only following the advice of parents, but also learning from experience and relying on instincts.

The fact that the novel was written in the period of sentimentality or sensibility is evident in the frequent references to feelings and their bodily expressions. As Swinkin argues, sentimental literature valued nonverbal communication, such as sighs, tears, or pulse rates, over the verbal forms, since the inner sensations were seen as more spontaneous or natural (50–51). Kilner gives many instances of the mouse's bodily reactions to tragic events. Thus, after the loss of one of his brothers, Nimble "with trembling feet and palpitating heart, crept softly to his remaining two brothers" (*The Life* 13); later on, the death of the second mouse overpowered them with grief, "their hearts being almost broken with anguish" (*The Life* 17–18). This accent on emotions and their nonverbal manifestations links, again, animals and children; they share a limited ability to express themselves verbally, but their innocent and pure sensations can be observed from their body language.



## Conclusion

*The Life and Perambulations of a Mouse*, perhaps the best-known narrative of Dorothy Kilner, reflects the time of its origin, when literature for children was largely non-existent. The novel contains long passages of didactic comments and retellings of overheard conversations which would be rather boring for contemporary readers. What Kilner succeeded in was using the animal perspective and point of view to narrate an entertaining picaresque story. The adventures of a cute little animal strove to improve the everyday conduct of their readers, teach them to be sensitive to the needs and emotions of others, and give them practical guidance in their lives. The writer stresses the importance of obedience to parents, civility and good-will when dealing with people of all social ranks, and respect for hard work of servants and working classes; and, most importantly, ability to feel for animals and treat them with kindness and compassion. This general tendency associated with sentimentalism, seen in Kilner's novel for children and other works of art of that time, found its expressions also in practical acts aiming at improving the treatment of animals, as Lord Thomas Erskine<sup>2</sup> finally introduced the Bill for Preventing Malicious and Wanton Cruelty to Animals to Parliament in 1809 (Swinkin 42). It took more time and effort to achieve a significant progress in that field, but Kilner at least contributed to the trend as she was among the first writers for children who addressed this issue.

## Notes

1. These works are also discussed by Rachel Swinkin in her dissertation on sympathy for animals in the age of sentimentalism.
2. Lord Thomas Erskine (1750–1832) was a British lawyer and liberal politician who served as Lord Chancellor between 1806 and 1807. He introduced a number of reformist bills to Parliament. The text of his speech defending the Cruelty to Animals Bill can be found at <[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1809/may/15/cruelty-to-animals-bill#S1V0014P0\\_18090515\\_HOL\\_2](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1809/may/15/cruelty-to-animals-bill#S1V0014P0_18090515_HOL_2)> (accessed April 10, 2014). The bill was accepted in the House of Lords but rejected in the House of Commons. For more information on Lord Erskine see Stryker, Lloyd Paul (1947) *For the defense: Thomas Erskine, the most enlightened liberal of his time, 1750-1823*. Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday.

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## Interpreting Cultural References in Discworld Series

*Abstract: Since languages are very closely connected to the cultures they are anchored in, it is very important for non-native speakers to have a sufficient amount of background knowledge in order to correctly interpret texts that contain culture-specific references and allusions. Using T. Pratchett's Discworld novels, this paper aims to identify and classify such culture-anchored references and explore the level of awareness university students have when working with heavily allusive texts.*

No piece of literature is placed in a vacuum, no author can, in their writing, completely detach themselves from their (be it) cultural or personal background. This cultural and humane interconnectedness is inevitable, natural and to some extent necessary. Allusive constructions can generate very tangible connections between a fictional text and our reality. Some authors use this interconnectedness to their advantage, incorporating it into their writing to a greater degree than most, creating very recognisable hallmark texts. Terry Pratchett uses allusive constructions to anchor his writing in the reality of our world, resulting in a particular type of comic fantasy. It is very important for non-native speakers to have a sufficient amount of background knowledge in order to correctly interpret texts that contain culture-specific references and allusions. Using T. Pratchett's Discworld novels, this paper aims to identify and classify culture-anchored references and explore the level of awareness university students have when working with heavily allusive texts.

One rather essential feature of *fantasy* is that our world is divided from the fantasy world by a chasm of space or time (sometimes both).<sup>1</sup> Fantasy is set either in a very different world, universe or dimension from our own, or in a very different (earthly) time. There are authors of fantasy who supply their secondary worlds with original histories and mythologies<sup>2</sup> to sever the ties with our reality even further, creating new hypertexts which allow them to allude to a reality separate and removed from our own. It could be said that Pratchett uses the opposite technique, utilizing in his fantasy Discworld series different types of intertextuality, such as the realities, phenomena and language (albeit warped) of our world to forge multiple unexpected connections.

Contemporary French theorist and critic Gérard Genette coined an umbrella term transtextuality which he presents as "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts" (Genette, *The Architect* 83–84). He developed five specific applicable subcategories which overlap and cannot be completely separated: intertextuality meaning "the actual presence of one text within another" or "a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts" (Genette, *The Architect* 1–2). Such scope of intertextuality includes quotation, plagiarism, and allusion; paratextuality (elements outside the text that help guide the reader in the process of interpreting a literary text. Here belong e.g. titles, prefaces, notes, interviews or reviews; metatextuality (implicit or explicit references of one text on another); hypertextuality (which denotes "any relationship uniting a text B (...) to an earlier text A (...), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary" (Genette 5), and also includes translation, sequel, spoof or parody; and, finally, architextuality, which represents expectations about the text in respect to a genre it belongs to (Genette 5).

The Discworld series, as Pratchett himself admits, began as a parody of fantasy as a genre (Mendlesohn and James 179) and therefore, in terms of typology, is an example of hypertextuality. The first of many Discworld novels, *The Colour of Magic* was published in 1983. There he parodies the traditional structure of the genre, the archetypal characters and the setting. As he himself explains: "I was doing it for the fun of seriously

parodying a lot of bad fantasy, and, indeed some good fantasy, which nevertheless is worth parodying" (Silver, *Conversation Part 1* par. 7). The Discworld novels have at present a firm place among fantasy books. Through them Pratchett generates a world where wizards and witches, dwarves, assassins, thieves and magical luggage exist side by side with modern inventions (of sort) such as cinema, the telegraph, the police force or the post office. His secondary world of Discworld gives him "opportunities to write about the entire world" (Silver, *Conversation Part 2* par.18), so his secondary world does not seem to be restricting him. Pratchett employs a parody—of a caring and friendly type—that positions our world in front of a mirror, albeit a crooked one. The Discworld novels are inspired by various aspects of human existence; parodying literary genres, popular culture, religion, institutions or class system. A broad definition of parody such as this therefore neatly covers Pratchett's endeavours: "(Parody can be) defined (...), in a deliberately widely drawn definition, as any cultural practice which makes a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (Dentith 37). When focusing on exploits of literature, using Dentith's concept, we can say that "parody is one of the many forms of intertextual allusion out of which texts are produced" (Dentith 6).

The first Discworld novels being parodies of *fantasy* as a genre constitute the type of parody defined as 'general' parody aimed at a whole body of texts or kind of discourse rather than a 'specific' parody which is aimed at a specific precursor text. (Dentith7) There is no doubt that the realm of parody is both great and diverse and as a result "we inevitably come across texts that are not centrally parodic, in terms of a clearly definable model, but which wear a parodic *aura*, and are full of echoes of half remembered writings. They might be called *pseudoparodies*" (Nash 99). Nash points here to the fact that pseudoparodies are not "closely or pointedly imitative" (Nash 100) of their precursor text, but rather may take on a form of "hazy recollection of rhetorical procedures" (Nash 100). Pratchett employs the parody in the strict sense of the word, as well as pseudoparody.

The Discworld novels are sometimes seen as satire aimed at the world we live in. The difference between parody and satire (Dentith mentions 'hostile' parody) can be difficult to pin-point, "but it is commonly assumed that satire has an aggressive element which is not necessarily present in parody. (. . .) satirical discourse, as well as having an echoic element, requires a further kind of ironic twist or distortion in its textual make-up. This additional distortion means that while parodies can remain affectionate to their source, satire can never be so." (Simpson 47) On top of that, satire often ridicules social conditions or conventions, typically in order to instigate or create a change.

While parody is allusive and humorous by nature, allusion (though often witty) primarily aims to create links between the literary text and the social and cultural reality beyond it; generating sparkle of reality within fiction. As put by Harmon and Holman (14) who call attention to the fact that allusion "seeks, by tapping the knowledge and memory of the reader, to secure a resonant emotional effect from the associations already existing in the reader's mind", allusions create external connections and associations that help with the process of characterisation and construction of a text, making it more dynamic, layered and as a result more interesting. Another feature of allusion is its ability to include in the discourse those readers who successfully interpret it and exclude those readers who do not succeed, as suggested by Nash:

'allusion', (...) is something (...) explicit and overt, (...) it has a function that goes beyond the mere decoration of a conversational exchange. (...) a kind of test, proving the credentials of the initiated, baffling the outsider. (...) a device of power, enabling the speaker to control a situation and authoritatively turn it to his own advantage. (Nash 74)

Allusion only ever has value for the reader if they manage to notice and interpret it and it is fair to say that the "effectiveness of allusion depends on a body of knowledge shared by writer and reader" (Harmon and Holman 14). Allusions can have various functions in a literary text. Leppihalme suggests parody, irony and other humour; means for characterisation; or indicators of interpersonal relationships (44).

The Discworld series is full of allusions and it would appear that Pratchett enjoys obscuring the readers' vision, challenging them to 'find the punch line'. Though some may perhaps criticise him for creating such profoundly allusive texts which might exclude younger or less-read readers, it could be maintained that 'passing the test', or 'cracking the code' successfully, will bring the readers additional delight, satisfaction or amusement, as well as another dimension of cultural connotation, resulting in generating further meaning of the text. And those who fail to spot the reference usually still appreciate the humour of the situation or its wittiness. Pratchett enjoys using allusions and cultural references when constructing his narratives. He justifies his usage of allusions, pointing out their importance and saying that "(t)here are a number of passages in the books which are 'enhanced' if you know where the echoes are coming from (. . .)" (Breebaart pars. 228-29) Ever-present intertextual/transfactual features (whether in the form of allusions or parody) fasten Pratchett's *fantasy* books tightly to our everyday reality. Pratchett himself compares the Discworld novels to the traditional English pantomime<sup>3</sup>, a type of parody itself. He says that

the classic story-line of the pantomime tends to stay the same. Everything else becomes modern. The references are modern. (...) Often television stars and other well-known people will be part of the cast and the pantomime and aspects of the script will be built around them. So the pantomime keeps going because it has these modern references all the time. I suppose Discworld can be the same sort of thing. (Silver, "*Conversation part 1*" pars.19-20)

Ultimately, Pratchett takes pieces of writing, products of modern society and aspects of earthly living, twists them, seasons them with humorous points of view and serves them as a new reality in a glass of *fantasy*; shaken and very stirred.

Though removed from our own world, the Discworld is a *fantasy* world, into which our reality relentlessly seeps and is recycled in a new shape, as if a special filter was used to portray it. Using in the same sentence references from two very different sources should therefore not come as a surprise: " 'A Wizard of Sorts,' Vitoller read. 'Or, Please Yourself'." (WS 76) resonate with a well-known book and film *The Wizard of Oz* and Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*, respectively. The realities of Shakespearean theatre somehow leaked into the Discworld. " 'It's the Theatre, see. All the women are played by men.' " (WS 39) as were all the female roles played by men in the Shakespearean theatre. The Discworld even boasts of a *fantasy* version of The Globe, called The Dysk, (WS 211) built by the river, having an unusual shape.

Many of Pratchett's literary allusions seem to be deliberately chosen from a universally recognizable source (at least within the context of Western culture). He explains: "If I put a reference in a book I try to pick one that a generally well-read (well-viewed, well-listened) person has a sporting chance of picking up; I call this 'white knowledge,' the sort of stuff that fills up your brain without you really knowing where it came from" (Breebaart pars. 228-29). He clarifies the notion of white knowledge further with a very hands-on explanation: "In my story, it's not Chekhov really, but it's what people that don't know much about Chekhov *think* Chekhov is." (White par. 10) In other words, Pratchett frequently draws on the impressions and (not necessarily precise) perceptions of the sources. The results of such

strategy are twofold; a greater number of readers are able to notice the allusions and the readers are constantly reminded that the Discworld might just be our world, seen through the looking glass.

Having said the above, it could not be denied that a familiarity with Shakespeare's works used as source material significantly increases comprehension and appreciation of the Discworld series. To understand the following quotes (unlike the ones mentioned before) would be very difficult indeed without having a good knowledge of Shakespeare's works. The echoes of various Shakespeare's plays create in readers' minds solid links to our physical culture, to our reality. Lord Felmet expresses his guilt, pondering: "(...) who would have thought he had so much blood in him?" (WS 300), whereas Lady Macbeth utters: "Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him." Granny Weatherwax uses an actual quotation from *Ling Lear* when reminiscing about the late king: " 'Every inch a king,' said Granny." (WS 68), showing herself to be a royalist. The line from *Macbeth* "If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly." is paraphrased in *Wyrd Sisters* " (...) and you said, 'If it's to be done, it's better if it's done quickly', or something (...)" (WS 143), reinforcing the thematic focus, by reminding us that in the book there is also a play about a crime (all of which ultimately alludes to a play) .

The world and words of Shakespeare are not the only sources of Pratchett's literary allusions. He alludes to Tolkien's writings, when he draws parallels between The One Ring and the crowns, which too "(...) have this way of being found, anyway. They kind of call out to people's mind. If you bunged it under a stone up here, in a week's time it'd get discovered by accident." (WS 31-32). Writing about Nanny Ogg's wicked tomcat, Pratchett nods to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and his Cheshire cat, he alludes to Peake's *Gormenghast*. Pratchett does not shy away from products of popular culture either. Here he alludes to musicals by Andrew Lloyd Webber like *Cats* and *Starlight Express*, also to *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Through Master Hwel, the Discworld playwright, Pratchett brings our reality into the reality/fantasy of the Discworld. It is as if Hwel hacked into some database of popculture; and so the allusions to the feats of Hollywood and American popular culture find a place in the Discworld. "(T)rying to find a laboratory opposite a dress shop that will keep the same dummy in the window for sixty years, (...) (WS 206) refers to H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and one of the movie versions of it, where the rapid passing of time is achieved by the effect described. Pratchett also inspires Hwel with an image of Laurel & Hardy and their catch phrase: "(...) the other idea about the two clowns, one fat, one thin... *Thys ys amain Dainty Messe youe have got me into, Stanleigh...*" (WS 210), and he channels an image of Charlie Chaplin. He is happy to go even further, using the image of the ghosts of two small girl twins from Stanley Kubrick's classic horror movie adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining*: " (...) the Twins, toddling hand in hand along the midnight corridors, (...)" (WS 107).

The following excerpt mimics motivational speeches the audience heard time and time again in movies about sport or war just before a decisive match or battle is about to be played out. We could just imagine the likes of Tom Cruise, Sylvester Stallone, John Wayne or Robert Mitchum uttering such words: " 'Now I want you to get out there and give 'em hell. Not for me. Not for the goddam captain.' He shifted the butt of an imaginary cigar from one side of his mouth to the other, and pushed back a non-existent tin helmet, and rasped, 'But for Corporal Walkowski and his little dawg.'" (WS 279) The last two quotes in particular resonate very strongly in the subconsciousness of popular culture audience. The physical context, as well as their content is highly predictable and in this aspect they are almost clichés. Pratchett, undoubtedly aware of it, gives it a friendly, albeit ironic poke.

Behind Nash's pseudoparodies, as well as Pratchett's white knowledge there are notions of echoes, imprecisely remembered information and parodic aura. Pratchett consistently manipulates images

from our reality to suit his *fantasy*. When he uses allusive constructions (parody, allusion, cultural reference) pointing toward the 'white knowledge' in our subconsciousness (or indeed specific facts stored in referential memory on different subjects), he anchors his stories and characters solidly into the fabric of our world, our reality, even though he writes fantasy novels. Readers expect Pratchett's books to be highly allusive and it gives them a lot of delight to find these links between our culture and an unlikely reality of Discworld. Pratchett himself offers a comment of his own: "Not everything in the books is a pun or a joke. In fact, there are very few puns. It looks as if there might be more." (Silver *A Conversation part 1* par.9)

Discworld series is rich in allusive references which are very often parodic and therefore have humorous purpose. Pratchett uses allusions and what could be called allusive references. Leppihalme classifies allusions into two types: proper-name allusions and key-phrase allusions (66-69). An example of the first being *Lancre castle was built (...) by an architect who had heard about Gormenghast but hadn't got the budget*; an example of the latter *As the cauldron bubbled an eldritch voice shrieked: 'When shall we three meet again?'*. There are also many allusive references, which clearly refer outside the text, but do not quite have the form of citation; e.g. *Greebo's grin gradually faded, until there was nothing left but the cat*. *This was nearly as spooky as the opposite way round*. Allusions as well as allusive references can be regular or deformed and any of the types can be a potential interpretative problem, particularly for non-native speakers tackling Pratchett's novels.

I decided to find out how successfully our first and fifth-year university students decode a set of presented allusions and allusive references. 30 first-year and 15 fifth-year students attempted to define the source of 20 different allusions and allusive references.

The excerpts were collected from three books of this extensive series: *Wyrd Sisters*, *Pyramids* and *Moving Pictures*. *Wyrd Sisters* (further WS) is a parody of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, though the Scottish play is not the only source of allusive constructions in this book. Pratchett also draws on what we know of other Shakespeare's works, and Shakespearean theatre. *Pyramids* (further Ps) brings us the images of cultural clashes between ancient Egypt and Greece. The main protagonist of the book – an heir to the throne tries to save a crumbling kingdom which has not seen a change or innovation for thousands of years – reminds the reader of the story line of *Gormenghast*. *Moving Pictures* (further MP) parodies consumerism, mass production and hypnotic properties of western movie industry, particularly of Hollywood.

Excerpts with commentaries:

No 1 *If illuminated three hunched figures. As the cauldron bubbled an eldritch voice shrieked: 'When shall we three meet again?'* (WS 5), where underlined allusion is in fact a word for word quotation from *Macbeth*, act 1, scene 1, which famously continues 'In thunder, lightning, or in rain?.'

No 2 *'Something comes,' she said. 'Can you tell by the pricking of your thumbs?' said Magrat earnestly.* (WS 17), which alludes to *Macbeth*, act 4, scene 1: (2<sup>nd</sup> Witch) 'By the pricking of my thumbs, Something wicked this way comes (...)'.

No 3 *'I'd like to know If I could compare you to a summer's day.'* (WS 281) alludes to Shakespeare's *Sonnet XVIII* which opens with words: 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? / Thou art more lovely and more temperate'.

No 4 *'If you cut me, do I not bleed?'* (MP 206) is a slightly moderated allusion to the Shylock's line from *Merchant of Venice*, act 3, scene 1, which follows: '(...) If you prick us, do we not bleed? (...)'

The excerpts No 1 – No 4 are of Shakespearean origin. As expected the first-year students were not able to pin point the source of these references. Their success rate was zero. The fifth-year students (in their final year of studies) fared much better. The most familiar one to them was No 3, the least familiar



No 4. Two thirds of students managed to successfully decode No 1 and 2. The improvement in the results was probably caused by students having to study works of Shakespeare within their courses.

No 5 *Lancre castle was built (...) by an architect who had heard about Gormenghast but hadn't got the budget.* (WS 27) *Gormenghast* is a book from Mervyn Peake's trilogy, which also features an enormous decrepit castle of uncommon architecture called Gormenghast.

No 6 *Greebo's grin gradually faded, until there was nothing left but the cat. This was nearly as spooky as the opposite way round.* (WS 186) The allusion refers to the line '(the Cat) vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.' from chapter VI. Pig and Pepper in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The excerpts No 5 and No 6 have literary sources. Neither group of students managed to recognise the source of reference No 5. The reference to L. Carroll's *Cheshire Cat* was uncovered by about half of the first-year students and almost all final year students. The discussion that took place after students worked on the references individually uncovered that only two (final year) students knew the Cheshire Cat from reading, the rest of the students knew the reference because they saw a movie adaptation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

No 7. *'And any son who doesn't like it will be cast into the outer darkness where there is a wailing and crashing of teeth,' he called over his shoulder.* (Ps 123) echoes, though humorously deformed, the biblical lines: 'but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' *Matthew 8:12*

The excerpt No 7 is a biblical reference with which all but one student were familiar with in spite of the word *gnashing* being replaced by parodic *crashing* and *weeping* by *wailing*.

No 8 *This is space. It's sometimes called the final frontier.* (MP 9) The allusion hints at opening lines of Gene Roddenberry's TV series *Star Trek*: 'Space... the final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilisations – to boldly go where no man has gone before.'

No 9 *It went on for several minutes, to a background of cheers. And then a voice said: 'That's all, folks.'* (MP 22) The allusion quotes a closing line of Warner Brothers' cartoons Looney Tunes.

No 10 *'I don't know what it's called, but we're doing one about going to see a wizard. Something about following a yellow sick toad,' a man in one half of a lion suit explained (...).* (MP 159) refers to *The Wizard of Oz* where the main characters, one of the being a cowardly lion, were 'off to see the wizard' and they had to 'follow a yellow brick road'.

No 11. *'What a picture! Pure kinema!' 'A giant woman carrying a screaming ape up a tall building,' sighed Dibbler.* (MP 300) An allusion derived from the movie *King Kong*, where a giant ape carries a woman up a skyscraper.

The excerpts No 8 - No 11 all have roots in popular culture – they are iconic phrases and images produced by American TV and movie industry (though admittedly *The Wizard of Oz* is a movie adaptation of a book). Most students were familiar with No 9 and No 11. Only two first-year students were familiar with No 8 (possibly because *Star Trek* where the allusion comes from is not regularly aired any more). The final year students were more successful in decoding the allusion – eight out of fifteen knew the reference. About fifty percent of students recognised the reference to *The Wizard of Oz*.

No 12 *(...) a god's idea of amusement is Snakes and Ladders with greased rungs.* (WS 6)

The excerpt No 12 contains an (underlined) reference to a board game for children. Both groups of students were equally unsuccessful in decoding it. Only three students were aware of the reference source.



No 13 (*The gods of the Disc*) exist in *Dunmanifestin*, their semi-detached Valhalla. (PS 341). Valhalla in Norse mythology a place where warriors who died a heroic death go.

No 14 A favourite trick of Ephebian Gods (...) was turning into some animal in order to gain favours of highly-placed Ephebian women. And one of them had reputedly turned himself into a golden shower in pursuit of his intended. (Ps 273) Greek god Zeus seduced Danae disguised as a golden shower.

The allusions in the excerpts No 13 and No 14 have mythological roots. One third of first-year students uncovered the origin of No 13, the final year students were more successful – three quarters of them. Only half of students in both groups knew the source of the reference No 14.

No 15. 'Special foreign word for people who've discovered something. It was invented by some foreign bugger in his bath -' (MP 16) This allusion suggests the word 'eureka', an interjection attributed to Archimedes and is used to celebrate a discovery.

The excerpt No 15 was impenetrable for thirteen first-year students and four fifth-year students.

No 16 He'd found room for the (...) comic grave-yard diggers (...). It was the cats and the roller skates that were currently giving him trouble... (WS 78) Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote a musical called *Cats* and actors in his other musical *Starlight Express* performed on roller skates.

No 17 He'd sorted out the falling chandelier, and found a place for a villain who wore a mask to conceal his disfigurement. (...) (WS 209) Such villain was a main character in A. L. Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*.

No 18 '(...)I had this dream about a little bandy-legged man walking down a road (...) He had a little black hat on (...) He had this little cane which he twirled (...) ' (WS 215)

The allusions in the excerpts No 16 and No 17 have roots in entertainment industry. They refer to A. L. Webber's musicals and were known only by three fifth-year students. The first-year students had zero success with them. Almost all of the students recognised the reference in No 18, which is a description of Charlie Chaplin in his most popular sketches.

No 19 'What song?' said Ginger. 'Search me. We just call it the "Hiho" song. That's all it was. Hihohiho. Hihohiho.' 'Sound like every other dwarf song I ever did hear,' rumbled the troll. (MP 88) The allusion is all about the song *Heigh-Ho* (*Heigh-Ho, It's Off To Work We Go!*) from animated Disney studios production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

About half of the first-year students and two thirds of the fifth-year students were aware of the source of the allusion in the excerpts No 19.

No 20 In the hot breathless darkness of a clapboard shack, Ginger Withel dreamed of red carpets and cheering crowds. And a grating. She kept coming back to a grating, in the dream, where a rush of warm air blew up her skirts... (MP 90) The allusion points to the well known photograph of Marilyn Monroe.

The most recognisable of all the excerpts was No 20. All the students knew the source of the reference.

Overall, it can be said, there was an improvement in the extent of understanding when comparing the first and fifth-year students. However, considering that only 20 least obscure references were chosen, I was hoping for better results. The students seemed to have fewer problems with the references that drew upon visual images, leaving the literary references on the tail. The results have also shown that the training in literary interpretation and generally experience with different kinds of literature make students more aware of transtextual references, ultimately making them better, more appreciative readers.

## Notes

1. E. R. Burrough's *A Princess of Mars* follows heroic feats of John Carter, a Confederate veteran of the American Civil War, accidentally transported to planet Mars.
2. As do J.R.R. Tolkien in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*; and George R.R. Martin in *A Game of Thrones*.
3. A form of entertainment performed usually

around Christmas and New Year, which parodies traditional fairy-tales, twisting their plots, using lots of slapstick, in-jokes and allusions to current affairs in English society.

4. The notion of white knowledge is reminiscent of Nash's concept of pseudoparody mentioned earlier.

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## The Political Wonderland of the Theatre

*Abstract: In today's technology-driven and socially deprived world, human values are often exiled into the world of make-believe. As a result, art – and theatre in particular – cannot fulfil its (apparently) inherent social role. This contribution seeks to present the importance of socially and politically engaged theatre using the example of Elliot Leffler's Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year, staged at the University of Minnesota in 2012. The production offered open discourse about political issues using the format of Augusto Boal's "forum theatre" while offering an intense theatrical and provokingly intellectual experience.*

In February 2012, a group of students led and directed by Elliot Leffler, a doctoral student of theatre at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, produced a show that attempted to improve (and perhaps also transform) the political and social discourse among students. The production titled *Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year* aspired to catalyze a process in which discussions about politics could shift from being polarized and fruitless. The production's title alludes not only to the American political movement of the same name, which has appealed to a number of conservative voters in the United States, but also to the historical event that took place in Boston in 1773, and even to the well-known "Mad Tea-Party" in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. This somewhat surreal interconnection of the above allusions became the point of departure for the show's creators, who attempted to revive public debate about important social issues. In this article I will endeavour to show how the performance made use of the features of social and interactive theatre to catalyze informed discourse about political and cultural matters, and to incite social change.

In the creative and rehearsal process, Leffler, co-author and director of *Tea Party*, worked with theatre students and devised a show that was both a student production and a socially engaging experiment. In the programme bulletin, Leffler elaborately explains his motivation and intent, and claims that the production was made as an attempt to shift the paradigm in which people often think about, consider and discuss social and political issues (Leffler). Leffler believes that such discussions suffer from an overly fragmented structure of the involved groups because people who are voters of one political party tend to have the same opinion about the principal issues of political discourse (health care, social policy, minorities, abortion, global warming, etc.) and only reinforce their views through debates within their own opinion circles. This is mostly because we only rarely meet (let alone seriously talk to) those who are of an opposing opinion. As a result, no dialectic confrontation of views takes place and if it does, it often turns into fierce diatribes full of anger and personal insults (Leffler). Leffler further posits that this divides society into small units that tend to strengthen their views and refuse to expose them to criticism, even if it is constructive and socially beneficial.

In other words, communication (for example with family and friends) is frequently free of potentially dangerous and controversial topics, and people fortify their own opinion by searching for information only in media that support this opinion. In turn, relationships among people are colder and poorer, defined by an external and mediated reality rather than by direct and personal experience. People are withdrawing from those who are close to them and their knowledge is decreasingly heterogeneous. As if our lives were ruled by some software that uses our on-line preferences to customize our advertising and recommend pages similar to those we have already visited. In her contemplation about the importance of intellectual empathy, Martha Nussbaum puts this succinctly: "One can hardly treat

another person's intellectual position respectfully unless one at least tries to see what outlook on life and what life experiences generated it" (Nussbaum 109–10).

Leffler's *Tea Party* started before the audience entered the actual theatre space. At the entrance, one of the actresses, dressed like Alice who had just sprung out of the rabbit hole, showed the spectators in and seated them in comfortable chairs. Then the Mad Hatter turned up and offered them tea. The set design put actors and spectators in one space – all around there were tables (set up for a tea party), chairs and armchairs, carpets and rugs strewn across what would normally be the stage. The result was something reminiscent of a huge reception room filled with actors and spectators who became debaters after each scene. Leffler did not try to direct the production using the Brechtian model of breaking the fourth wall – from the very beginning it was obvious (to both the actors and the audience) that the fourth wall did not exist at all (Harper).

Genre-wise, the production was a combination of documentary drama and devised theatre, as well as, and perhaps most visibly, of the "forum" theatre method invented and perfected by the Brazilian theatre-maker and activist Augusto Boal. The forum links theatre with politics and civic engagement and, through ideas presented by Boal in his ground-breaking work *Theatre of the Oppressed*, functions on the premise that the spectators are also actors (or "spectactors" as Boal himself called them) (Boal 126). The forum thus becomes a theatre form in which the audience directly enters the dramatic and performative process in order to discuss specific themes and issues, in particular those that concern them personally:

The theatre, as we know it, puts two different worlds in contact: the auditorium and the stage. Conventional theatrical rituals determine the roles that both worlds must play. Onstage, images of social life are presented in an organic, autonomous fashion which cannot be modified by the auditorium. During the performance, the auditorium is deactivated, reduced to contemplation (sometimes critical) of the events that develop onstage. Osmosis moves from the stage to the auditorium in an intransitive manner. If there is strong resistance to deactivation in the auditorium, the performance can be stopped, but it cannot be transformed since it is predetermined. The conventional theatrical ritual does not change. It may broadcast, mobilizing ideas, but the ritual itself remains unchanged. (Boal and Epstein 37)

Leffler's artistic premise was to use the imbalance in the current political discourse in the United States to point out why it is necessary to know the causes of it – just like Augusto Boal recognized the importance of the equilibrium for both the dramatic and social structure. While the equilibrium is regained in Aristotelian drama, it is absent in, for example, Brecht whose notion of withdrawal from involvement, identification and catharsis became the essence of his anti-Aristotelian, socially engaged *epic theatre* (Boal 105). Boal took Brecht's dramatic defamiliarization even further and proposed four stages of transformation of the spectators into actors in which the audience gradually starts to participate in the dramatic action and eventually the theatre becomes "discourse" (Boal 127). The focus on discourse in *Tea Party* was defined at the very outset of the piece when the Mad Hatter opened the show with a brief explanation about what type of production it would be (an interactive one about topical political issues) and the traditional invitation to relax, let go and be carried away by the plot was replaced by the provocative "Please, don't sit back and relax." In short, the fourth wall was gone and the performers and spectators were in it together.

The Mad Hatter became the host of the production and his role was to introduce each of the four scenes. As the conflict peaked in a scene, the Mad Hatter would stop it by inviting the audience

to express their view on the presented issue. However, the aim was not to take a vote on how the scene should continue, but rather to discuss a specific social and political issue which the scenes had revealed as universally relevant, pragmatic and common. The graceless and sometimes awkward discussions with actors after a performance were thus replaced by an (inter)active discussion about 21<sup>st</sup> century issues that are crucial not just for the United States but also for the majority of Western countries. The most significant element in Leffler's undertaking, however, was the involvement of the spectators not only in the conferences with the performers and the host, but also – and perhaps even more importantly – in the creative and performative development of the play itself. The spectators thus became what Monica Prendergast calls “an informed audience” (Prendergast 47).

The opening scene (or what the programme bulletin referred to as the “first course”) presented the playful and energetic romping of children that ended in a fight over building blocks. One of the children used the blocks to build a tower and another child wanted to take the blocks, arguing that the blocks were hers in the first place. But the first kid's argument was that the tower was now his because he had built it. The second conflict ensued when three children tried to play on the top of a table with enough room only for two. The Mad Hatter used both conflict situations to initiate a discussion about the nature of property (physical and intellectual), why we should share things with others and whether we should share at all, what it is that gives objects their value, how we define entertainment and why we define it in a particular way, whether we like doing certain things more if they are done in a group, and even if we get more satisfaction from doing certain things when we know that somebody else is *not* able to do them. The discussion included ruminations about why we have rules and who defines them.

In the second scene, the audience got to see a dispute among the members of an undefined community about the amount of the tithe they should pay to their local church – money that was to be used primarily for social programmes. One group claimed that they could not pay any more because the parish tended to spend too much money to support the weak, ill and poor, while they themselves were left with less. The other group defended the idea that the payments ought to be increased because otherwise the spiritual facet of their church would lose its purpose. In the United States, where the separation of church and state is rigorously applied, smaller religious communities are often dependent on the direct support of their members. The clash in this situation arose between the principles of “I pay because I want to” and “I pay because I have to”. The spiritual dimension in the nature of the argument endowed the discussion with the somewhat ephemeral feeling that the tithe should be used only to spread God's love and therefore cannot be compared with, for example, the obligation to pay taxes.

Taxes were the focal point of the third scene in which an imaginary female president (evocative of the 2012 Republican Party candidate Michele Bachmann) had a passionate discussion with the Defence and Treasury secretaries about budgetary items – a large jar was used to pour tea into smaller cups that metaphorically represented the budget chapters of individual cabinet departments. The audience was offered a simplified version of the creation of the state budget and could physically perceive the links between the individual budgetary items as well as the stark disproportion in the respective amounts. The most stunning realization about the annual budget of the United States was brought about by the discussion about the enormous amount spent on defence – and the debate in the tea room became more passionate. Does the country even need such a big military budget? Is this in the interest of the citizens whose taxes are used to finance the army? Is not the presence of a strong army the reason why countries enter into conflicts more frequently? What values are the American military forces in fact defending?

One of these values should be the country's more than 200-year-long tradition of democracy that started with the original colonies' struggle for independence. The historical and best-known milestone in the effort to detach the thirteen colonies from the imperial influence of Great Britain was the 1773 Boston Tea Party. The last part of the show involved the audience in a scene that reflected a historical period when the American social and economic elite discussed the tax and political issues of the then monarchy. All of the questions that were discussed after the previous scenes were given a historical background and the debate became more abstract. The actors and spectators talked about the histories of countries and nations, the importance of studying history and its interpretation, the ambiguity of great historical ideas and concepts as well as their relevance for the process of identity-shaping. In this last scene, Leffler's production approximated Augusto Boal's forum theatre the most because the scene continued with a handful of spectators performing various roles in the historical scene from Boston.

The discussions following each scene were lively, informed and enriching. Nonetheless, the show would not have achieved this had Leffler exported the production outside of the academic world. After all, the liberal microcosm of a university is radically different from large industrial areas or rural regions. The idea of osmotic discourse would perhaps take a new shape and the tea party would become more irrational and expressive – very much like the session in Lewis Carroll's story. The tea party in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was meaningless, chaotic and full of incomprehensible riddles without answers. Alice's conversation with the Mad Hatter about the meaning of phrases is of particular relevance to Leffler's theatre production: especially the difference between "I mean what I say" and "I say what I mean," or even "I like what I get" and "I get what I like," which Alice finds utterly puzzling (Carroll 97–98). In the tea party scene, Alice's bafflement intensifies and she leaves at the end, nervous and disturbed, calling it "the stupidest tea party" she has ever been to (Carroll 111). Alice is uneasy because she does not understand any of it. Her desperate outcry is an expression of how difficult it is for her to understand a totally different view of the world.

*Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year* tries to present a similar situation. In an effort to catalyze a dialectical debate, the performance aims to unnerve and provoke, activate and stimulate, yet never judge or set people against each other. Leffler's theatre is entertaining, provides constructive discourse, and steers clear of propagandist representational art. Since the scenes reflect on universal situations, there is no room for moralizing or outright criticism – it is rather a theatre-based forum that can be useful for a functional civil society.

Despite the production's specifically American framework of reference, it effectively communicates ideas that are pertinent for a major part of the Western world, including post-communist countries such as Slovakia, where social and political discourse tends to be polarized, its content ideologized and its social impact minimized. Authorities make decisions from a position of institutionally defined power. The academic environment and art are very careful to debate issues that are essential for the direction Western civilization is taking. In Slovakia, in particular, theatre (and the academic preparation of those who will be involved in it) has preserved its focus on the aesthetic form at the expense of what is known as social theatre (which often functions in specific communities or marginalized groups) (Schechner and Thompson 11). Like Leffler's interactive performance or Boal's forum theatre, social theatre can offer an aesthetic experience and at the same time inform, educate and stimulate civic discussion.

The American debate presented by Leffler introduces themes about the nature of property, the role of taxes, the structure of the welfare system, the importance of a functional system of education and health care, and even issues related to national identity and patriotism. Just like in the United States, political influence also circumscribes these themes in the European Union. A bloated bureaucratic

apparatus, corporate profit and power struggles dehumanize social decisions. The question asked by Leffler in *Tea Party* is whether a discussion about essential social problems can be depoliticized and re-humanized: namely, as Grace Christenson, actress and co-creator of the production, put it, whether in our discourse we can “(take) politics out of politics” (Harper).

*Tea Party* vividly shows that university-based discourse may well approximate what Eric B. Gorham calls a political theatre space:

I conceive of the university as a theater of politics where individuals are permitted to act publicly and create a sort of enduring story together. But it is also a space where they must withdraw from action periodically in order to judge the performance in which they may have participated. Through this theater members of a university can satisfy public institutional purposes – democracy, citizenship, community ethics; so the theater metaphor represents a means to political ends. (Gorham xv)

For Gorham, theatre is not only a craft learned by future actors, directors and playwrights, but an instrument enabling comprehensive education in the humanities. The artists, spectators and critics perform distinctive roles in this process – while the moral and aesthetic analysis of dramatic work is the object of the critic’s scrutiny, the political aspect of it is not. The political dimension becomes a vehicle for activism and civic contemplation of the spectators (Gorham 62–65). Many theorists and thinkers have recognized the potential of theatre as a superlative artistic form. Hannah Arendt, for example, considered theatre the ideal genre capable of processing and presenting political relationships between people – in particular the power structures in society and the ensuing complexity of human relations (Arendt 188). Shifra Schonman argues about the benefits of traditional aesthetic education and praises experience-based creative learning (and gaining civil awareness) in a treatise about “the old debated issue of learning through the arts as opposed to learning art forms for their own sake” (Schonman 36).

The greatest challenge in the present utilitarian academic world is to prove that it is not enough to teach practical and technological skills. Language, philosophy and social awareness need to be cultivated as well in order to stimulate self-knowledge and an informed perception of the social and cultural context. Theatre, being a specific cultural, literary and physical art form, has the potential to furnish academia with a more engaged social and political approach to learning, teaching and discourse. Anne Berkeley explicitly suggests that civic curricula should be created in theatre programmes, enabling the students to participate in public life through the study of theatre and its forms and expressions. This type of curriculum, according to Berkeley, would introduce the idea of what she calls “an engaged university” drawing on the axioms of Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action (Berkeley 10–13). The social, intellectual and cultural environment in which the students prepare for their further studies or for work is thus as important as the content of the curriculum and the methodological approach of the teachers.

When theatre (as well as other) study programmes offer students the possibility to become “involved in collaborative learning in which they analyze carefully the possibilities of social change, and develop both individual and group strategies for specific changes” they not only flexibly reflect the changing environment of the job market, but, crucially enough, give students “the experience of acting to change their social world” (Hardy 231). A diversity of approaches and points of view is as significant as the depth of the penetration into a specific topic or theory. Knowing “the other side”, that is, opinions that perhaps question our own views, has always been the essence of (humanistic)



education in the humanities. Boal's theatre forms are most relevant in times of emergency and threat – from situations where citizens are evidently oppressed by an authoritarian regime to financial and political crises where corporate interest is enforced by political means at the expense of public interest. In such situations, theatre can be used as a tool to understand the ethical and moral context and can become a transformative method that involves the participants of a workshop or performance in social debate (Brown and Gillespie 39).

When Robert Frost, in his famous poem *The Road Not Taken*, almost mystically contemplates the path a nameless traveller chose not take, he reveals more than the universally human fascination with the unknown and impossible – he also reflects on the Kantian and Hegelian appeal of the harmonizing productivity of contradictions. The creative process applied by Leffler in the production of *Tea Party* works on a similar level: to help create the performance, Leffler set up an interest group (called the Brain Trust) that consisted of four people with different political views (Leffler). The group would debate burning issues in American politics and generate ideas and concepts that were consequently used for the individual scenes in the performance. Even if some issues were not included in the final product, they resonated in the subtext – just as Frost's poem echoes the feeling that there are always several paths available and without experiencing them we cannot responsibly judge their quality.

Elliot Leffler's *Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year* succeeded in presenting depersonalized political themes in scenes where the personal aspect was dominant. Whether it was the naively free world of children, uncontaminated with social hierarchy and formalism; the clash between the church's charity and true belief in spiritual values; the bizarre world of budget creation and the breath-taking number of zeroes in the individual budget chapters; or even the conjectural dimension of the ideas declared in historic documents and their direct impact on the lives and feelings of people then and now. This personal aspect enabled an Aristotelian identification with the characters, which was then challenged in the following discussion, as the dramatic conflicts, rather than abstract topics, became the points of departure for each debate. In Leffler's show, the imaginary Alice returned to the tea party which she had earlier left so suddenly; she thought harder about the baffling riddles and nonsensical poetry, and started to explain to the other guests why she did not understand them.

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## Thomas Dixon and his Reconstruction Novels

*Abstract: At the beginning of the 20th century, there was probably no other American author more controversial than Thomas Dixon. His name is permanently associated with the first Ku Klux Klan and its principles. This article examines Dixon's two novels, The Leopard Spots and The Clansman, which celebrate the glorious past of the American South and praise white supremacy and the Klan. In these novels, Dixon tried to correct what he perceived as a misinterpretation of the South in fiction, particularly in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Thomas Dixon has been described variously as a "Klan apologist" (Blight 112), a "major representative of Southern racism" (Slide 3), an "embarrassing purveyor of white supremacy who wrote bad novels" (Romine 124), "something of a Forest Gump of his day" (Link 203) or "one of the greatest geniuses ever to come out of the South" (Cook 142). In his two best-selling novels, published at the beginning of the twentieth century, he articulated ideas about race, the Ku Klux Klan, and Reconstruction, that represented the mindset of nearly the entire South's white population of the period.

Dixon indeed was something of a Forest Gump. Born in North Carolina fifteen months before the end of the Civil War, he spent his teenage years living in the Reconstruction South. He graduated from Wake Forest College with the highest honours achieved by a student before or since, and enrolled at John Hopkins University where he befriended Woodrow Wilson, the nation's future president. He left his studies to pursue an unsuccessful career in acting. Subsequently, he turned to more successful careers as a lawyer, a local politician and a highly praised Baptist minister. Disappointed with Baptism, Dixon started a church of his own but soon abandoned the ministry and turned to lecturing. In 1902, he became a writer and published *The Leopard's Spots*, while in the second decade of the century, he emerged as a successful filmmaker and producer. Together with David W. Griffith, Dixon produced *The Birth of a Nation*, the most popular silent film ever.

The primary impulse that incited his writing career was a stage production of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he saw during one of his lecturing tours. Angered by what he perceived as unfair treatment of the South, he left the theatre with tears in his eyes and vowed himself that one day he would tell the "true story" of the South. He asserted that the Southern viewpoint was not adequately treated, and the best answer to Stowe's charges would be to write a sequel where emphasis would be placed on white superiority (Cook 51).

The American Civil War officially ended in April 1865, but culturally it was just a beginning. According to Jim Cullen, the most striking uses of the war in the decades that followed Appomatox were made by Southern writers who sought to secure ideologically what could not be achieved militarily (16). It is thanks to them and thanks to Southern historians from the postwar era that the American Civil War and Reconstruction period that followed are surrounded by a vast mythology, and there are actually two different versions of the Civil War. On the one hand, there is the history of the war, the account of facts that actually happened. On the other, there is what is known as the 'Southern interpretation' of the war, what is generally called the Lost Cause. Particularly in the South, this second version substituted for the history of the war (Nolan 12).

According to some Southern writers including Dixon, the Civil War was a tragic mistake in which black people played a disruptive role. During Reconstruction, the misguided white Northerners made the mistake of experimenting with black freedom. By doing this, they unleashed a bestial element

in newly freed male slaves and “sent forth an animalistic Negro army that would rape the white daughters of the South and wreak havoc down through generations with the miscegenation that must result” (Gillespie, Hall 8). Order in the South could only be achieved through the resurrection of chivalrous Ku Klux Klan, which would not only bring white rule back to the South but would knit the nation together, as well.

Dixon quickly found huge audiences for his version of history. His two early novels, *The Leopard’s Spots* (1902) and *The Clansman* (1905) became immediate bestsellers. Within a short time, *The Leopard’s Spots* sold more than one hundred thousand copies and sales eventually passed the million mark. *The Clansman* enjoyed similar success (Cook 70). The reason for such a huge popularity of the novels was, according to Joel Williamson, that Dixon said in a total way what his audiences were thinking in fragments, and his novels suggested what a vast number of Southerners passionately believed was true (Williamson 108).

*The Leopard’s Spots* is a bad novel indeed as far as its artistic value is concerned. It is full of clichés, flat characters and sentimentality. Dixon himself admitted this, when after completing it, he wrote: “I have made no effort to write literature. I had no ambition to shine as a literary gymnast. It has always seemed to me a waste of time to do such work. Every generation writes its own literature. My sole purpose was to reach and influence with my argument the minds of millions. I had a message and I wrote it as vividly and simply as I knew it” (Cook 52). His message was that the Anglo-Saxon race is superior to the black one, and salvation for two groups is either white domination or permanent separation of the races.

The novel opens where the Civil War ends, on the fields of Appomatox, as General Lee’s observes a proud North Carolina brigade march by. The troops are ragged, but their spirit is not broken. They are straggling home, towards the uncertain future. The racist overtone of the novel is set already on the second page, when in every soldier’s heart and all over the earth hangs “the shadow of the freed Negro, transformed by the exigency of the war from a Chattel to be bought and sold into a possible Beast to be feared and guarded” (2).

The first part of the novel follows the career of Simon Legree, the evil slaveholder from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, who is now the ultimate carpetbagger. When the war starts, he sells his slaves and moves to the North. To avoid service in the army, he spends the war dressed like a German female immigrant. After the war, he hires a man to teach him grammar and pronunciation and moves to the South, where he becomes a leader of the newly freed blacks with a plan to drive the white man out of the South. The South is now divided into military districts, the white Southerners are removed from power and what they experience is a nightmare come true. Legree becomes the Speaker of the North Carolina House which consists of one hundred and ten black and ten white representatives, and uses this position to amass huge power and fortune. With this new government “saturnalia begin” (56) and Dixon vividly describes various acts of anarchy and terror towards the South’s white population when “marauding bands of negroes armed to the teeth terrorize the country, stealing, burning and murdering” (51). It is the Ku Klux Klan that saves the South. The Klansmen appear out of the blue in the middle of the night, without any previous reference, to drag a black associate of Legree who attempted to kiss a white girl out of his bed, and hang him from a balcony of a courthouse. On the origin of the Klan, Dixon writes:

...it was a spontaneous and resistless racial uprising of clansmen of highland origin living along the Appalachian Mountains and foothills of the South, and it appeared almost simultaneously in every Southern state produced by the same terrible conditions...The Invisible Empire of White Robed Anglo-Saxon Knights was simply the old answer of organized manhood to organized crime.

Its purpose was to bring order out of chaos, protect the weak and defenceless, the widows and orphans of brave men who had died for their country, to drive from power the thieves who were robbing the people, redeem the commonwealth from infamy, and reestablish civilization. (80)

According to David Blight, Dixon's novels provided the Klan with its most romantic mythology. His version of history, which claims that the blacks caused the Civil War by their presence and the Northerners during the Reconstruction failed to understand that freedom has ushered the blacks as a race into barbarism, framed the story of the rise of the Klan. In order to be saved, the South needed white men who would take law into their hands and protect Southern womanhood from the sexual brutality of the black men. This vision captured minds of thousands and forged in story form a collective memory of how the war might have been lost but Reconstruction was won. In Dixon's version, as Blight claims, the Klansmen were the noble Lancelots who founded a new, reunited nation (111). Because of this, Dixon's name has been permanently associated with the original Klan, but he was not a supporter of the second Klan that appeared in the 1920s. Although he himself unconsciously contributed to its rebirth – *The Birth of a Nation* is perceived as a film that inspired the founders of the second Klan – he viciously condemned the modern Klansmen, because they undermined national unity and encouraged bloodshed and anarchy. He believed them to be a menace to the American democracy and condemned them for their attacks upon immigrants. He argued that "we are all immigrants, except the few Indians we haven't killed" (Gillespie, Hall 13). This is in sharp contrast with his racism which did not waver in the 1920s.

Simon Legree is not the only *Uncle Tom's Cabin* character in Dixon's novel. There appears also George Harris, the child carried by fugitive slave Eliza across the frozen Ohio River with bloodhounds at her heels. George Harris is now Harvard educated and lives in a household of the Hon. Everett Lowell, liberal politician and the champion of black rights. Here, he falls in love with Lowell's daughter Helen. After hearing Lowell's speech in which he passionately demands full equality for blacks, Harris finds courage and expresses to Lowell his love and desire to marry Helen. Stunned Lowell replies to Harris' plea:

I care not what your culture, or your genius, or your position, I do not desire, and will not permit, a mixture of Negro blood in my family. The idea is nauseating, and to my daughter it would be repulsive beyond the power of words to express it!...One drop of your blood in my family could push it backward three thousand years in history. (207)

After this episode, Harris is sent away and wanders hopelessly across the country in a vain search for work. All over the North, he is scorned and ridiculed and eventually he turns to gambling and crime in the West. Through Harris, Dixon tries to emphasize that the social equality between white and black people is impossible, the conditions of the blacks are no different in the North from those in the South, and that during the years of slavery they were somewhat better in the South (Slide 32).

On the one hand, the novel is glorification of the Ku Klux Klan, on the other, a vilification of blacks. There are not many works of literature where the portrayal of the blacks would be so preposterously stereotypical and prejudiced. The Dixon's blacks are either faithful slave stereotypes or, far more often, "black beast" stereotypes prone to idleness, drunkenness and, what was most terrifying for Dixon's readers of the era, rape. There is a scene in *The Leopard Spots* when drunken black troops interrupt a wedding and drag away the bride. The shootout that follows ends with four black men laying on the ground and a dead bride with a hole in her head. Tom Camp, the father of the girl,

comforts his wife "Don't cry so Annie. It might have been worse. Let us thank God she was saved from them brutes" (66). Later in the novel, teenage Flora, his second daughter, disappears. She is found raped and near death. After the crowd captures the rapist, former slave Dick, Dixon describes Dick's public lynching in detail. From these scenes it is clear that Dixon is obsessed with protection of the Southern womanhood.

Dixon's second Reconstruction novel, *The Clansman*, bears a number of similarities to *The Leopard's Spots*. There are no *Uncle Tom's Cabins* characters as in the former, but both are poorly written and populated by flat characters. Both of them start at the end of the Civil War and are set in the small-town South during the Reconstruction (North Carolina setting from *The Leopard's Spots* is replaced by South Carolina in *The Clansman*). Both are blatantly racist, present the same black stereotypes and include scenes of the black rape. Both are pure Ku Klux Klan propaganda, though *The Clansman* to a much larger extent. And finally, both end with the reconciliation between the North and the South.

Books I and II of the novel are set in Washington DC immediately after the end of the Civil War, follow the assassination of Abraham Lincoln (whom Dixon holds in great reverence) and subsequent rise to power of Senator Austin Stoneman (based on Senator Thaddeus Stevens, radical abolitionist and originator of the Reconstruction program of the South). In Book III, named "The Reign of Terror," the plot shifts to Piedmont in South Carolina where Stoneman, through his mulatto associate Silas Lynch and black votes, tries to take control of the state. And finally, Book IV presents glorious emergence of Klan in South Carolina and restoration of order under its banners. The following quotation can be seen as a summary of Dixon's views and a justification for writing the entire novel:

It was the resistless movement of a race, not any man or leader of men. The secret weapon with which they struck was the most terrible and efficient in human history – these pale hosts of white-and-scarlet horsemen! They struck shrouded in a mantle of darkness and terror. They struck where the power of resistance was weakest and the blow least suspected. Discovery or retaliation was impossible. Not a single disguise was ever penetrated. All was planned and ordered as by destiny. (184)

Today, Dixon is best known for his collaboration with D. W. Griffith who used *The Clansman* and some elements of *The Leopard's Spots* as a basis for *The Birth of a Nation*, but at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he was one of the best-selling American authors. With his Reconstruction novels he provided inspiration for one of the most popular works of fiction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Margret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. Because of his strongly racist overtones, he is the main representative of a group of Radical writers, who blamed the blacks and Abolitionists Northerners for all wrongs that happened to the South, praised Ku Klux Klan and white supremacy. However, with their distorted version of the Southern history, they catered to the tastes of millions of Americans who shared these opinions.

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## Coming to Terms with the Transcendent: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Literature in the Post-Secular Age

*Abstract: From the perspective of a twenty-five year career of teaching the thousand year history of pre-Victorian literature, it has become apparent that to fully appreciate and engage with great literary works a minimal grasp of the underlying cultural and theological influences is essential. Proceeding from the relevant concept of the loss of transcendence the author highlights the prevailingly negative attitude of students towards the necessity of a grounding in religious studies as a means to accurately, completely and maturely embrace and assimilate literature as part of an on-going cultural identity. With the aim to reverse the current trend towards a dangerous cultural deficit, the author presents a parallel between literature and theology at a selection of critical periods of literary development. The author wishes to assert that the lack of an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of literature is increasingly placing students at a severe disadvantage.*

In a recently published collection of texts under the title *Reflections on Transcendence* the authors, all affiliated to the Catholic Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague, present twelve different studies related to the concept of transcendence in a large variety of contexts – all the way from the divine revelation in the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to psychology interpreting children's experience of the transcendent, through its manifestation in art and literature and in the translations of the Bible into Czech. As one follows the respective arguments, it becomes evident that the feeling of loss of transcendence or its entire absence in the lives of individuals today in the cultural environment of the Euro-American civilization is both unfortunate and unjustified. After all, as Mireia Ryšková points out in her introductory words, the capacity to be creative, original and inventive derives from a superior governing transcendent order above and beyond. Moreover, we all experience transcendence in the horizontal sense of the word through love, friendship, charity, loyalty, citizenship and numerous other forms of belonging and striving. Why then should we abandon the upward bound or vertical dimension of transcendence (see Ryšková, Mikulicová)?

It may be of interest therefore to inquire into the relationship of such absence with the rather disappointing enterprise of teaching literature in the academia to a public lacking appropriate knowledge from the fields of philosophy, religious studies or theology and above all of the fundamental text of western civilization, the Bible itself. The result of the teaching process is frequently reminiscent of the medical diagnosis termed *ageusia* – that is the loss of the capacity to perceive taste or *anosmia* related to the damage of the perception of smell. Students absorb texts of literature, learn the required sum of information about them with the final effect of remaining on the surface. They are unable to enjoy, interpret, understand and make their own the principal and essential messages of the texts as part of their personal culture with the seminal impact on their understanding of the past and present to have a perspective for the future. They lack the ability to realize the significance of the surrounding phenomena and the sense of their own existence. It may then be worth considering which assets would the approach to teaching literature as an interdisciplinary subject bring at Czech universities, where literature on the one hand and theology and religious studies on the other would have a reciprocal effect of mutual clarification. Literary texts may serve as original and individual examples

of specific theoretical issues or historical processes and the material of theology and religious studies would provide the necessary tools of interpretation and hermeneutics with a permanent effect on the culture of the reader.

Departments of Literature and Theology have after all coexisted at universities all over the world for more than thirty years with the final outcome being manifold and most enriching. The journal *Literature and Theology* has been published from Oxford since the early 1980s (Hass, Jasper and Jay 24). The changing status of the Bible throughout the centuries is thoroughly dealt with on the space of some seven hundred pages in *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature* (see Lemon, Mason, Roberts, Rowland). The volume entitled *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology* documents the relationship of the two spheres of human self-understanding in a variety of perspectives: historical, thematic, the Bible as literature, theology in literature and even theology as literature (see Hass, Jasper and Jay).

The present times have been identified as post-secular and so they indeed are with the literary texts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries providing sufficient evidence in the genres of science-fiction and later fantasy enjoying massive popularity while manifesting the desire of the reading public for the transcendent and for the omniscient and omnipotent merciful father-figure. On the other hand there are authors such as Salman Rushdie or Graham Swift with their straightforward, albeit controversial treatment of religious topics. Although it is evident that religion has never left the stage, philosophers, e. g. Jacques Derrida, started to announce its return already in the mid-1990s. The reassuring and soothing accompanying feature of that process is the fact that religion and secularity no longer stand in opposition.

One of the prominent effects of this post-secularity (as a state or condition, and not an ism) is that religion and art no longer bear an antagonism towards each other, as they once did within the religious/secular divide. Religion, having lost its supremacy as moral authority, can no longer expect literature to play the role of handmaiden to higher truths. Art, having lost its authority as the inviolable genius of culture, can no longer claim to be the new legislator of morality and reality. A new humility marks the post-secular age, whereby both sides understand that they are bound to one another. (Hass, Jasper and Jay 842–3)

Within the pedagogical process, however, a strong opposition arises towards the requirement addressed to the students concerning the knowledge of selected passages in the Bible to facilitate coming to terms with the significance of the cultural background and development covering roughly one thousand years of English literary history starting with the Anglo-Saxon period and going as far as the 18th century. Students therefore, lacking even the basic knowledge of the history of religion and the essential concepts presented in the Bible, miss the significance of the texts, and are unable to interpret the allegorical meanings and to enjoy their pertinence and beauty. As a result of such an ineffective process of literature study, students often question the very fact that they should follow a course in English literature that deals with any material before the 19th century, perhaps with the exception of William Shakespeare, arguing that within the profession of a primary school teacher such knowledge will not be required.

### **The Development of Religion and Literature as a Parallel**

Looking at the historical development of British literature as a parallel to the existing theological paradigms, it will become apparent that the existing oral poetic expressions in the earliest times



and the texts that came into existence with the spread of literacy later were substantially fed with religious ideas. They were in fact by their very nature verbal renderings of the faith experienced.

#### a) The Anglo-Saxon Times

Perhaps the most fascinating process to be observed within the corpus of Old English literature that is now available to us is the slow disappearance of the powerful pagan motifs and, when recorded in writing, their transformation into a timid form of Christianity in the secular verse and into an exhilarating and mighty expression of Christian faith in the religious texts. The secular elegies *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and mainly *The Fortunes of Man* operate systematically with the leitmotif of *fate* and at the same time, as if additionally, the poetic voice turns to God for consolation and assistance. Fate, however, dominates the scene. On the other hand, the outstanding poem *The Dream of the Rood* represents the most telling Old English expression of the gospel. Fate then is a concept exclusively related to all pagan religions and represents an alien issue with respect to Christianity. That is, after all, besides other reasons, why ancient drama falls silent with the adoption of Christianity in the Roman Empire and drama as a genre comes back to life only when it is reborn within the Christian liturgy.

Another strong motif, this time in narrative verse, is that of *immortality* – in the memory of the survivors of the warriors' heroic deeds in the pagan understanding, or in heaven through Christ's death on the Cross. And heaven is not there this time just for brave warriors, but it is open to the last sinful wretch now living on Earth. Germanic mythology brings the image of *Yggdrasill*, the cosmic tree that holds the universe together and on which the Germanic deity Wodan suffered to gain absolute wisdom – what a contrast to the event and effect of the self-sacrificing Crucifixion of God the Son. The motif of the *tree* becoming the Cross and obeying God to become the instrument of torture and salvation in *The Dream of the Rood* is a most touching concentrated metaphor of the willing and eager transition of the Germanic world to Christianity. This transition was not a forceful one by the power of the sword but a welcoming one in the souls and hearts of the people. Man no longer has to fear and calm the wrath of gods, God is there with his arms wide open. In the poem the Cross itself appears alternately covered in blood or glorious in bejewelled gold. This represents a most significant doctrinal declaration of the paradox of Christ's suffering as a man and his victory over death as Son of God (Fee with Leeming 112–114).

The poem *The Dream of the Rood* is an orthodox enunciation of the Gospel, it bears no trace of Arianism (from the name of its initiator Arius of Alexandria in the 4th century A.D.) that was a widespread heresy among the Germanic tribes of the day and denied the dogma of the Holy Trinity claiming that Christ is a created being, subordinate, together with the Holy Ghost, to God the Father. Arianism survived to this day in the form of unitarianism, e. g. in the teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and has nourished numerous other heresies until this day. It is the essential point of controversy between the trinitarian Christians on the one hand, and Jews and Moslems who have maintained the strict understanding of God as one and only on the other. The impact of Arianism on the history of religions and on their ability to maintain peaceful mutual relations is therefore seminal. One of the seeds of the global violence of past decades doubtless also germinated from that particular source and can be traced back to Arius. The Moslem community transmits its understanding of the one and indivisible God on humankind. Just as God is one, so human society should be one and undivided in its faith, way of life, traditions, practices and so forth. That is the concept of *tawheed* (from the word for the numeral "one" in Arabic) or *oneness*. The political consequences need, certainly, not be discussed further. The true controversial impact of Arianism cannot be sufficiently appreciated also for its impact on the medieval political scene. It was interpreted in the sense that the superiority of God

the Father over the Son (Christ) and the Holy Ghost should be, and indeed was, transported into the relationship between the monarch and the Church plus the whole intellectual sphere. The resulting effect, first in the period from the fourth until the seventh century A.D. and then in the high Middle Ages, was that the monarch, as father, dominated over the Church and the whole intellectual sphere as the sole and most sovereign authority. The consequences of such a standpoint during the Dark Ages and within the framework of the struggle for investiture are not unknown. In the course of teaching, those facts are, however, usually simply stated but the roots of the conflict are not, in our view, sufficiently analysed and put in relation with the burning topics of discussion over dogmatic issues within the Early Church, let alone explaining the role of Areios. It is no wonder then that students tend to condemn both parties in the game – the Church and the monarchy – wholesale as simply struggling for power and wealth. What they may miss, though, is the essence of the whole story, and that is the values for which people were ready to die in those times, since they represented their chances for salvation, eternal life and their own precious conscience. Indeed, pragmatic and base motives were certainly present as well, yet it is our modest opinion that their faith and the desire to save their souls was sincere. Any complacency within our judgements would definitely, therefore be out of place.

Going back to the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood*, the above mentioned demonstrates another reason why its theological significance should be stressed. The connotations of the poem are immense and a whole course in the political and Church history of the Middle Ages could start there. The only Germanic idiosyncrasy present in *The Dream of the Rood* is the nature of Christ as a warrior. He is not nailed to the Cross – he ascends there willingly to fight his victorious battle. Words, indeed, fail us when we try to express the cardinal importance of the message embodied in the image that death of life temporal is a victory over death of life eternal. The mentality of the Germanic peoples would not be able to grasp the message should the Saviour be represented as a victim.

The tension between paganism and Christianity, with the latter slowly gaining ground, can be traced also in the major surviving epic of *Beowulf*. “While *Caedmon’s Hymn* and *The Dream of the Rood* are sophisticated poems which stand at important junctures in the English tradition, there is relatively little disagreement about the Christian influence in each. The same however, cannot be said for *Beowulf*” (Hass, Jasper and Jay 41). Scholars mostly agree on the biblical inspiration there, including the giants who feature in myths of creation, but they disagree on how to read and understand the dichotomy of the Christian versus pagan elements in the narrative.

It may be of interest to pay some attention to the poem’s manuscript context. *Beowulf* appears in the Nowell Codex together with *The Passion of St Christopher*, the *Wonders of the East*, the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, and *Judith*. One of the obvious links between these texts may be an interest in monsters, but it might also be observed that two other poetic texts in the manuscript contain explicitly religious material (Hass, Jasper and Jay 41). Close, attentive and informed reading of the epic will reveal that

Christianity is inextricably woven into the very fabric of the poem, its mythology, its setting, and its themes, and this is generally true of most Old English literature. Though the theology of the poem is not particularly complex, it may be that the poem in this respect is more representative of mainstream Anglo-Saxon theology than one may think. (Hass, Jasper and Jay 47)

The part of our historical overview devoted to Anglo-Saxon times would not be complete without at least a brief mention of the influence of the Bible on the vernacular. The mission of Augustine of Canterbury also meant that the Latin Vulgate Bible arrived in Britain. There were, however, only very

few who were literate and who, at the same time, had the means to acquire the manuscript text. Partial translations therefore circulated orally through the singing of Psalms, preaching, prayers or the poetry of Caedmon, complemented with the lives of saints by Cynewulf and various anonymous authors. Biblical motifs penetrated other subject matter, battle poems, accounts of journeys and the like. A complete translation of the Vulgate was not available until the fourteenth century. A translation from the original languages had to wait for another one hundred and fifty years, with the official Authorized King James Version arriving in the early seventeenth century. Yet, all the way from the Anglo-Saxon times, the Bible continued penetrating British culture in all its manifestations for another one thousand years with the result that writers, readers and listeners not only recognized the message but also assumed the truth of the Christian faith (Hass, Jasper and Jay 54).

In Europe, from the advent of Christianity until towards the end of the twentieth century, the Bible remained unchallenged as the central text within the cultural polysystem, functioning as an agent for language enrichment and as a source text for literary inspiration, commentary and reference. The Bible was the one text that could be quoted or referred to in the knowledge that listeners and readers would recognize the allusions. (Hass, Jasper and Jay 54).

#### b) The Middle Ages

With respect to the Middle Ages, no controversy would be expected as to the significance of Christian teaching for literature, whether in the apologetic sense or in the framework of protest against certain elements of decline within the Church. A few points though may be noted to demonstrate that a conventional perception of that historical phase may cause grave misinterpretations. The key concept of the period is the concept of the *ideal*, the ideal Christian, the ideal knight, the ideal love. And since Geoffrey Chaucer is the only author with realistic pretensions, the only author who dares mock the ideal, his texts are among those from the texts of medieval literature that the university students of today approach without major protest. Further obstacles they encounter on their path to being able to understand and enjoy reading medieval literature are the coded language of allegory, general and unquestioned faith in miracles, blunt moral judgements, the omnipresent authority of the Church and certainly many others. Their projection of the way people think and act in the contemporary world into those texts is so powerful that it prevents them from even admitting that reading Geoffrey of Monmouth, William Langland, *The Romance of the Rose* or Thomas Malory in modern English translation or even in Czech could be a fascinating adventure of entering a world now lost, a world that came to its end with the Renaissance.

The Middle Ages was a world of one authority and one truth, a truth that people were willing to lay down their lives for. Yet, from a closer perspective, we are able to recognize numerous pertinent elements within the medieval culture the validity of which is permanent. The intellectual sphere offers the early and high manifestations of Scholasticism, first with Anselm of Canterbury and his respect for human reason in *Fides quaerens intellectum*, and later the intercultural encounter with the Arab world through the genius of Thomas Aquinas. The philosophy and theology of the Middle Ages certainly do not represent some limited blind faith. Anybody can disagree with the conclusions of the scholars of the day.

But first, it is a good idea to get acquainted with the material they provide and try, at least in part, to understand what they are trying to say, in what cultural and intellectual context and what exactly is their aim. The religious environment offers a spiritual renaissance with the arrival of the Franciscan order and any environmentalist of today may envy the profound love, respect and understanding of nature that we find in the person of St. Francis of Assisi. One may ask the students today a simple

question; whether they understand the symbolic and unprecedented choice of the name Francis by Pope Francis. What exactly is he trying to say by that choice? Why do so many people all over the world, irrespective of faith, absence of faith, culture of origin and social standing identify with his opinions? It may be helpful to a future teacher to not just follow a public trend fostered by the media but to hold an opinion formulated on the basis of individual knowledge.

The medieval world is a world of *splendor ordinis* in the Church of the Common Corps of Christendom, undivided and providing a firm and secure shelter to humans in an environment of constantly shifting and indefinite geographical frontiers. It is a world of the fixed feudal order and society. In the spiritual sphere a world of the Benedictine and later Cistercian orders whose members maintained a strict discipline of personal life, cultivated the countryside of Western Europe, took care of the miserable and spread civilization through art and intellectual activities. A world of the glorious order in the Gregorian chant, in the mysterious code of the structure of the Gothic cathedral, full of hidden significances and embodying the message of the Gospel, in the logic and method of human intellect of scholastic theology of the day, and last but not least, in the overwhelming enormity of the paradox of the Lord's self-sacrifice in his Son. It is, above all, a world of unflinching hope, of hope often unfulfilled and betrayed in this world but certain and unquestioned with the perspective of the world beyond. A country priest from the fourteenth century is almost certainly the author the anonymously published text *The Cloud of Unknowing*. That particular outstanding text of mysticism from a time when Europe was all in the grip of the Black Death is perhaps the most representative text of the late Middle Ages when whole regions were dying out. Those people, suffering, dying and seeped in the "cloud of unknowing" still maintained their hope in divine love and in the gift of life eternal.

To conclude in secular terms, the last remark concerning the Middle Ages touches upon the courtly environment. Love in terms of *fin amor* is doubtless based on another ideal, this time on the cult of Virgin Mary from the high Middle Ages. Reading the courtly romances brings to our attention the image of love unconditioned, absolute, self-sacrificing and eternal. And to unravel the intricacies of the hermetic code of expression including the hidden but mighty erotic undertones is a true adventure for the intellect of the reader. Outside of court, there are the adventures of the knights, serving God, their king and their own honour. Those texts provide the intriguing adventure of a mixture of the age-old Germanic substratum of honour and glory fused with the contemporary sense for Christian service, sacrifice, humility and desire for salvation.

### c) Renaissance

As we proceed towards the period of Renaissance literature in the university classroom, the atmosphere among the students frequently warms up and the participants of the course expect, most unjustly, I regret to say, some change from the constant attention paid to religious matters on the side of the teacher. The scene of events in literature definitely changes, the perspective does too, but the core remains identical. It is sufficient to realize that the most representative work of art of Renaissance is the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci, the most influential piece of literature is Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the most eminent of Humanists Thomas More died in defence of the purity of his faith, the most significant event of the day was the outburst of the Reformations of the Church, initiated, among other things, for the legitimacy of reading the Bible in the vernacular, and immediately any hope that theological matters will go out of the window falls flat. On the contrary, new theological issues arise and those remain uncomprehended once the students have missed the beginning of the show. As a result, the literary topics introduced in Renaissance literature cannot be appreciated without sufficient insight both into the issues of the past and those of the day.

The Renaissance is a time when chaos breaks out, in politics and within the Church. This is a chaos that was to continue with the French Revolution when the magnificent Abbey of Cîteaux was torn down and reduced to dust. A chaos that continued in both world wars and the horrors of the holocaust, a chaos that still goes on with global terrorism and with the fast emancipation of former colonies. A chaos, however, that must have been necessary for humanity to experience its freedom of will and bear the consequences. A chaos that, once somehow overcome, may lead, in Tomáš Halík's use of the words formulated by C. G. Jung concerning the "*late afternoon*" of human history with all the connotations that term implies (see Halík on Rádio Proglas).

Religion was the maker and breaker of political order throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Britain. Theology in turn was the language in which political ideas were tested and the main source of political controversy, the scene both of brittle enforcement and seditious fantasy. Rather than seeing literature as a free space beyond the personal and public agonies of religious change, it is more realistic to see the enormously rich literary production of the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries as part of a world in which words mattered intensely for exactly these reasons. Tottel's first printing project after the accession was a literary celebration of Elizabeth's entry into London. It contained an image of the Marian martyrs redeeming the sins of England's Babylonian captivity and an allegorical pageant glorifying the new Protestant order. Yet, it soon became apparent that the Elizabethan order required a more complex cultural ideology if it was to survive. The sixteenth century produced a legacy of anxieties and disorders concerning religious practice which left their mark on all aspects of social and cultural everyday life. (Hass, Jasper and Jay 92)

Renaissance literature, when presented in textbooks, is frequently torn away from most of the related issues, and students, even at the university level, fall into the trap of repeating platitudes and long abandoned clichés. The farthest they get in that sense is a mention of Renaissance neo-paganism. Indeed, that is a relevant concept, however, always in tension and interaction with the past concepts of the Middle Ages and with all the new concepts and practical consequences of Humanism and the Reformation. Among the Humanists, it is Thomas More himself who falls prey to such interpretations when his *Utopia* is understood and presented as an ideal world to live in. Students, unfortunately, miss the point that no two human beings can be happy in an identical manner and that the text is in the definite tone of irony. Another example of the seminal importance of remaining alert to religious issues is in the figure of perhaps the most eminent of Humanists, Erasmus of Rotterdam.

His most celebrated work was an edition of the New Testament in Greek (1516) with a whole volume attached of theological as well as philological interpretation. From one of the prefaces to this work he constructed a new statement of hermeneutic method, the *Ratio verae theologiae*, as important a manifesto in the history of literary theory as it is in the history of theology. His educational, grammatical, and rhetorical works, such as *De recta pronuntiatione* and *De copia*, while they excoriate the principles of scholastic method, do so not in the interests of removing literary study from the arena of religion but rather making it all the more central. His most widely read book, the *Moriae encomium*, is a polemical justification of the benefits of literature in transforming European piety and religious learning. (Hass, Jasper and Jay 89)

Renaissance is at the same time the age of the sonnet. There it may be worthy of our attention to notice that in discussing the poetry of the two early English representatives of that poetic form, Wyatt and Surrey, we rarely come across a mention of the differences in their religious background, with Wyatt being a Lutheran and Surrey from a conspicuous Catholic family. And those circumstances can be traced in the character of their poetic language (Hass, Jasper and Jay 89). On the other hand, John Donne serves as an example of late Renaissance poetry. His experience as a clergyman for the purpose of poetry needs no additional explanation. The sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries do, indeed, feature humanist prose as well as the sonnet. Above all, however, there is the genius of William Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare (1564–1661) was active playwright and poet from the 1590s. All the main English Reformation Bibles and Prayer Books were either already available to him or were introduced during his lifetime. Although he followed the usual Renaissance model of reworking a combination of sources and never used Biblical stories per se for the subject matter of his plays, quotations from and references to the Bible abound in his work. Extensive studies of allusions in his plays to the Bible, the Book of Homilies and the Prayer Book reveal a writer steeped in the scriptural culture of his time and one who frequently, but not exclusively, uses the Geneva Bible (...). (Hass, Jasper and Jay 72)

Some basic grasp of Christian ethics would also assist anyone interested in interpreting the tragedies and historical plays of Shakespeare. The idea of purgatory comes to mind in connection with the famous monologue in *Hamlet*. The medieval motif of the “prick of conscience” should not be lost when analysing *Macbeth*. In *Othello* we encounter once again the desire for the restoration of divine order in the interplay between good and evil through the final slaughter at the end of the play. Much has been said about the pagan motifs in Shakespeare’s plays. Considering that, however, does not suggest that Shakespeare could be read and fully understood without understanding against what Christian background those motifs become pronounced in the context of the author’s personality, culture, and life in dynamic link with the surrounding social and cultural context. At the same time, students would have the capacity to appreciate the current debate that has been going on for some time on the academic scene about the potential of Shakespeare’s inclination towards Roman Catholicism.

#### d) From the Seventeenth Century to the Present in Conclusion

With a little bit of licence we may suggest that John Milton in the seventeenth century knew where the human race was heading when he entitled his seminal work of narrative poetry *Paradise Lost*. During his lifetime and with his assistance monarchy was removed, although it was later restored. At the end of that process Puritan authors, e.g. John Bunyan, occupy the scene on the background of the contrasting licentious Restoration literature and they call to repentance. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century shifts religion into the private sphere and with Immanuel Kant a sharp line is drawn between theology and philosophy. It would, nevertheless be wrong to assume that faith is replaced by reason. Reason is on the contrary identified as the “candle of God.” “The argument is not that reason is not important in disputing theology – which, after Locke, is the intellectual master-subject, determining man’s place in both the cosmos and society – any more than it is about relegating theology to the realm of the sub-rational. Rather, the arguments are about how best to deploy reason within theological dispute and reflection” (Hass, Jasper and Jay 106). It is equally a period when

some theological knowledge facilitates understanding of some new approaches to religion, such as deism, Socinianism, agnosticism, divinization of nature in Romanticism, the Roman Catholic revival in Victorian times and even atheism, including their articulation in literature. The truth is that orthodox religion and traditional institutional Churches lose adherents but individual expression of faith in some form of idiosyncratic spirituality becomes typical. New Churches, such as Methodism, from among the Dissenting circles appear on the scene. The first novelist in English, Daniel Defoe as a Dissenter doubtless articulated his religious views in his prose. William Blake in his turn embodies through his poetry, art and opinions an example of a distinctive form of personal spirituality. From the Victorian times until the present, literature offers a plurality of attitudes to the issues of faith, religion, and the institutional Church. And the situation becomes even more colourful with the appearance of post-colonial literatures after the Second World War. There one needs to grapple with Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity as experienced by non-Europeans in a minority context.

It has been the author's wish and aim so far to illustrate that an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of literature in collaboration with experts in religious studies and theology may facilitate the understanding of the texts studied. What she considers of major importance though is that such an approach may stimulate interest and enhance the pleasure and enjoyment of reading literature among students. In the context of teacher education, it is the author's firm conviction that only teachers who are themselves informed, enthusiastic and fervent readers will be able to sufficiently motivate the future generations of readers, and adequately contextualize the experience for them.

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## The Social Identity of the Precariat, Britain's Emerging Class

*Abstract: While British society has traditionally been construed in terms of a triadic model (upper, middle and working class,) recent economic and sociological research has yielded a different structure, with the bottom rung of the social ladder occupied by the so-called precariat, an emerging class of individuals leading a precarious existence due to the disappearance of steady employment, rise in the number of temporary job positions and increasing demands on workforce flexibility, especially in the service sector. The paper aims to define this group's social identity, seeking to demonstrate how the precarious nature of work, combined with low pay, impinges on the quality of life of those involved, a trend exacerbated by the recent economic crisis. The social and cultural capital of the British precariat is revealed to be considerably impacted by the loss of economic stability.*

### 1. Introduction

Among the many aspects of contemporary British society, the entrenched class system has always stood out as the most distinctive one. Ever since the emergence of the modern social structure in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, Britain has appeared to be beset by class barriers, whether real or perceived. Class identity has shaped the lives of generations of Britons despite the temporary narrowing of the social gap in the decades of the post-war consensus and despite the proclamations of New Labour meritocrats of the 1990s that “we are all middle class now” (Webb). In recent decades, the gap has been re-opening at a dramatic rate, with the UK currently ranking as the fourth most unequal country in the world, following Singapore, USA and Portugal.

Although several models have been proposed to describe the British social structure (Cannadine 20), the most widespread and by far the most popular concept involves the existence of three classes – the upper, the middle and the working class (with possible subdivisions and the controversial addition of an ‘underclass’). However, this broadly accepted triadic model has recently been challenged in the much-publicized Great British Class Survey, conducted in 2012-2013 by the BBC in co-operation with social scientists led by Mike Savage and Fiona Devine. Seeking to redefine the British class model by focusing on the cultural and social capital of the respondents in addition to purely economic factors, the Survey has unveiled a remarkably complex social fabric. According to its findings, there are no longer three but seven distinct classes, namely the elite, the established middle class, the technical middle class, new affluent workers, traditional working class, emergent service workers and, finally, the most deprived group, referred to as the *precariat* (Savage et al. 231–233).

As evident from the Survey's results, it has been the lowest rungs of the social ladder that have seen the most dramatic shift in recent years. The traditional working class, once the largest segment of British society comprising up to 75% of the workforce, is shown to have shrunk to mere 16% of mostly older members of the society, on relatively low incomes but with the widespread advantage of home ownership. In place of this declining group, two new groups have come to life amidst the changing economic conditions: the emergent service workers and the precariat. The present paper focuses on analysing the social identity of the latter group, the precariat, while arguing for its broader definition due to the presence of precarity in a much wider segment of the British society (see below).

As easily inferred, the term ‘precariat’ has arisen as a blend of ‘precarious’ and ‘proletariat’. With the actual author of the term being unknown (the French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu is sometimes mentioned in this respect), the debate on modern-day precarity reaches back to the 1980s.



In the study *Immaterial Labor, Precarity and Decomposition*, authors Enda Brophy and Greig du Peuter define precarity as “financial and existential security arising from flexibilization of labor” (Brophy and Peuter 179). On a similar note, the Canadian cultural critic Tobias c. van Veen contemplates precarity in the context of the transformation of the traditional ‘Fordist’ industrialized economy:

Precarity results from, in part, the demands of the 60s to a less rigid workplace. Precarity in this sense is the outgrowth of Fordism; it is post-Fordist, post-assembly line, post one-job-for-life labour. However, the exploitation of precisely this development announces the precarious class. As employers no longer have to commit to their employees, no longer have to think of employees as long-term partners in the functioning of a business, employees are like stock: they become replaceable on a seasonal basis. (van Veen)

Principally, it has been owing to the British economist and lecturer Guy Standing that the subject of the precariat has broken through the academic domain into the mainstream social debate. In his book *The Precariat: the New Dangerous Class*, Standing presents compelling evidence of the precariat constituting a class in the making, a worldwide class of expendable workers living in perpetual economic and social insecurity and, as a result, experiencing existential anxiety, anger, alienation and anomie (19–22). Defining the precariat more broadly than the Great British Class Survey, Standing argues that the group consists of the following three subgroups:

- those who fell out of the working class jobs and communities
- those who accept insecurity because they have never known anything better (migrants, single mothers, the disabled)
- young university-educated people experiencing status frustration (20).

In addition, Standing observes that a much wider section of society is potentially facing precarious existence amidst the sweeping changes on the globalized labour market. Individuals such as IT specialists, creative professionals or even non-tenured academic staff are increasingly affected by the temporariness of income and the subsequent loss of social stability, a trend threatening the traditional middle-class lifestyle (38–41).

While acknowledging the results of the Great British Class Survey with its narrow concept of the precariat, this paper adopts Standing's wider definition by including in the analysis the group identified by the Survey as emergent service workers, due to affinities found and described further. At the same time, the paper limits itself to the discussion of ‘precariat proper’, i.e. low-income individuals, as opposed to middle-class individuals facing insecurity due to the flexibilization of white-collar jobs.

In the following two sections, the social identity of the British precariat is discussed in terms of two categories: precarity of work and the resultant precarity of life.

## **2. Precarity of Work**

As pointed out, the phenomenon of precarity has developed as a result of the wider process of deindustrialization and transition to a service sector economy, which generates different types of jobs than the traditional industrial model. Britain found itself swept by these economic forces in the 1980s during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher, for whom the replacement of traditional industries with the privatized service sector was a key policy, which no subsequent government has attempted to reverse. Consequently, Britain provided the ideal conditions for the precariat to emerge and grow.

Britain's traditional industries having been largely closed or outsourced, the biggest job provider in today's Britain is retail, employing over 3 million workers. The largest segment of the precariat can,

therefore, be found working in supermarkets, mostly as checkout operators or shelf stackers (Jones 145). Similar employment conditions are faced by fast food workers and other catering staff, in positions popularly called 'Mc Jobs'.

Significantly, the precariat now also includes workers in formerly public sector jobs (hospital ancillary staff, school support staff, nursery assistants, care home workers, etc.) that have been contracted out to private companies, a trend championed by the governments of the past two decades with the aim of reducing the number of public sector workers (Knight and White). Prior to the privatization, these public sector jobs were low-paid but secure, providing, crucially to female workers in particular, considerable occupational stability. With the contracting out, that stability has been undermined, throwing a vital part of the workforce into precarity.

Finally, the precariat can be argued to include the vast army of call centre workers involved in tele-marketing and telesales, one of the fastest growing industrial sectors in the UK. High-tech in character but low on pay and occupational security, these jobs are often performed by the members of the last subgroup identified by Standing, i.e. university graduates experiencing status frustration (see Standing 20), who are unable find jobs corresponding to their qualifications in the stagnating British economy. Other jobs, naturally can lay claim to being called 'precarious' but the ones mentioned above can be regarded as prototypical.

An important aspect of precarious work is the replacement of the traditional employer with the temporary employment agency, a phenomenon currently on the rise in Britain. Permanent employees are being replaced with agency temps on short-term contracts, constantly adrift on the labour market and struggling to form a coherent occupational identity, an important building block of social life in Britain. The original attractiveness of temping jobs as enablers of flexibility has given way to involuntary temporary employment; agency work is no longer a choice but a last resort (Cam 48).

In a rare experiment of a purposeful descent into poverty, the social impact of the precarization of work has been investigated the Guardian journalist and campaigner Polly Toynbee and documented in her book *Hard Work. Life in Low-Pay Britain*, a compelling first-hand account of the life of Britain's working poor (12). In the spirit of Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier*, Toynbee temporarily took up residence in one of the most deprived council estates in London, Clapham Park, and put herself in the position of an ordinary jobseeker, performing a string of low-paid jobs: a hospital porter, a dinner lady, a nursery assistant, a cleaner, a cake packer and a care home assistant; all of them involving some element of precarity. Toynbee's immediate observations offer invaluable insight into the work and life conditions of the precariat, despite the fact that she never uses the term herself. Of the jobs available to her in the course of her experiment, most were offered by employment agencies or private contractors of outsourced public services. One of the offers involved a "temporary position" - a euphemism for a so-called zero-hour contract, an employment relationship presently causing considerable controversy in Britain (Toynbee 115, Pyper and MacGuinness 3). Zero-hour contracts represent an extreme form of precarity: the number of hours worked is neither specified nor guaranteed, yet at the same time the employee has to be constantly available for work, effectively preventing him or her from securing a supplementary income to compensate for the irregular and highly unpredictable earnings. In such circumstances, economic survival is fraught with difficulty, a fact illustrated by the high representation of zero-hour contract workers among the clients of Britain's fast-growing food banks (Monroe). Though heavily criticized by social activists, these contracts are widely used in Britain and even hailed by employers as delivering the much-desired flexibility.

Due to the temporary basis of the jobs available, the precariat can easily find themselves caught up the so-called low pay-no pay cycle, with seasonal employment followed by periods 'on the

dole'. Under such conditions, each return to paid employment represents a stumbling block due to the costs incurred by attending various interviews as well as due to the loss of welfare benefits once a new position is taken. This often leaves the jobseeker in a worse financial situation than previously, with a personal loan frequently needed to finance the transition from benefits to work. The constant fluctuation from one job to another has a major psychological impact on workers, seriously undermining their sense of security, as intimated by a respondent to a survey on the low-pay no-pay cycle carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a British social policy research organization:

Just jumping from job to job, it's no way to go. It's a nightmare! Jack of all trades, master of none (laughs). I just want something with a bit of job security – where maybes I can buy me own house in the future rather than just where you've got to be on a wing and a prayer type thing ... just a job that I can call me own, you know what I mean? Rather than just looking for one all the time or just jumping from job to job (Shildrick et al. 45).

While acknowledging that the temporariness is a problem, Toynbee identifies the universal low-pay character of precarious jobs, regardless of the nature of the work performed, as a far more serious concern. Whether she packed cakes in a shabby, badly managed production facility, worked as an operator in a call centre (a job she took the greatest dislike to among those tried and tested) or performed the duties of a nursery assistant in a luxury Foreign Office childcare facility in the heart of Westminster, the pay invariably copied the minimum wage rate (about £5 at the time of writing), whatever skills and responsibilities were involved and however upmarket the place of work was. Ironically, it was the most upmarket of all of the facilities, the Foreign Office nursery, that was offering the above-mentioned zero-hour contract (Toynbee 115).

Moving back and forth between the categories identified by the Great British Class Survey as the precariat and the emergent service workers did not seem to make any difference to Toynbee's actual experience; lack of funds and the struggle to make ends meet was the leitmotif of the day with each job taken, with the low pay precluding most leisure or cultural pursuits (see Section 2). This throws some weight behind the argument that emergent service workers and the precariat have a great deal in common, a view also held by Standing (20).

As further observed by Toynbee, the low status of precarious workers may not be immediately noticeable to individuals from the outside, since the agencies, or employers in general, often seek to put a glossy façade on their temporary workforce by prescribing neat, sleek uniforms, usually in the form of polo-neck T-shirts with company logos and other accessories: "Whatever else, private companies are good at eye-catching uniforms, branding their employees all over, offering a reassuring appearance of confidence and affluence whatever the reality beneath the logos" (Toynbee 58-59). In addition, constant smiling and displays of enthusiasm about being involved in working for the company are demanded from the staff.

However, maintaining an upbeat attitude may be a source of extra stress given the nature of the work performed. Typically, the precariat have very little power over their work activity and very little workplace autonomy. Their conduct is heavily surveyed and often controlled by the computer, with little room for personal initiative or social interaction. The lack of opportunity for interpersonal contact is perceived as especially restrictive:

When I started, you could have a little bit of time with the customer, and get to know your customer, you had regulars that came to you because you had that little bit of rapport with them. Now it's get

on with the job, you have to have targets ... you're supposed to get through so many customers an hour (Owen 146).

Call centre workers, especially, are likely to suffer from the repetitive nature of their work as well as from the extreme isolation from interaction with other workers due to sitting enclosed in cubicles with headphones on. In addition, they are exposed to verbal abuse from customers on a daily basis, which tends to leave psychological scars and an undermined sense of self-worth. Forming any kind of positive occupational identity becomes a serious challenge in such conditions.

As the logical outcome of the combination of low pay and poor working conditions, staff turnover is high in precarious jobs, especially among men. Women are more likely to stay despite the adverse work and pay conditions, as they find it difficult to obtain better jobs locally that could be combined with childcare, a major concern in Britain. In addition, anxiety and fear of risk-taking, especially in the situation of being the sole family breadwinner, is what appears to keep women in these jobs, leading to the distinct feminisation of the precariat.

### **3. Precarity of Life**

As a result of the growing economic and occupational insecurity, the precariat tend to perceive life as daily struggle to survive. The fixation on the bare necessities seems a clear throwback to the pre-war, perhaps even Victorian, era. This is borne out by evidence presented by Daniel Dorling, human geographer and social justice campaigner from Sheffield, who has demonstrated that the gap between the rich and the poor is wider in Britain today than it was in the 1930s (Dorling, "Persistent North-South Divides", 17).

Interestingly, however, as revealed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reports, many members of the precariat reject 'poverty' and 'the poor' as concepts relating to them. Instead, they emphasize the normality of their lives and take pride in their ability to cope, in defiance of the shame and stigma attached to the concept of poverty (Shildrick et al 7). Where they have to depend on some form of government assistance despite being in work, they overwhelmingly resent this fact and are sensitive to being referred to as 'benefits scroungers', a stereotype frequently raised and exploited by the right-leaning media. The failure to make ends meet despite the hard work is a constant source of frustration, as reported by a 31-year working single mother responding to a JRF survey:

It's not as though I'm not aware of budgeting, and this is what I normally do as a family, but there just isn't enough to cover everything and I've got one thing under control, then I'm taking from something else, for something we need, like food, shopping or rent – general living (Dearden et al. 19)

In addition to reliance on benefits, reliance on personal debt is a constant in the lives of the precariat. In the political and media discourse of the 'undeserving poor,' the omnipresence of debt tends to be explained as the result of the widespread consumerism of the lower classes, who are portrayed as feckless and driven by the need for immediate gratification. A more sympathetic explanation is offered by Daniel Dorling, who argues in his book *Injustice: Why Inequality Persists* that the poor are not buying consumer goods out of greed but as status symbols in a struggle to gain acceptance and maintain dignity among their peers (99).

However, as discovered by Toynbee (who found herself involuntarily in debt as early as the first week of her experiment) and as confirmed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation research, loans are increasingly taken out by the precariat to cover the essentials, such as food, utilities or expenses

incurred by travelling to job interviews (Dearden et al 44). The low pay-now pay cycle in particular is conducive to amassing debt, as the transfer from benefits to a low-paid job often involves expenditures that are beyond the financial means of a low-income individual. Due to the reluctance of high street banks to lend to the Precariat, who are seen as lacking in creditworthiness, friends or relatives are often borrowed from, or, in the most desperate circumstances, loan sharks offering credit with extremely high interest rates.

With Britain currently in the grip of a housing crisis with an acute lack of affordable homes, the availability of housing is another major issue faced by the precariat. In the 1980s, large swathes of the aspirational working classes were able to become homeowners under the so-called right-to-buy scheme. While providing working-class individuals with an opportunity to join middle-class ranks by buying off the council houses and flats they occupied, the policy, spearheaded by Margaret Thatcher, also led to the reduction of the council house stock available to those unable to rent privately or obtain a mortgage. Today's precariat are the direct victims of this policy, with housing options far more curtailed than any other social group in post-war Britain.

The decline in council housing, compounded with skyrocketing house prices and declining real income, makes renting from private landlords the only option for a substantial section of the precariat, giving rise to the term 'Generation Rent' (Howard). In the country obsessed with home ownership, renting carries a social stigma that is not witnessed elsewhere in Europe; living in a rented property usually bestows on the person or family a sense of failure. As pointed out by the *Guardian* columnist and blogger Penny Anderson, who writes on the social aspects of renting, the precarity of British tenants is made more acute by the fact that under the assured shorthold tenancy applicable in Britain, British tenants have fewer rights than their continental counterparts and can be evicted by the landlord after only six months of tenancy. This leads to a sense of being constantly adrift, of lacking a solid roof over one's head, as well as to the difficulty putting down roots and becoming part of a community:

Here I am, juggling the balls of job and home, hoping that at least one of the balls stays in the air of the other should fall. I can't relax of course. Or plan for much. I'm always thinking about the next job app, the next move, the next landlord, the next conversation I must surely have, to secure my next abode (Anderson).

In addition to residential impermanence, the fear of being unable to pay the rent (an expense accounting for up to 60% of the monthly budget of a family living in precarity) represents a major source of anxiety. A single day missed at work may put the tenant at the risk of falling into arrears and facing eviction and possibly homelessness. For families claiming the housing benefit to top up the low income, an added concern is being able to find a landlord willing to rent to them. Just as in the 1950s and 1960s, some landlords openly refused to rent to certain groups (most often ethnic minorities), it is now common to see "No DSS" signs on houses for rent or in the windows of letting agencies, with DSS referring to the former Department of Social Security, now Department for Work and Pensions, the institution that covers rent payment for claimants (Butler). This is a clear example of the stigmatization of the precariat, fuelled by the popular image of benefits claimants as 'scroungers' while ignoring the fact that most of those looking for a place to rent are people in work, drawing benefits to top up their low earnings.

Compared to the drifting renters, those members of the Precariat who have been allocated a council house or flat appear to be in a much more favourable position. However, as a result of the growing polarization of British society, council estates, once planned as decent abodes for the burgeoning

working class, have become ghettos in all but name, with high concentrations of crime and social breakdown. Living on an estate carries a far greater social stigma nowadays than it did twenty or thirty years ago, with occupants attempting to relocate to 'nicer' areas whenever they can. Due to the high occupant fluctuation, especially on the rougher estates, establishing a sense of community and forming relationships with neighbours can be as difficult for council house tenants as for private renters. The sense of isolation – and desolation – can be pervasive, as witnessed by Toynbee:

I stood at the window looking down on the scene below, noticing how people scuttled in and out of their blocks, hurrying to their own front door (...) Everyone here walked fast and purposefully across no-man's land. No one sauntered through these unwelcoming public spaces, no-one looked much to right or left, avoiding eye-contact for fear of some unwelcome encounter. There were not even clumps of kids hanging about. The only place to be was the safe, familiar, private space of your own flat. That's how it felt; safe up there looking out, but with a desert down below to cross to get to the streets and bus stops of the outside world. Estates are curious places, locking poor people out of sight (Toynbee 17).

Not limited to housing, the sense of deprivation extends to other areas of the life of the precariat. Precarity makes any kind of long-term planning impossible; life is lived from day to day with few prospects of future improvement. The jobs performed by the precariat are usually entry-level jobs which do not offer any prospects of a career rise, or even financial self-sufficiency. Due to the lack of hope for an upward life path, there are delays in leaving parental homes among the younger members of the precariat and delays in starting a family. Social life in general suffers owing to the unsocial hours worked or owing to the need to hold multiple jobs. Casualised work leads to casualized life; long-term, stable relationships are difficult to establish and maintain, an absence that can only inadequately be offset by relating via the Internet.

With their social life affected, the precariat also have limited access to culture. According to the Great British Class Survey, they represent a class possessing the lowest amount of cultural capital (Savage et al. 230). Here, culture does not necessarily mean highbrow pursuits: as observed by Toynbee, it can be understood as engagement in activities that bring enjoyment and relaxation (Toynbee 239). In her experiment, Toynbee has demonstrated how access to those activities is affected by the low-pay status of the precariat. Spending her time as a minimum-wage worker living on the council estate, practically the only source of 'enjoyment and relaxation' she was able to make use of was the television. Other activities, including having a drink in a café or a pub or buying a book, involved spending money (however modest the sum); therefore, access to them was restricted:

Everything I did was limited by the shortage of cash. Shops simply vanished from my horizon and I realized how important they were to me, as they are to most people in modern life. Well-worn and familiar tracts of the city devoted to pleasure, art, eating, clothes and shopping disappeared from my map. Wherever I walked, everything I passed was out of bounds, things belonging to other people but not to me. No Starbucks sofas, no Borders bookshop, not even the most humble café. This is what 'exclusion' means, if you ever wondered at this modern wider definition of poverty. It is a large No Entry sign on every ordinary pleasure. No entry to the consumer society where the rest of us live. It is a harsh apartheid. (Toynbee 239).

The working classes of the past appear to have always had some means of accessing their own culture, much of which was socially based (working men's clubs, football matches, going to the cinema, meeting friends in pubs). Nowadays, with cinema or football tickets beyond the means of

many precariat members and even pub-going becoming a luxury, the precariat find themselves in increased social and cultural isolation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The emergence of the Precariat represents one of the most significant challenges to the traditional British social structure. The precarity of employment, arising from far-reaching structural changes on the labour market in the face of globalization and the switch from industrialized to service-sector economy, has given rise to the precarity of life, presently experienced by a growing number of Britons. The minimum-wage level pay combined with economic and housing insecurity contributes to the creation of a social class without a positive identity, defined merely by the shared deprivation and the lack of economic, social and cultural capital. Members of this group not only have limited opportunities for social advancement but also find themselves stigmatized by the media and used as a disposable source of labour by employers. This situation represents a clear reversal of the post-war development towards greater equality, inclusion and social mobility.

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## **LINGUISTICS AND METHODOLOGY**

## Corrective Feedbacks among Slovak Teachers of English

*Abstract: The following paper discusses the manner in which Slovak teachers of English language use different corrective feedbacks and in this way approach mistakes that are produced in spoken output by their learners. The research is based on implementation of the questionnaire method to ascertain which methods are preferred by teachers and how often they use each method in everyday classes. The survey also relates the most common errors of Slovak learners as chronicled by teachers with regard to their classroom observations.*

Teaching English to students with different mother languages is a very sophisticated process. It is a long-lasting and continuous activity that contains many procedures. An important part of this process is the necessary cooperation between the learner and the teacher. To produce a proficient speaker of a target language, there needs to be an effective method of correction. A significant part of the learning process is using an appropriate method to rectify errors. It can also become a very delicate situation if the student starts to feel uncomfortable, due to the pressure of being corrected.

### 1. Errors and their Definitions

In order to deal with errors it is important to define what the term 'error' means. This term has often been used differently in the theories of linguistics and language teaching. As Lee discusses in her article that in past decades there has been a problem concerning the use of the term "error" and its seeming equivalent "mistake" (55). Both of these terms for nonnative speakers mean the same. But there is a distinction that Corder clarified in his book *Error Analysis and Interlanguage* in 1981 as Lee states:

'Mistakes' are characterized in spontaneous speech or writing as being induced by slips of the tongue, or lapses in memory, arising from physical states and psychological conditions which have little to do with language competence but rather more to do with performance. However, the term 'error' is commonly assumed to incorporate the notion of a 'mistake'. The use of 'error' as an umbrella term in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classroom compounds the lack of distinction made in practise between errors and mistakes, particularly for error correction purposes. (Corder 56)

From the previous statements it is clear that error as the umbrella term covers in a more general way any deviation from the norm of the second language system that is produced by a learner. Then Edge created a system of learners' lapses in SLA (second language acquisition) and grouped mistakes into several "categories according to the teacher's opinion regarding how a mistake fits in with an individual student's stage of learning in his/her class" (9). Based on this it is possible to name three different kinds of mistakes: slips, errors and attempts. Edge also carefully specifies each kind of mistake as follows: "If the teacher thinks that a student could self-correct a mistake, we shall call this type of mistake a slip." "If a student cannot self-correct a mistake in his or her own English, but the teacher thinks that the class is familiar with the correct form, we shall call that sort of mistake an error." "When the teacher knows that the students have not yet learned the language necessary to express what they want to say, we can call their mistakes attempts" (9-10).

From the divisions above it is clear that dealing with errors during the teaching of English is a serious responsibility. It is important for teachers to be prepared for required interjection while the learner is speaking in order to show him/her that something in the utterance is not appropriate to targeted language structures. The way in which the teacher responds to the learner's error has an impact on the learner's uptake – the way of learning a foreign language and the reaction to the teacher's input.

In the past when teaching English as a second language especially in terms of specific teaching methods (the audio-lingual method and the grammar-translation method), errors were considered undesirable and were not accepted (Gondová 51). Researchers Gondová and Touchie also claimed that making errors in language learning was normal, natural and human. The humanistic approach accepted them as an inherent part of the learning process (Gondová 51, Touchie 75). Although errors were present in the past, teachers diligently tried to prevent their occurrence without even thinking that they could benefit from looking at these errors more closely. Some authors described several positive features that help teachers to approach the errors and in this way also help learners to improve their learning. Touchie in her publication depicted three significant factors: 1.) when learners make errors that indicates for teachers the learners' progress in language learning, 2.) for language researchers learners' errors provide important insights into how language is taken up 3.) the last factor involves errors being meaningful for "the language learner himself/herself as he/she gets involved in hypothesis testing" (75). A similar opinion was described by Corder when he stated that:

A learner's errors are significant in that they tell teacher, if he/she undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him/her to learn. On the other hand the researcher is provided with evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language. (Corder 167)

## **2. Corrective Feedbacks**

Knowing that errors have their natural place in language learning several important questions become apparent and demand answers. These questions were asked by many researchers. Throughout the years Lyster and Ranta conducted surveys dealing with correcting learners' errors and these are still pertinent to contemporary research. The questions used are as follows: "1. Should learners' errors be corrected? 2. When should learners' errors be corrected? 3. Which errors should be corrected? 4. How should errors be corrected? 5. Who should do the correcting?" (38)

During recent decades useful research has been focused on finding appropriate answers to the questions above. Most of this work attempted to find the manner in which errors should be corrected – precisely what methods or approaches teachers used when responding to learners. Carroll and Swain in their article described the investigation they held with Spanish-speaking learners of English. Their objective was to prove empirically whether different feedbacks could assist learners in second language acquisition, more precisely whether corrective feedback helps learners become familiar with general rules of a language and the theoretical restrictions within it. Subjects of the research were divided into different groups and each group was provided with a different kind of corrective feedback. The comparison group was provided with no feedback. Results gathered in the study proved that all treatment groups in which corrective feedbacks were implemented significantly benefited as compared to the control group. Both implicit and explicit types of feedback led to learning (357–386).

Lyster and Ranta in their article from 1997 described their study about corrective feedback and learner uptake in four immersion classrooms. In their results they discussed how often each of four teachers responded to learner errors and which corrective feedbacks were used most. French learners of English as their second language were treated with six different feedback types by four teachers. The survey results indicated the overwhelming preference of one corrective feedback as well as distinctly specified differences in learner uptake when using each of the corrective types (37–38).

Other researchers, Doughty and Varela, published a study they performed in a content-based ESL class in the USA in 1998. The survey was carried out with the focus on form where corrective recasting was used in the class. The treatment group received focus on form instruction in addition to science instruction, while the control group experienced only science content instruction. The errors that were addressed concerned only the past and conditional forms. The results showed that the comparison group's usage of past time reference showed little change in terms of pretest and posttest results. Also noteworthy the treatment group demonstrated an increase in attempts to express the past form correctly. It was evident that the implementation of corrective feedback was more useful than leaving the students on their own (114–138).

From the above examples it is clear that treatment of learners' errors has been researched and made its importance undeniable in second language acquisition. The researchers discuss specific approaches of teachers towards errors.

The term corrective feedback is used. So what does corrective feedback really mean? According to Chaudron in 1988 "the term corrective feedback incorporates different layers of meaning" (Tatawy 1). In Chaudron's view, the term "treatment of error" may simply refer to "any teacher behaviour following an error that minimally attempts to inform the learner of the fact of an error". The treatment may not be evident to the student in terms of the response it elicits, or it may make a significant effort "to elicit a revised student response". Further to this is stated "true correction succeeds in modifying the learner's interlanguage rule so that the error is eliminated from further production" (150). Another explanation of the meaning of corrective feedback is: "an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect. Corrective feedback can be explicit (for example, in response to the learner error 'He go'- 'No, you should say "goes", not "go"') or implicit (for example, 'Yes, he goes to school every day'), and may or may not include metalinguistic information (for example, 'Don't forget to make the verb agree with the subject')" (Lightbown and Spada 197). Harmer discusses the fact that errors of students are part of their interlanguage ("language which the learner has at any one stage of development, and which is continually reshaped as he or she aims for full mastery"). Therefore he claimed that when teachers respond to errors their feedback should be giving and supportive to learners in their reshaping process. It is more important to help students than reprimand them for their erroneous expressions (100).

What is understood by the term corrective feedback is explained above. From this it was clear that teachers of English as a foreign language clearly deal with learners' errors and respond to them. In the past several decades researchers have accumulated many useful surveys in which the focus was on several particular corrective methods. These methods have been investigated through several questions such as: 1) what is the frequency of use of a particular type of feedback? 2) which feedback is better for the learner's uptake? 3) which method is more suitable to support students' self-correction? 4) which feedback is most preferred by teachers? 5) how do corrective feedbacks influence the learning processes? Tatawy states in her overall review that many different authors have focused on a particular component within the corrective feedback observation and its impact on

teaching a foreign language. These investigations have provided several valuable findings about corrective feedbacks (5–12).

The findings oblige us to research the situation among teachers in Slovakia. How do Slovak teachers of English respond to their learners' errors? To look at this more closely it was necessary to define corrective feedbacks that would be included in the research for this article.

After examining many surveys this researcher decided to apply corrective feedback research as defined by Lyster and Ranta in their publication from 1997. These corrective feedbacks precisely named possible approaches towards errors in foreign language education in communicatively oriented classes. These were also closely linked to the findings from preceding surveys and covered in their terminology the most registrable corrective feedback. According to Lyster and Ranta the following were six corrective feedbacks discussed and investigated in their numerous articles (Lyster and Ranta 1997, Lyster 1997, Panova and Lyster 2002).

Corrective Feedbacks according to Lyster and Ranta:

1. "Explicit correction refers to the explicit provision of the correct form. As the teacher provides the correct form, he or she clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect."
2. "Recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error. Recasts are generally implicit in that they are not introduced by phrases such as "You mean," "Use this word," and "You should say."
3. "Clarification requests form a feedback type that can refer to problems in either comprehensibility or accuracy, or both. A clarification request includes phrases such as "Pardon me"? It may also include a repetition of the error as in "What do you mean by X?"
4. "Metalinguistic feedback contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form. Metalinguistic comments generally indicate that there is an error somewhere (e.g., "Can you find your error?," "No, not X," or even just "No."). Metalinguistic information generally provides either some grammatical metalanguage that refers to the nature of the error (e.g., "It's masculine") or a word definition in the case of lexical errors. Metalinguistic questions also point to the nature of the error but attempt to elicit the information from the student (e.g., "Is it feminine?")."
5. "Elicitation refers to at least three techniques that teachers use to directly elicit the correct form from the student. First, teachers elicit completion of their own utterance by strategically pausing to allow students to "fill in the blank". Such "elicit completion" statements may be preceded by some metalinguistic comment such as "No, not that. It's a . . ." or by a repetition of the error."
6. Repetition refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the student's erroneous utterance. In most cases, teachers adjust their intonation so as to highlight the error (Lyster and Ranta 46–48).

### **3. Research Questions and Research Method**

From the previous portion of this article it is clear that several useful surveys have been conducted about the way teachers of foreign languages respond to learners' errors and how corrective feedbacks were used to help learners to correct their own errors. Those findings were useful not only for researchers and their interests but they also uncovered some aspects regarding the way teachers managed learners' incorrect spoken output, what feedbacks they preferred and how they managed the process of learning a foreign language. With this in mind research issues of the present survey are explained in this article. Attention was paid to Slovak teachers of the English Language. This researcher was curious to search out further information about the treatment of learners' errors

during oral practice of English while with their Slovak teachers. Research focused on the way teachers actually dealt with errors during speaking activities of Slovak learners studying English. Based on the above mentioned six corrective feedback methods presently used in English classes the following questions formed the basis for investigation:

- 1.) What are the most frequent errors that teachers come across when teaching English to Slovak learners and how do they respond to them?
- 2.) What was the frequency of use of each corrective method among Slovak teachers of the English language?
- 3.) Which corrective feedback is used by teachers the most and which is used the least?

To answer these questions it was important for the researcher to set a suitable method of investigation for this educational research. It was intended that a variety of Slovak teachers of English be asked to ascertain how often they used each individual method. The wide range of different opinions within the findings from the teachers' points of view could be numerically interpreted and finally compared to other survey results. For this reason it was decided that a questionnaire was the suitable research method for these needs.

In Cohen's book Wilson and McLean depicted the questionnaire as: "an instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze" (317). The questionnaire as a research method in education has advantages as well as disadvantages. The previous reasons as well as the following advantages led the researcher to choose this method to conduct a successful inquiry. As stated by Wilson and McLean a questionnaire tends to be reliable because it encourages honesty from respondents as the data is collected anonymously. It also gives time for respondents to think clearly about the questions and choose or write the most suitable answer. Another positive attribute is the economy of time and money and the fact that it can be mailed to the respondents. On the other hand Cohen relates that the major disadvantage is a low percentage of returns. Also that construction of questions can lead to different meanings for different people. There should be a balance of different types of questions. Another crucial feature is the reality that questionnaires are often filled in hurriedly (317). Keeping these advantages and disadvantages in mind the researcher designed a questionnaire that included questions to elicit responses that would provide the information sought. It was important to specify several important issues related to ease and accuracy of data collection and to plan the whole process in sequence.

The design of the questionnaire was the first step taken. In this phase the decisions about the objectives, the samples, the topics, the questionnaire items and the administering of the final version of the questionnaire were made. At the very beginning of the questionnaire a brief explanation about the purpose of the survey was created for the respondents. It was stated that the completion of the questionnaire was part of a research study that focused on the education of those learning English as a second language (ESL). Respondents were also informed that the survey would be conducted at grammar schools, elementary schools (grades 5-9) and high schools. Also included was the aim to find out how teachers (respondents) approached learners' errors during vocalization (oral answers, discussions in groups, presentations, talks).

Then the decision regarding questionnaire items was considered. This researcher included both closed and open questions. Open questions were used in those items where a teacher was asked to fill in information about his/her years of practical teaching experience and the faculty with which he/she had studied at university. Another open question item asked the respondent to write an answer for a question: Please specify what errors you hear in spoken utterance – speech when teaching

English to Slovak learners. Please also specify which corrective feedback you use the most and which the least. Closed question items were used specifically in terms of the use of corrective feedbacks. Respondents were given six questions, each beginning with a brief depiction of the feedback and then asking the respondent to select from multiple choice options. An example follows:

1.) Method of Direct Reaction - Explicit Correction (The teacher clearly indicates that what the student had said was incorrect and provides the correct form.)

I use explicit correction:

☐ almost always

☐ very often

☐ sometimes

☐ very little

☐ do not use

This example indicates how all six corrective feedback questions were arranged using multiple choice which provided a range of frequency. This means that for each question concerning a different feedback, the feedback was described as a review for them and then a series of choices regarding frequency of its use was provided.

After designing the questionnaire it was important to pilot the draft version. As Cohen states: "there is a need, to pilot questionnaires and refine their contents, wording, length, etc. as appropriate for the sample being targeted." The piloting helps in this manner to support the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (158).

The draft version of this researcher's questionnaire was piloted a month before it was handed out to the respondents for whom it was targeted. Piloting of the questionnaire was conducted using a sample of thirty Slovak teachers of English language. These teachers from elementary, high and grammar schools were asked to look at the draft and comment on it. Some teachers wrote comments regarding questions that could lead to ambiguous interpretations and some wrote useful suggestions to improve the questionnaire items. All of the comments and suggestions were finally reappraised and adapted for the final version of the questionnaire.

The revised questionnaire was then distributed among Slovak teachers of ESL at levels of elementary school including grades 5-9 and different levels of high schools 1-4. The grammar schools were involved as well for they cover both levels within the same institution. The final version of the questionnaire was put on the internet as this was the easiest means of distribution to the respondents. With the help of the gmail application called "Google Drive" the questionnaire was sent to different schools around Slovakia providing the respondents with a simple way to fill them in. Schools were chosen randomly and official e-mails were sent to the principal of each school asking him/her to participate and make his/her ESL staff aware of the survey. The period for the completion of the questionnaire was also clearly stated. One month was provided for the target group. The English teachers had only to click on the web link and respond to the questions either at work or at home. With the help of this internet application it was simple for the researcher to check on the answers as well as on the number of respondents. The final tally indicated that 70 teachers from across Slovakia responded to this particular survey.

#### **4. Research Findings**

After all respondents submitted their answers, data was assembled and interpreted as shown below. In order to clarify the findings it is important to explicate some important facts. The targeted group consisted of 70 respondents both male and female. The majority was represented by female teachers at 82%, male teachers being 18% of the group. Their practical experience with teaching English varied from novice teachers with one year of experience to teachers with practical skills

of 35 years. The average amount of practical experience was 7.07 years. With less than 3 years of practical teaching 27% of respondents were in the minority while the 73% majority were experienced teachers. Also noted are the percentages of participation by the different levels of schools in the study. From the 70 respondents 34 teach at elementary school level grades (5–9); 16 teachers teach at different high school levels; 18 respondents were from grammar schools which cover both elementary and high school teaching levels.

From the research data comes the answer to first research question which asked for the most frequent errors that teachers found when teaching English to Slovak learners and how they responded to them. In the majority of cases as this was an open question respondents wrote several errors which were repeated several times. These errors were those observed by teachers during spoken output of learners. The researcher decided to categorize the answers as follows:

#### 1.) errors made in pronunciation

Within the spoken output errors in pronunciation were the most repeated responses, in the case of 42 respondents. (Some teachers have written that the majority of learners have difficulty pronouncing some words, some specific phonemes, especially problems with pronunciation of the definite article, mispronunciation of words that include or start with the letter 'w'.) These findings concur with the survey by Bodorik who specifically discussed the most frequent pronunciation errors typical to Slovak learners of ESL. Some of them are mentioned above (175).

#### 2.) errors made in grammar

Grammar errors were mentioned in the responses of 23 teachers. (In this group it is important to mention that 11 teachers specified that learners have trouble becoming accustomed to the third person singular form of verbs in simple present tense where they forget to add suffixes -s or -es. The responses of 20 teachers indicated that learners have problems with appropriate use of tenses which they often shift from one to another.) In this case the findings from the teachers' observations were very similar to the findings discovered in a survey conducted by Schmidtová:

The highest percentage of mistakes and errors occurred in the use of tenses (29.5%). Each student made at least one incorrect tense shift within his or her spoken output. Simple Past was the tense used within the whole story, and students were to retell the story in this tense, too. Most of them started in the target tense, but later, shifted into Simple Present. These mistakes and errors were very often accompanied by violations in subject-verb agreement. From a morphological viewpoint, 19% of errors were caused by the lack of an -s/es suffix in indicative verbs. (Schmidtová 212)

#### 3.) errors connected to wrong word order

(In this group 19 respondents described that often learners follow Slovak word order and their tendency is to create a question in English as if it was a Slovak one.) Similar findings are again found in Schmidtová where she depicted word order errors as syntactic but according to her may also be connected to morphological and lexical issues (212).

#### 4.) errors less mentioned

A variety of other errors were mentioned only a few times. (These include: learners do not know how to use some words appropriately in context – lack of vocabulary, problems that occur because of limited vocabulary, problems with articles – do not know when to use them, some learners are afraid to communicate in the English language – they are ashamed to be mocked by more advanced learners, short and simple sentences, translate sentences word for word, wrong use of prepositions, problems with intonation.)



In this part of the questionnaire teacher reaction to learners' errors was revealed. In the situation where learners made errors during spoken activities 41 respondents reacted to the most frequented errors; 14 teachers responded to every error that learners make, (which seems to be intrusive and sometimes makes students feel shamefaced); 10 teachers focused mostly on errors connected to the theme of the lesson; 5 respondents corrected only the concrete type of error (pronunciation or grammar or some other).

Respondents next chose one of the options regarding frequency of use of each corrective feedback. A summary of their responses are recorded in tables for clarity. Following each table below the results are interpreted by first combining the results of the 'almost always' and 'very often' categories in order to consider the highest usage categories. The 'sometimes' category results act as the middle or average use classification. The 'very little' and 'do not use' categories are also combined to consider the lowest usage of the feedback.

<i>Frequency of use – Explicit Correction</i>	
almost always	4 respondents
very often	36 respondents
sometimes	24 respondents
very little	5 respondents
do not use it	1 respondent

Table 1. Teachers' frequency of use of the 1<sup>st</sup> corrective feedback

From the chart above it is clear that this method is a favourite one as 40 respondents use it almost always or very often and that represents 57% of use when teachers approach learners' errors using the explicit correction method. Of surveyed teachers 34% use this method sometimes which indicates that they may combine it with other corrective feedbacks. Only 9% of respondents used this method 'very little' or 'not at all'.

<i>Frequency of use – Recasts</i>	
almost always	3 respondents
very often	27 respondents
sometimes	32 respondents
very little	7 respondents
do not use it	1 respondent

Table 2. Teachers' frequency of use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> corrective feedback

According to these results the recast method is often used by 30 respondents or 42% of participants. Its use however in the 'sometimes' category where the majority of respondents answered indicates that this feedback method is likely also used in combination with one or more other techniques.

<i>Frequency of use – Clarification Request</i>	
almost always	3 respondents
very often	28 respondents
sometimes	27 respondents
very little	7 respondents
do not use it	3 respondents

Table 3. Teachers' frequency of use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> corrective feedback

Clarification request is fourth as a favourite with its 31 responses in the highest usage categories and has the second highest number of responses in the 'sometimes' or middle usage category.

<i>Frequency of use – Metalinguistic Feedback</i>	
almost always	9 respondents
very often	29 respondents
sometimes	18 respondents
very little	10 respondents
do not use it	2 respondents

Table 4. Teachers' frequency of use of the 4<sup>th</sup> corrective feedback

This corrective feedback is the third most frequently used method with 38 responses or 54% of respondents. Also apparent is the 17% who make so little use of metalinguistic feedback.

<i>Frequency of use – Elicitation</i>	
almost always	5 respondents
very often	34 respondents
sometimes	21 respondents
very little	8 respondents
do not use it	2 respondents

Table 5. Teachers' frequency of use of the 5<sup>th</sup> corrective feedback

Elicitation is the second most frequently used method among teachers with its 39 responses or 55% indicating high usage. This method appears to be used almost as much as explicit correction by the respondents. Elicitation however has a higher number of responses in the low usage categories at 15%.

<i>Frequency of use – Repetition</i>	
almost always	6 respondents
very often	22 respondents
sometimes	17 respondents
very little	12 respondents
do not use it	12 respondents

Table 6. Teachers' frequency of use of the 6<sup>th</sup> corrective feedback

In this case the method is used less frequently as 24 respondents or 34% use it very little or not at all when correcting learners. The findings indicate that more than 1/3 of the teachers surveyed do not favour it.

From the above tables it is clear that Slovak teachers use all six corrective feedbacks. There is a clear preference for *Explicit Correction* although *Elicitation* and *Metalinguistic Feedback* in close proximity play important roles as well. It is clear from the numbers that these corrective feedbacks are in frequent use when approaching the oral errors of Slovak learners. None of the corrective methods were completely unused. The higher numbers in frequency of 'sometimes' use may refer to the possibility that teachers combine these different types while teaching. To ascertain more about the use of corrective feedbacks and learners' uptake it would be appropriate to conduct further investigation.

The final question asked teachers to determine which feedback he/she used most and the one used least. The questionnaire provided the following result. The most used method by teachers approaching errors was corrective feedback number one, *Explicit Correction*, as 26 respondents marked it as the most used. This finding also confirmed the above result from the chart where direct correction was most preferred among teachers who participated in the survey. If this result is compared to Lyster's survey where explicit correction was used in only 7% of cases (little frequented) while in this survey usage was 57%, a high discrepancy is apparent. Lyster proposes that explicit correction was one of the feedback types least likely to lead to a learner's uptake. Lyster's survey was conducted by observation and the survey in this article by questionnaire. Observation is a method whereby an unbiased researcher looks more deeply into cooperation between teacher and learners, while a questionnaire particularly in this passage searches for teachers' opinions and their insights meaning that teachers are involved in the educational process (56).

The least used corrective feedback according to the respondents' choices was *Repetition* with 27 answers. This corresponds to the findings of Lyster and Panova although this corrective feedback type belongs to those which encourage learners to better uptake and immediate repair, indicating that the repair is learner-generated (578).

## Conclusion

The present article has provided an insight into how Slovak teachers respond to verbal errors of their students while learning English. The conducted survey was administered as an initial attempt to gather information about teachers' opinions, how they perceive the reality of education, what they observe and how they react to errors. To provide more information it would be necessary to conduct further surveys with a focus on learners' uptake and their correction. Further investigation into how errors are produced could lead to improvement in English language teaching and learning.

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## Lexical Relations Between Words: The Use of “Hell” and its Synonyms in the Bible

*Abstract: The present paper attempts to outline some of the essential differences in semantic structure of the lexical items Gehenna, Hades, Sheol, queber and grave used as synonyms of Hell in the English translations of the Bible. The method of componential semantic analysis has been used to specify the semantic features of each of the technical terms.*

### 1. Introduction

Even though technical terms of a given field are linguistically considered to have specific meanings with the tendency to be clear, straightforward, and unambiguous, their translation into other languages may sometimes be problematic. Such is the case of words like *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *queber* and *grave* which are used as synonyms for *hell* in the Old and New Testament.

The attempt of this paper is to analyze the meanings (semantic components) of these technical terms as they are used in different places and different contexts in the Bible. With the help of a theological study of Edward Bedore ( Bedore, W.E.: *Hell, Sheol, Hades, Paradise, and the Grave*) we were able to arrive at some important conclusions regarding the question of substitution of these terms.

### 2. Methodology

In order to establish the meanings of each of the terms under analysis, the definitions available on each of the words have been searched and consequently a componential semantic analysis based on identifying binary features is carried out.

The present analysis first introduces some of the definitions and theological explanations of *hell*, *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *queber* and *grave* providing examples of these lexical items taken as direct quotes from the Bible. Secondly, the results of the componential semantic analysis are presented in the form of two charts which show the similarities and contrasts in the semantic structure of each of these terms.

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 Lexical Field/Semantic Domain Theory

The view that „language constitutes an intermediate conceptual level between the mind and the world inspired the metaphoric notion of a lexical field: if you think of reality as a space of entities and events, language so to speak draws lines within that space, dividing up the field into conceptual plots“ (Geeraerts 52). A lexical field, therefore, is „a set of semantically related lexical items whose meanings are mutually interdependent and which together provide conceptual structure for a certain domain of reality“ (ibid. 52).

A semantic domain „consists essentially of a group of meanings (...) which share certain semantic components. Though some domains, e.g. entities, animate objects, masses, artifacts, events, processes, states, etc., may appear to be logical categories, based on systematic classifications of extralinguistic phenomena, they are in reality not dependent upon any a priori system of nomenclature or taxonomy. For any language, semantic domains consist simply of meanings which have common

semantic components" (Nida 174). In Section 3.2 are established the common semantic components which group the terms under analysis into one semantic domain.

### 3.2 Componential Analysis

Componential analysis is one of the main methodologies within structuralist semantics, which is „a logical development from lexical field theory: once you have demarcated a lexical field, the internal relations within the field will have to be described in more detail" (Geeraerts 52). Componential analysis is a method for describing the items in the field which are in mutual opposition.

Classical componential analysis consists of „systematically comparing and contrasting related words (known as a semantic field or domain), and summarizing the similarities and contrasts in the most economical way" (ibid. 52) on the basis of distinctive (binary) features.

All of the lexical items analyzed in this paper - *hell* - *hades* - *abyss* - *sheol* - *gehenna* - *queber* - *grave* - *pit* share the following *semantic features*, which at the same time groups them into one *semantic domain*: + entity + inanimate + natural + geographical + supernatural.

### 3.3 Relational Semantics

Relational semantics „looks for an apparatus that is more purely linguistic, one „in the form of lexical relations like synonymy (identity of meaning) and antonymy (oppositeness of meaning)" (ibid. 52). The next section of this paper shows the lexical relations, i.e. the degree of synonymy based on componential semantic analysis, among the selected biblical terms.

## 4. Semantic Analysis of Gehenna, Hades, Sheol, queber and Grave

### 4.1 Definitions and Explanations of Hell, Gehenna, Hades, Sheol, Queber and Grave

*Hell* in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* is defined as a word „used in the Bible to represent both the Hebrew ‚Sheol', the place of the departed, and the Greek ‚Gehenna', the place of punishment for the wicked after death. In Christian theology it normally signifies the place or state to which unrepentant sinners are held to pass, by God's final judgement, after this life. According to traditional Scholastic theology, souls in hell experience both the *poena damni*, i.e. exclusion from God's presence and loss of contact with Him, and a certain *poena sensus*, denoted in the Bible by fire and usually interpreted as an external agent tormenting them. Modern theology stresses that hell is but the logical consequence of ultimate adherence to the soul's own will and rejection of the will of God which necessarily separates the soul from God, and hence from all possibility of happiness" (*Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 260). The Lake of Fire, or Hell, „is a literal place of everlasting fire that was originally created by God as a place of punishment for Satan and the angels that followed him in his rebellion against God (Mt 25:41)" (Bedore 1). While „Hell was created for Satan and the other fallen angels, the unsaved of humanity from all ages will be with them in this place of torment where *“there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Mt 13:42)" (ibid. 1).

While „there is no one in the Lake of Fire at this time, it will one day hold a vast multitude. The first residents of this place of righteous retribution will be the Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet who, at the end of the Tribulation, will be *“cast alive into a lake burning with brimstone”* (Rev 19:19-20). Joining them will be the unsaved of the nations who survive the Tribulation (Mt 25:31-32; 41-46)" (ibid. 1).

And the tongue (is) a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell (Jas 3:6).

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Mt 10:28).

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27).

I (am) he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Rev 1:18).

And the tongue (is) a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell (Jas 3:6).

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched (Mk 9:45).

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Ps 16:10).

*Gehenna* refers to „a valley outside Jerusalem. From early times it was a place of human sacrifice and in later Jewish thought it was regarded as a divinely appointed place of punishment for apostates and other great sinners. Hence in New Testament times the word is used for the final place of torment for the wicked after the Last Judgement“ (*Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 230). *Gehenna* „is described in Scripture as a “furnace of fire” (Mt 13:42); “everlasting punishment” (Mt 25:46); “the mist (gloom) of darkness” (2 Pet 2:17); the “hurt of the second death” (Rev 2:11 cf. 20:6,14; 21:8); “a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev 19:20; 20:10; 21:8)” (Bedore 1). The title *Gehenna* originates from „a deep narrow ravine south of Jerusalem where some Hebrew parents actually sacrificed their children to the Ammonite god, Molech, during the time of the kings (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chr 28:1-3; cf. Lev 18:21; 1 Kings 11:5,7,33)” (ibid. 2). This valley „served as the city dump and, because there was continual burning of refuse there, it became a graphic symbol of the place of punishment for the wicked” (ibid. 2). In the New Testament, this was a commonly used name for *hell*. Jesus also used the word *Gehenna* in reference to the place of everlasting punishment for the wicked dead and not to the city dump” (ibid. 2). *Gehenna* is the place where Satan, all of the fallen angels and all of the lost mankind will „reside in torment” (ibid. 2) forever.

*Hades* comes from the Ancient Greek Ἅιδης/Ἅδης, *Haidēs* and Doric Αἴδας *Aidas*. Originally this name was assigned to the ancient Greek god of the underworld. Eventually, the god's name came to designate the abode of the dead. In Christian tradition, *Hades* is “the place or state of departed spirits” (*Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church* 253) or „the place of departed spirits before judgment, visited by Christ after the Crucifixion” (ibid. 253). This place refers to „the realm of existence in which the souls of the pre-Christian people waited for the message of the Gospel”(ibid. 165). In the Old Testament, the Greek term Ἅδης (Hades) is used to translate the Hebrew term שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) in, for example, Isaiah 38:18. Here the term *hades* refers to the abode of the dead in general, rather than the abode of the wicked.

*Hades* in the New Testament replaces the Old Testament *Sheol*. The Greek and the Hebrew translations of the word „speak of the same place, the present Hell” (Bedore 2). However, *Sheol* has been translated as *grave*, *hell* and *pitt*.

The word *Hades* appears in Jesus' promise to Peter: "And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it", (Mt 16:18) and in the warning to Capernaum: "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? Thou shalt go down unto Hades." (Mt 11:23 and Lk 10:15).

Hades refers to „a place of temporary torment that we might refer to as the immediate, or present, Hell“ (ibid. 2), which means that „at the time of death, the souls of the lost go directly to Hades, where they suffer in torment until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment when they will be resurrected and cast into the Lake of Fire. The souls of all the lost who have already died are presently there and those who die in their sins immediately go there to join them“(ibid. 2).

*Sheol* in the Old Testament is defined as „the underworld, the place of the departed souls. In the Bible it is translated variously as ‚hell‘, ‚grave‘ or ‚pit‘: more recent translations usually leave it untranslated as a proper noun. The notion reflects an undeveloped and shadowy belief in the future life which was superseded by more defined beliefs of later Judaism“(Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church 530).

For Sheol can't praise you, death can't celebrate you: Those who go down into the pit can't hope for your truth (Isa 38:18).

or

For not hell shall acknowledge to thee, neither death shall praise thee; they that go down into the pit, shall not abide thy truth. (For Sheol, or the grave, shall not acknowledge thee, nor shall death praise thee; and they who go down into the pit, shall not wait for thy truth.) (Isa 38:18).

*Queber* is the common word for "grave" in the Old Testament (Cf. ibid. 2).

And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they...in the sepulchre (*queber*) of Kish his father (2 Sam 21:14).

In my grave (*queber*) which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me (Gen 50:5).

The sepulcher (*queber*) of Kish (2 Sam 21:14).

In my grave (*queber*) which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me (Gen 50:5).

Even though *Sheol* is often translated as „*queber*“, Bedore (ibid. 3) points out to eight points of contrasts showing that the two terms do not refer to the same reality (see componential analysis below).

*Grave* is defined as "the place in the ground where a dead body is buried" or as a synonym of "death" (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* 708)

For in death (there is) no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? (Ps 6:5).

And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him. (Gen 37:35)

#### 4.2 Componential Analysis of Gehenna, Hades, Sheol, Queber and Grave

The following componential analysis shows the presence or absence of particular semantic features which build up the semantic structure of *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *queber* and *grave* used



as synonyms of *hell* in the Bible. The analysis is based on the definitions of each of the lexical items presented above.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Semantic Features</i>	real physical place on earth	place of permanent torment (with reference to <i>Hell</i> )	place for Satan	place for all the fallen angels	place for all the lost mankind	temporary place for dead bodies
<i>Gehenna</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Hades</i>	-	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Sheol</i>	-	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Grave</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+

The chart below points out to eight contrasts in semantic structure between *Sheol* and *queber* as indicated by Bedore (Bedore 3).

	<i>Semantic Features</i>	<i>Sheol</i>	<i>queber</i>
1	used in plural form	-	+
2	body goes there	-	+
3	located on the face of the earth	-	+
4	existence of and individual's <i>Sheol</i>	-	+
5	individuals are placed there	-	+
6	man is said to have dug or fashioned it	-	+
7	man can touch it	-	+
8	man can possess it	-	+

## 5. Conclusion

The biblical terms selected for analysis in this paper *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *queber*, *grave* and *hell* share certain *semantic features*, which groups them into one *semantic domain*: + entity + inanimate + natural + geographical + supernatural.

However, from the present componential semantic analysis it is clear that not all of the synonyms of *hell* used in different instances and in different contexts in the Christian Bible contain all of the same semantic features and are thus not substitutable as absolute synonyms in every context and situation. Even though the general meaning of each of the words under analysis: *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Sheol*, *queber* and *grave* is that of *hell*, there are specific features which sometimes differentiate the meaning of one from the other. We may conclude that *Hades* the equivalent of the Old Testament *Sheol*. Otherwise we come across certain differences in the semantic structure among the rest of the terms when considering the results of our componential analysis.

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## Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence in English Language Training

*Abstract: The paper describes the impact of intercultural context on communication competencies in (English) language teaching, as perceptions of other cultures are currently viewed as an integral part of effective intercultural communication, especially in the corporate sector. It brings up different aspects of perception in other cultures and their influence on communication, particularly if it is carried out in a foreign language. It shows different models of cultures, compares poly-chronic and mono-chronic cultural standards and considers explicitness in communication and attitudes to hierarchy, individualism and indulgency. It briefly points out trends in second language acquisition goals and outlines some ideas and scenarios implementing intercultural elements applicable to language learning.*

### Introduction

Globalization has brought huge progress to humanity at economic, financial, ecological, and societal levels, and the rapid development in IT technologies has amplified these effects. However, the challenges imposed by our changed world are also enormous. Individuals all over the world have to find their place in new, pluralistic societies, and interact and communicate with each other.

This seemingly easy task is an ever more frequent phenomenon, almost an everyday requirement. Success in doing so guarantees efficient political, business and cultural cooperation, whereas failure might result in unwanted consequences. As much of the communication is carried out in English, or a second language, the goals of language education have been also changing and need to be structurally modified. Presently, the goal is no longer seen as simply to achieve linguistic "mastery" of one, two, or even three languages. On the contrary, the objective is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all abilities take place within the socio economic and cultural requirements. This implies, of course, that the language training offered in educational institutions should be preparing language learners to function as competent intercultural speakers (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2001) and should involve not only language in use but also intercultural competences which should be recorded and formally recognised.

### Concepts and terminology:

Intercultural communicative competence/Cross-cultural communication competence

The two modifying adjectives frequently used in compound nouns with communication are intercultural and cross-cultural. Some authors differentiate intercultural and cross-cultural on the basis of how they define culture (Kramsch, 1998a): cross-cultural implies meeting of two cultures across the political boundaries of nation states. Intercultural, on the other hand, may also refer to communication between people from different (ethnic, gendered, social) cultures even within the same nation state. However, we distinguish between cultures on the basis of their language use and for this purpose we use the term intercultural communicative competence. Also, as we follow the recent trends in applied linguistics, we can hardly recognize the difference between the two most frequently used adjectives communication and communicative. Therefore we find it reasonable to use intercultural communicative competence in this paper.

## What is culture?

“Culture hides more than what it reveals, and strangely enough, what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants.” Edward T. Hall (1914–2009)

The picture of an iceberg is well-known in English teaching circles. The iceberg in James Cameron’s film *Titanic* is classic in visualising the perils of an unseen mass. As shown in Figure 1, the hidden mass of an iceberg is a good comparison to show how hard it is to see or fully understand cultures and this acquire intercultural competence.

# Iceberg model of culture

- What is the relationship between culture and language?

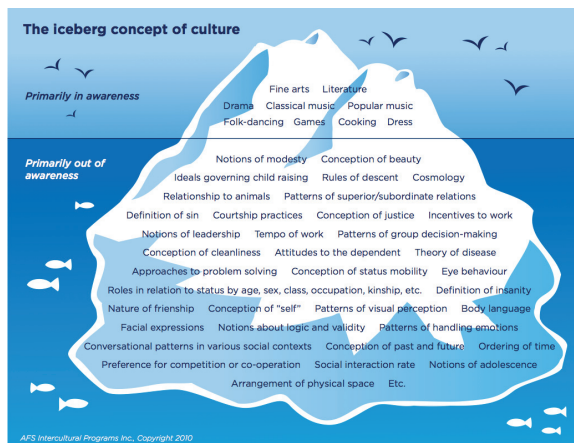


Figure 1

Culture is developed through language and each language provides a new view and a new angle to a land, its people, their lives and beliefs. Language is the key to tell their stories and their history. And this is where intercultural competence – or incompetence – begins. With mistakes and misunderstandings, with uneasiness and discomfort, sometimes even embarrassment.

Apart from Hall’s iceberg model of culture demonstrated in Figure 1, there are several other theories: the pyramid model developed by Hofstede, the onion model by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, or the Lewis model (Figure 2) which provides a practical framework for understanding and communicating with people of other cultures, and can be expanded with other features, such as Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (see Figure 4). Lewis classifies cultures and cultural standards into Linear-Active, Multi-Active and Re-Active, or some combination. Broadly speaking, Northern Europe, North America and related countries are predominantly Linear-Active, following tasks sequentially

using logical thinking, facts, planning, preferring truth to diplomacy. Southern European, Latin, African and Middle-Eastern countries are typified as Multi-Active, centred on relationships, feelings and often pursuing multiple goals simultaneously. East Asia is typically Re-Active, never confronting or interrupting and following harmonising, solidarity-based strategies.

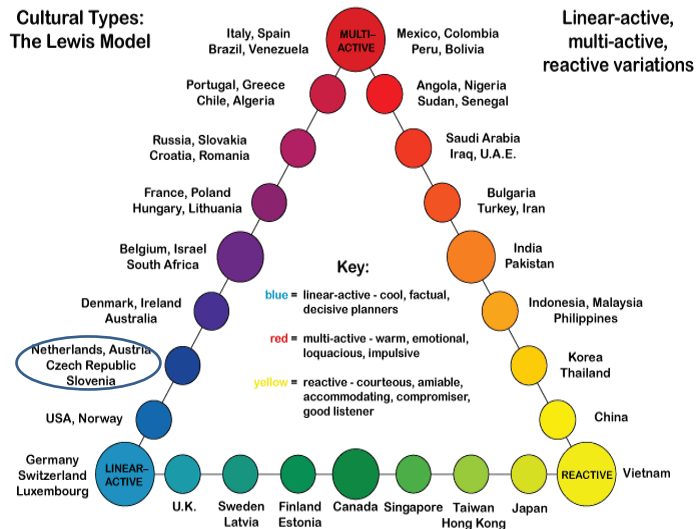


Figure 2

Mistakes and misunderstandings, uneasiness and being uncomfortable or embarrassed, are typical symptoms of cultures clashing. Therefore linking language and culture in an educationally relevant way is essential. So what is teaching intercultural competence in English?

1. Unlike many standard language trainings, the focus is not only on language mistakes. There can be other communication confusion caused by, among other things, cultural factors. Therefore mistakes of English language learners can be seen in the following categories:  
Not important and not noticeable: I was in holiday last week.
2. Noticeable but meaning clear: Last year I go to holiday in Spain.
3. Misunderstanding possible but not inevitable: Thank you worry match\*.
4. Misunderstanding with resulting checking question possible: I broke school. However, the fifth mistake and misunderstanding is most serious and brings with it rather complicated difficulties and uneasiness. This is:
5. When the misunderstanding is not even noticed!

Therefore, recognising potential “faux pas,” raising the awareness of cultural differences, and finding cultural and socially acceptable reactions to cope with situations where the other active partner is not even aware of a cultural “faux pas,” appears in the centre of intercultural communicative competence in a foreign language.

Practically, this can imply changing some aspects of conventional language teaching approaches, designing new elements and identifying and focussing on elements which have often been held back. Emphasising practical communication and the role of polite discourse, degrees of formality, registers of language styles, and combining these with awareness-raising exercises with respect to culture-bound conventions and country-specific rules lie at the heart of good language teaching. The goals in second language acquisition are slowly shifting in the direction of avoiding conflict, minimizing misunderstanding, checking comprehension and responding in adequate ways. Needless to stress here that knowledge, implicit or explicit, cannot be omitted (Figure 3).

Speaking about intercultural communicative competence, however, we need more than just knowledge and skills.

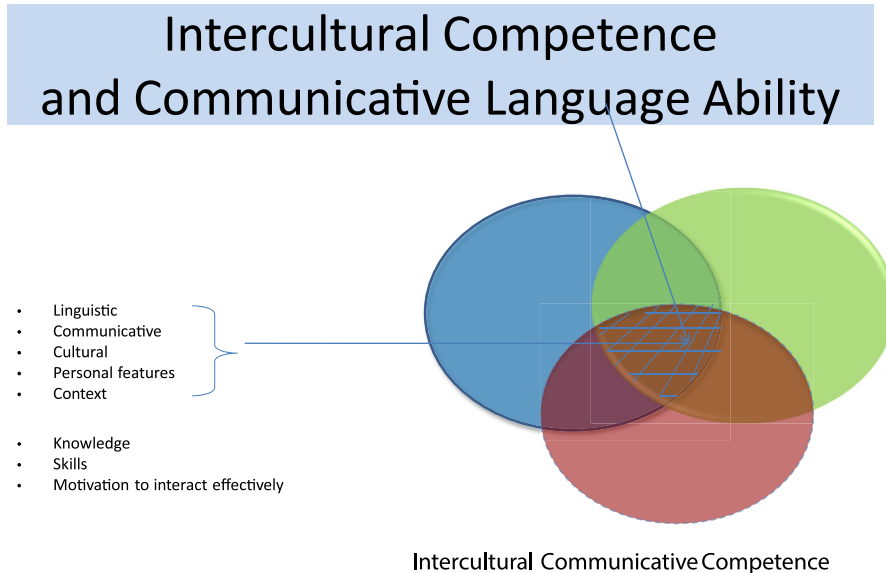


Figure 3

If one in many definitions characterises communication as producing and understanding discourse in a given context, in intercultural context we speak about exchanging ideas and meanings by individuals who may have different assumptions and feelings.

As language teachers and trainers we should be aware that language opens doors to the world but each language provides only one particular view of the world. Our understanding is filtered through our own culture. Culture is revealed through using the language.

The examination of discourse features may well provide useful information for intercultural understanding, as it is the language which ultimately makes up interaction, and it is almost always a person's use of language which defines our perception of their intercultural competence. Interestingly, language is almost entirely ignored in the many definitions of intercultural competence which are used to provide the basis for training curricula and tests, the results of which can have crucial effects

on individuals' careers. Competence can be usefully defined as "...the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating." (OECD 2003)

### **The components of intercultural competence**

Intercultural competence is therefore a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables individuals to understand themselves and others in a context of diversity, and to interact and communicate with those who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from their own (Council of Europe, 2011), to respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people and to understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural 'difference'.

### **The approaches involved include:**

- Valuing cultural diversity and pluralism of views and practices
- Respecting people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own
- Being open to, curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own
- Being willing to empathise with people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own
- Being willing to question what is usually taken for granted as 'normal' according to one's previously acquired knowledge and experience
- Being willing to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty
- Being willing to seek out opportunities to engage and cooperate with individuals who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own

### **The knowledge and understanding which contribute to intercultural competence include:**

- Understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups
- Awareness and understanding of one's own and other people's assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination
- Understanding the influence of one's own language and cultural affiliations on one's experience of the world and of other people
- Communicative awareness, including awareness of the fact that other peoples' languages may express shared ideas in a unique way or express unique ideas difficult to access through one's own language(s), and awareness of the fact that people of other cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective
- Knowledge of the beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products that may be used by people who have particular cultural orientations
- Understanding of processes of cultural, societal and individual interaction, and of the socially constructed nature of knowledge

### **The skills involved in intercultural competence include skills such as:**

- Multiperspectivity – the ability to decentre from one's own perspective and to take other people's perspectives into consideration in addition to one's own

- Skills in discovering information about other cultural affiliations and perspectives
- Skills in interpreting other cultural practices, beliefs and values and relating them to one's own
- Empathy – the ability to understand and respond to other people's thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings
- Cognitive flexibility – the ability to change and adapt one's way of thinking according to the situation or context
- Skills in critically evaluating and making judgements about cultural beliefs, values, practices, discourses and products, including those associated with one's own cultural affiliations, and being able to explain one's views
- Skills of adapting one's behaviour to new cultural environments – for example, avoiding verbal and non-verbal behaviours which may be viewed as impolite by people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own
- Linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse skills, including skills in managing breakdowns in communication
- Plurilingual skills to meet the communicative demands of an intercultural encounter, such as use of more than one language or language variety, or drawing on a known language to understand another ('intercomprehension')
- The ability to act as a 'mediator' in intercultural exchanges, including skills in translating, interpreting and explaining

While attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills are all necessary components of intercultural competence, possessing these components alone is insufficient for an individual to be credited with intercultural competence: it is also necessary for these components to be put into practice through action during intercultural encounters. People often profess attitudes and often acquire knowledge and skills which they fail to put into practice. For this reason, in order for an individual to be credited with intercultural competence, they must also apply their intercultural attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills through actions.

Another thing that is seldom brought to learners' attention is their own comprehension of certain cultures and cultural concepts. Foreign language knowledge often remains separated from the knowledge and understanding of the first language and culture. This means that the cultural information students get about the target language often does not influence their own identities and the ways in which they formulate ideas about their own language and their own culture.

An intercultural orientation in foreign language teaching therefore seeks to transform students' identities in the process of language learning so that they would understand that culture is not merely information about different people, but a framework which these people use to exchange ideas, negotiate meanings and understand social reality.

A deeper insight into particular national cultural attitudes based on Hofstede's research and the research of his colleagues, is provided in country scores describing attitudes to power distance, individualism, masculinity, pragmatism, certainty avoidance and indulgence, on the dimensions of national culture. A sample chart showing scores of the Czech Republic is presented in Figure 4, compared to values of Russia and Vietnam, which are geographically located to the East of the Czech Republic, and Great Britain, representing the Anglophone culture and geographically seated in the west.



# Cz, Ru, Viet, GB

<http://geert-hofstede.com>

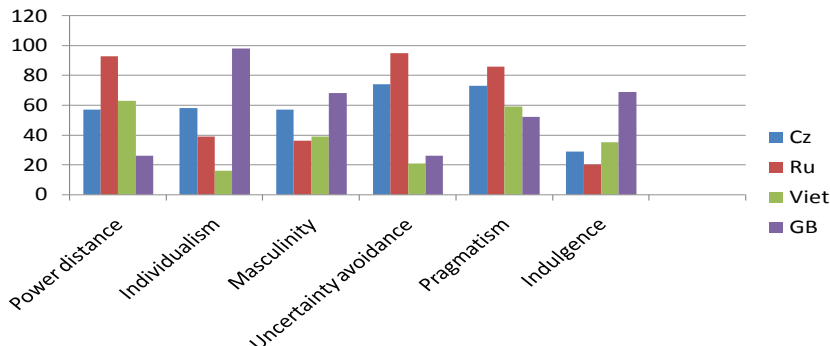


Figure 4

The description of the Czech culture through Hofstede's 6-D Model (<http://geert-hofstede.com/czech-republic.html>) gives the following overview:

**Power distance** (need for and accepting authority and power, unequal distribution of power)

The Czech Republic has a relatively high score on this dimension (57). This means it is a hierarchical society. People accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. Hierarchy in an organisation is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralisation is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.

**Individualism – I or WE?**

The Czech Republic, with a score of 58 is an individualistic society. This means there is a high preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. In individualistic societies offence causes guilt and a loss of self-esteem, the employer/employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only, management is the management of individuals.

**Masculinity – desire to be best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine)**

The Czech Republic scores 57 on this dimension and is thus a masculine society. In masculine countries people "live in order to work", managers are expected to be decisive and assertive, the emphasis is on equity, competition and performance and conflicts are resolved by fighting them out.

**Uncertainty avoidance**

The Czech Republic scores 74 on this dimension and thus has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Countries exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an

inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation.

#### Pragmatism

With a high score of 70, Czech culture is shown to be pragmatic. In societies with a pragmatic orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time. They show an ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results.

#### Indulgence

The low score of 29 means that Czechs are generally not indulgent. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to indulgent societies, restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong.

#### A note on Hofstede's cultural frameworks

Since it was first published in 1980, Hofstede's culture framework has been incorporated into the work of academic researchers and intercultural trainers alike. Although we mention his findings above and do not wish to question the value of his research, it is worth pointing out some of the shortcomings of the methodological basis for which he has been frequently criticised. The methodological criticism points out that cultures are not limited to values, nor are they extremely stable, culture may be an effect, not only the cause, geographical boundaries are not optimal for clustering cultures, low scores and ranking may create a false perception of cultural homogeneity, and finally matched samples are not always helpful for the study of cultural differences and can lead to cultural stereotypes.

### **Intercultural Communicative Competence and Language Policy**

#### **Key concepts in European language policy**

- plurilingualism
- multilingualism
- Lingua franca
- Cultural awareness



#### **Culture and national curriculum**

- Non-English speaking to non-English speaking: 74%
- (*D. Graddol, English Next, 2006*)



Figure5

## Balanced Attitudes

### Cultural differences

- Deny?
- Defend?
- Minimize?
  
- Respect?
- Accept?
- Adapt?

**Linking language and culture (target+ one's own) in an educationally relevant way is essential to function as competent intercultural speakers**

Figure 6

### **Intercultural communicative competence and EU language policy**

Although in the EU language policy, the key concepts of which include pluralism, multilingualism, lingua franca and cultural awareness is the responsibility of the member states, a considerable number of institutions and programmes deal with these issues and thus influence national language policies and curricula. The most important organization affecting European language policy is the Council of Europe, a Strasbourg-based intergovernmental organization. Two bodies coordinate the Council of Europe's work on language education: the Language Policy Division and the European Centre for Modern Languages. There are also documents (Living Together: Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Century Europe, 2011) which state that educators and education authorities in all member states should aim to develop intercultural competence as a core element of school curricula, and should aim to extend it beyond formal education to non-formal settings as well. It is also recommended that the Council of Europe should work on a conceptual framework to assist this development. However, in the developmental processes across all of the EU, different countries take different steps to deal with intercultural differences on national levels, being either ethnocentric, which means their own culture is experienced as central or ethno-relative, which means their own culture is viewed in the context of other cultures (Bennett, 1993, Figures 5 and 6).

## Conclusion

Intercultural encounters have nowadays become an everyday occurrence for large numbers of people in many countries. Therefore it is vital that people's intercultural competence is developed in order to enable them to understand, appreciate and respect each other across cultural differences, and to enable them to contribute actively to societies that benefit from diversity. Developing intercultural competence in English language training is a powerful tool for achieving this and there is an increased interest in intercultural competence-based teaching.

This paper has presented some concepts and frameworks for intercultural communicative language competence. It recognises that it is a responsibility of both learners and teachers, and that it is a complex and dynamic process in line with EU trends.

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## Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century Neologisms in English

*Abstract: Presenting new expressions which appeared in English at the beginning of the 21st century and which were coined by means of various word-formation processes (derivation, compounding, and shortening) and many of which are not part of any Anglophone national database (e.g. BNC or COCA). Theory on expressions created this way is to appear in forthcoming textbook on English lexical morphology backed up by the project called Tvorba a inovácia ŠP v študijnom odbore učiteľstvo akademických predmetov v AJ a NJ (01/10/2013 – 30/09/2015; ITMS: 26110230109).*

### Introduction

The English language is said to have created or borrowed approximately 1,000 new words every single year. According to A. Böhmerová (33–45) there are more courageous estimations ranging from 15,000 to 20, 000 new words a year. However, a common language user does not have a chance to learn so many new words every year, not even to recognize them as new.

New words, referred to by linguists as neologisms, are coined by several ways: by borrowing, word-formation processes, and the shift of meaning (or semantic changes respectively). Vocabulary is the most dynamic part of language which means that the new linguistic material may be observed within a short course of time, and thus the changes on lexical level are possible to observe in language. The answer to a question 'What is neologism?' is rather disputable because linguists are not united about this subject matter. Some assert that neologisms are word-forms or their uses which are not recorded in general dictionaries (Algeo 125). By 'word-form' linguists usually mean a single word (e.g. nouns *bourgeoise* and *bohemian* blended into noun *bobo* which emerged around 2000, an adjective *glamorous* and a noun *camping* blended into *glamping* which appeared about two years ago or adjective *malicious* and noun *software* blended into a noun *malware*), compound (e.g. *the Internet-banking*, *sleeptracker*, *SUV – sport-utility vehicle*) or idiomatic phrase (e.g. *to rat out somebody*). By others neologisms are believed to be felt by the native speakers as something new (see and compare Arnold 232–234 or Jesenská 107–112) regardless their appearance in a dictionary.

### Subject Matter

The first plan was to present such new expressions which appeared in English at the beginning of the 21st century and which were coined by means of various word-formation processes (derivation, compounding, and shortening). However, majority of such expressions are not part of any official Anglophone national database (e.g. *British National Corpus* including over 100 million of expressions or *Corpus of Contemporary American English* providing over 450 million of expressions) yet (and, honestly, they cannot be either), and that is why it was decided to choose the other way how to do research on English neologisms. The search for a relevant database on the Internet started then. Professor Suzanne Kemmer initiated the project of collecting new words at the *Rice University Linguistics Department* (Houston, Texas, U.S.). The project started in 2003 and was finished ten years later. During the whole decade over 5,500 neologisms were collected by Kemmer's university students. According to prof. Kemmer (web) validity and factual correctness of all entries were also checked. We have decided to work with this database for several reasons (see below).

## Reasons

New words reflect the best a dynamic way of life we live. Young people are very open-minded to new phenomena and creative in forming new words themselves. And though many Internet sources are not believed to be valuable or valid we have decided to find a database created if not by professionals, then at least by native speakers, university students in this case, whose gathered material would be checked by a professional linguist (Suzanne Kemmer in this case). The database can be perceived as a representative source of relevant size (5,500 units by now). The database contents cannot be found in any dictionary yet.

## Research Purpose and Methods

Research aim was to find out whether derivation and compounding are still to be considered the most productive word-formative processes (WFP<sup>1</sup>), especially in the case of new coinages and what is the position of other WFP, such as blending, conversion, and back-formation and various types of shortening (acronyms, initialisms, and clips).

Four research questions were set:

## Research questions

Q1: Are derivation and compounding still the most productive WF processes?

Q2: Are clips and blends as productive as derivation and compounding?

Q3: What is the status of conversion and back-formation in the context of neologisms?

Q4: What is the percentage of semantic neologisms?

## Research sample

We have focused on the neologisms sample collected in the course of the year 2003 when 670 units were gathered. We have downloaded the linguistic material due to easier access whenever necessary and then have checked validity of all 670 neologisms. 33 units had to be excluded due to repetition or other reasons (they could not be considered new, their origin/coinage was unclear, etc.). Anyway, we have analysed 637 units (see table below) that were considered new in 2003.

## Research sample results

Table: Research Sample Results

No	WFP or other ways <sup>2</sup> of enriching language	Amount	Percentage
1	Blending	185	29
2	Derivation	143	22
3	Compounding	93	15
4	Semantic neologisms	75	12
5	Clipping	51	8
6	Conversion	51	8
7	Shortening	23	4
8	Borrowing	9	1
9	Back-formation	6	1
10	Coinage (so-called ex-nihilo)	1	0

Explanation: WFP – word-formative process

There were some very interesting findings made (see answers to the four research questions below). For instance, blending with nearly 30% turns out to be the most productive WFP leaving behind such productive processes as derivation (22% in the selected sample), compounding (15%), clipping and conversion (8% each), and shortening (4%). Semantic neologisms (shift of meaning as in the case of metonymy, or branching of meaning as in polysemy, etc.) were included, though they are certainly no WFP, represent 12% of all analysed neologisms.

### Q1: Are derivation and compounding still the most productive WF processes?

The answer is brief – no – when checking the results in the table above one can see that derivation and compounding still represent very productive WF processes, however, no longer the most productive WF processes at all.

In the database were found derivatives such as *bacheloric* (living a single life of a bachelor), *blogger* (coined from *blog* + *er*), *burninator* (a dragon burning everything to the ground with his breath<sup>3</sup>), *Chineseness* (the lifestyle or quality of Chinese), *confuzzling* (derived from a blend *confuzzle*<sup>4</sup> + *-ing*), *cyber-grounded* (having no access to the Internet), and *dollarization* (greater presence of American money in economy).

‘Typical’ compounds (i.e. noun + noun/gerund) found in the sample were *ass-flowers* (hemorrhoids), *blogosphere* (*blog* + *-o-* + *sphere*), *blogspotting* (*blog* + *spotting*), *bosshog* (v,n: *boss* + *hog*, meaning *to bully* or *a bully*) or *one-downmanship* (try to outdo someone else in a negative way).

Creativity and play with words so typical of young people is confirmed by emerge of rhyming compounds or using alliteration, such as *cockblock* (n,v: vulgar meaning someone/thing preventing a person from sexual activity), *creature-feature* (usu. a movie featuring monster), *cookie-cutter* (n, adj: mass-produced), *hucka hucka* (interj. laughter).

Many units are part of informal register (usu. student slang or vulgar word-stock) which is quite understandable when regarding the context of collecting new units. The usage and distribution such an informal vocabulary is limited for specific occasions (i.e. particular communication sphere, e.g. student dormitory, libraries, clubs, etc.).

### Q2: Are clips and blends as productive as derivation and compounding?

The clipping is not as productive as derivation and compounding and the latter are not as productive as blending. Yes, it is blending (see table above or graph below) that prevails with its creativity, unpredictability and tendency of words to ‘blendability’. Blend<sup>5</sup> may be defined as an amalgamation or fusion of clipped word-forms of usually two free lexical morphemes (compare Böhmerová 22–23). Nearly all blends are lexical units (i.e. nouns, adjectives or full verbs; overlapping parts of a blend are underlined):

*administrivia* (***administration*** + ***trivia***)n – referring to tedious and mundane administrative and organizational tasks,

*Amerindians* (from a compound ***American Indians***)n – native people of North America(s),

*bassackwards* (***ass*** + ***backwards***)adj – referring to something exceedingly backwards,

*confuzzled* (***confused*** + ***puzzled***)v, adj – person confused and puzzled at the same time, e.g. *This math problem has me all confuzzled*. Derivative *confuzzling* (adj) is coined from the blend.

*courseware* (course + *software*)n – computer programme that can teach a particular course/subject to the user,

*drinkathon* (drink + ***marathon***)n – an event involving the consumption of alcohol, alcohol ‘race’, similarly *shopathon* (***shopping*** + ***marathon***<sup>6</sup>)n,

‘electronic’ is a frequent part of a blended expression, such as in *e-lucent* (**e**lectronic + **deli**quent)  
 n – a person who commits crime by using information technology, *e-pal* (**e**lectronic + **pal**)n – a sort  
 of electronic ‘pen’ friend, *e-voting* (**e**lectronic + **voting**)n – voting done online,  
*emoticon* (**emo**tion + **icon**)n – icons showing (usu. positive) feelings and emotions,  
*fro-yo* (**fro**zen + **yoghurt**)n – an alternative to an ice cream (low-calorie dessert),  
*funtastic* (**fun** + **fantastic**)adj – being fun and fantastic at the same time,  
*Governator* (**governor** + **terminator**)n – a nickname coined ad hoc referring to, Arnold  
 Schwarzenegger, the governor of California between 2003–2011,  
*gravy* (**great** + **groovy**)adj – good,  
*snizzle* (**snow** + **drizzle**)n – referring to light snow,  
*webinar* (**website** + **seminar**)n – a seminar taken online.

Clips represent 8% of the whole sample which is not much, but it is no surprise due to the salient  
 features of this particular WFP. Clipping is a class-maintaining WFP by which an expression is  
 shortened to a monosyllabic or disyllabic word. The meaning usually remains the same, and what  
 changes is a stylistic value of a clipped word (usu. shift from neutral/formal to informal/colloquial  
 or slang respectively). In the sample there were found such clips as *fave* (from *favourite*)n, adj; *frag*  
 (from *fragmentation*)n, adj; *gr8* (*great*)adj<sup>8</sup>; *Gyp* (*Gypsy*)n; *hun* (*honey*)n; *jackie* (*jacket*)n; *mecha*  
 (*mechanic*)n; *trow* (*trousers pants*)n.

### Q3: What is the status of conversion and back-formation in the context of neologisms?

Conversion (8%) and back-formation (1%) proved to be quite unproductive processes at least  
 within the group of analysed neologisms in terms of statistical data, and therefore they are left  
 unanalysed.

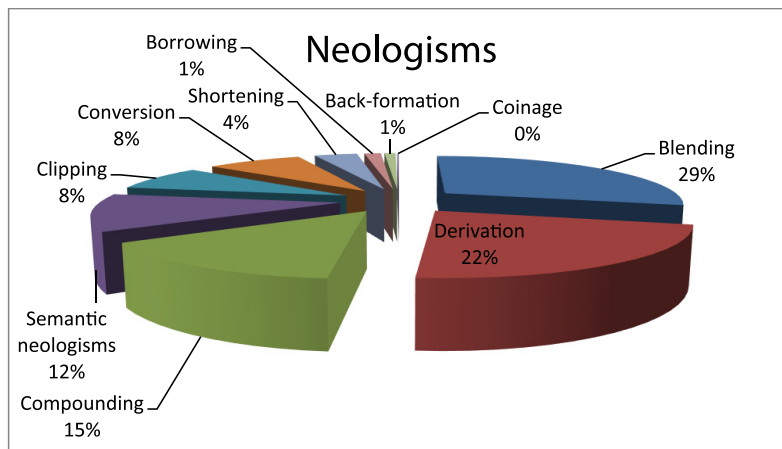
### Q4: What is the percentage of semantic neologisms?

One can see that semantic changes (see table above and/or graph below) with 12% represent  
 a small part of enriching neological word-stock (slightly over 70 units). For instance, *overcooked*  
 (overused, cliché)adj, *sick* (referring to a broken computer due to a virus or bug)adj, *sketchy* (dubious  
 reputation)adj, *spoon* (bother, molest)v, *track* (understand the speaker’s line of thought or arguments)  
 v, *white bread* (referring to ordinary, predictable, and uninteresting people)n, adj.

However, possible problem may be ‘hidden’ in a wrong identifying of semantic change, though  
 we have checked all semantic changes of selected units in SOED (2007). Absence of new meaning  
 in SOED (2007) was a signal that the existing word/expression has underwent the process of semantic  
 change based on polysemy (as in case of expressions *overcooked* or *white bread*), metaphor (as in  
 case of the verb *track*) or metonymy (as for instance in case of the adjectives *sick* and *sketchy* or the  
 verb *spoon*). SOED (2007) often provides nearly all sememes of polysemous words. E.g. semantics of  
*runners* (sports shoes)n is listed in order of historical appearance (from the oldest times in the Middle  
 English to the most recent ones). *Runners* is a noun from our research sample described by SOED  
 (2007) as a lightweight soft-soled sports or leisure shoe, usu. found in plural and used in Australian  
 colloquial English where it first appeared in the late 20<sup>th</sup> C. However, it is part of our group of semantic  
 neologisms because only now it has become used in American and British English in reference to  
 ‘shoes’.



Graph: English Neologisms



#### Comparison of two sources

Algeo (1993):

- **compounding = 40%**
- derivation = 20 %
- shortening = 8%
- **blending = 5%**
- coinage = below 0.5%
- semantic shift = 11%
- grammatical shift = 6%
- borrowing = 2%

Our findings (2003):

- compounding = 15%
- derivation = 22 %
- shortening = 8 – 12%
- **blending = 29%**
- coinage = below 0.5%
- semantic shift = 12%
- grammatical shift = 8%
- borrowing = 1%

Algeo (1993):

- long analysed period → it took 50 years to collect all units in the corpus,
- there were 222 contributors, assistants, lexicographers, etc. involved in the project,
- thousands of words have been collected and analysed.

Our selected research sample (2003):

- short analysed period → only one year (2003),
- contributors to the database were undergraduate (university) students (i.e. no professional linguists or lexicographers),
- hundreds of words have been found and involved in the database by the students themselves.

It is obvious that the results of both sources are the same with the exception of compounding and blending. Do the results of our findings suggest that English language users coin more blends and less compounds than they used to twenty years ago? There are more possible ways how to interpret the results (see below).

## Interpretation of results, research problems to be faced, and possible trends

Research has revealed higher productivity of blending compared to derivation and compounding usually considered as a leading WF processes. Derivation and compounding are both an integral part of English WF processes in coining new words enriching English word-stock. However, it is blending that dominates because of its various and large possibilities – the users of language can express their creativity, pun on words, humour and intelligence. Blending seems to be ‘the WFP of the Anglophone youth’ thanks to its heterogeneity, unpredictability, and possibilities to link ‘unlinkable’.

We had to face several problems in the course of research. Firstly, to find a valid research sample of relevant size solved out when covering over 600 units. Secondly, to identify all WF processes properly, borrowing and semantic changes within the found corpus. Thirdly, treating blends as blends or compounds as compounds which may be abbreviated when found in a written form, and then they should be treated as abbreviations, for example *Nine-Eleven* treated as blend (from *September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001*) or as an abbreviation *9/11* (usu. found in written form) or a compound adjective *twenty-four-seven*<sup>9</sup> (adj) abbreviated to *24/7*. It seems that this could be the main cause of differences between Algeo (1993) and our findings. For instance, Algeo and his team considers blends like *drinkathon* or *shopathon* results of so-called combining (derivation and compounding), when he asserts the words to be derivatives (he says that *-athon* is a suffix, i.e. a bound morpheme, not a free one). Fourthly, it was clear that many words were created only ad hoc and will not be used on a regular basis or will be used as a specific reference to a particular phenomenon (e.g. *burninator*, *Governator*). Especially some blends are used just for fun and their usage is limited for a particular time and/or communication sphere (usu. in an informal spoken language uttered among friends). New trends may be predicted in WF processes in a way that blends are becoming popular among young native speakers of language and this results in higher productivity of modern blending compared to blending a hundred years ago (e.g. compared to times of L. Carroll who is believed to be the very first user and inventor of blends in his work *Alice in Wonderland* published in the late 1880s and *Through the Looking-Glass* in 1890s). The coinage of blends is more typical among young people in their twentyish who like playful experimenting with language boasting about their imagination, creativity, and intelligence. Fifthly, some units were included among neologism, though, they are no longer considered new by native speakers. *24/7* is a typical example of a colloquial Americanism taken into the British English in the early 1980s, which is also included in English lexicons. The blend and its abbreviation were not excluded due to its change of a word-class (noun to an adjective). Sixthly, etymology of words was sometimes ambiguous, i.e. it was difficult to properly identify a particular WFP or other way of coining a word or its meaning (in case of semantic changes). This was due to heterogeneity of word-formative processes – results of WF process may be opaque and unclear in some cases. Seventhly, it is highly likely that blending has ‘just’ been increasing in recent years (it has become more productive than ever before).

## Purpose of this research

One may ask ‘What is this sort of research good for? Isn’t it research for the sake of research?’ These are very good questions indeed. Results of our research findings ought to reflect in teaching practice. How and why should they? At universities language departments a lot of attention is paid to the WF processes, namely derivation and compounding, clipping and conversion respectively, but hardly any to blending which is quite surprising in regard to our research findings. As blending becomes more productive this should reflect in language classes spending more time explaining the principles and rules plus practicing coining new words by this particular WFP for the sake of students

and their better practical training as future English teachers or translators/interpreters. Moreover, many English neological blends become part of national languages (recent Anglicisms in Slovak and Czech languages: *Amerindián*, *brunch/branč*, *emotikon*, *funtastický*<sup>10</sup>, *heliport*, *infotainment*, *phishing*, *spam*, *webinar/webinár*<sup>11</sup>).

## Conclusion

Neologisms in the English language have been researched from the point of quantitative analysis when 637 new words, expressions and phrases have been analysed. The analysis revealed that among neologisms blends outnumber derivatives and compounds which were quite surprising findings. There were not so many abbreviations or clips as one could expect.

We think that blends have particular characteristics which make them popular especially among young people (who tend to create new words this way more often than any other ways). Salient features of blending are heterogeneity (i.e. sharing features of other WFP), unpredictability (which parts are clipped, which is used as the first/second element), so-called blendability and its uniqueness. Blending then results in expression of native speakers' creativity, experimenting with language very often using humour and fun, playing with words, showing language users' intelligence, or 'only' ad hoc creation.

The next step of our research is to analyse all 5,500 neologisms to confirm our findings on the sample source presented in this paper.

Theory on expressions created this way is to appear in forthcoming textbook on English lexical morphology backed up by the project called *Tvorba a inovácia ŠP v študijnom odbore učiteľstvo akademických predmetov v AJ a NJ* in the framework of *Inovatívne kroky pre potreby vysokoškolského vzdelávania v 21. storočí* (01/10/2013–30/09/2015; ITMS: 26110230109).

## Notes

1. J. Algeo (1993) asserts that majority of new words, which emerged in the AmE betw. 1941 and 1991, were created by means of compounding and derivation (68 %). Then (semantic + grammatical) shifting follows (17%), shortening (8%) and blending (5%) as the least productive process(es). By grammatical shifting he means the process of conversion.
2. By other ways are meant borrowing and semantic shifts.
3. The counterargument goes that it may be considered a blend based on analogy *burn* + *terminator*. However, we think this is an example of derivation because affixes like -in (n) + -ate (v) + -or (n) were attached to the base/root *burn* (v).
4. Its lexical meaning is explained below.
5. For classification of blends see A. Böhmerová (2010, pp. 68 – 90).

6. It seems to be a productive part of ad hoc blends: *kissathon*, *telethon* (appeared in English in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> C), etc. See A. Böhmerová (2010) for more examples.
7. Some linguists consider this WFP to be clipping or compounding.
8. Similarly *str8* (*straight*) = heterosexual person. Meaning goes back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, its clipped form is quite recent.
9. Also used as a compound noun: *twenty-four seven*.
10. In Slovak environment the blend happen to become homonymous with the name of commercial radio broadcasting.
11. Old(er) English blends are (becoming) part of Slovak and Czech languages already: *smog*, *brunch*, *e-mail/email*.

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## The Potential of Pedagogic Translation in Teaching EFL

*Abstract: The paper reflects the pedagogic translation, its basic definitions and reflections in the subjective beliefs of teacher educators. The paper defines the subject and introduces the research method and its technique, which is called concept structuring. The technique allows the researcher to describe and visualise the subjective teachers' beliefs as the basic pre-requisite for further studies and deeper analysis of pedagogic translations and its position in the EFL teaching. All the results are tagged at the binary level to create a platform for further research using multilevel tagging systems identifying the proper content of the teachers' beliefs in the field of the pedagogic translation.*

Over a period of time, translation is receiving increasing attention by teachers and teacher educators within modern direct approaches for teaching foreign languages. A number of pedagogues already described and analyzed the role of a mother tongue (L1) as one of the most important components for teaching foreign languages and also as the major component of the pedagogical translation (Lewis 55, Atkinson 246–7).

Translation as a part of modern approaches appears in professional literature mainly under the term "pedagogic or academic translation", introduced into the professional literature by Canadian theoretician Jean Delisle (28). He defines it as follows: "Academic, or pedagogical, translation is intended to help the student acquire the rudiments of a language, or at a more advanced level, to perfect his style. It is never an end in itself, but always a mean...". In Delisle's understanding, a pedagogic translation is defined against the use of L1 in the teaching of foreign languages and does not see each occurrence of L1, each case spoken in a mother tongue, as an automatic translation activity. This definition of pedagogic translation does not include the use of L1 in teaching, leading to the saving of time and also does not include instructions in L1 for help in organizing teaching. The use of L1 for grammar explanation, word definitions or more extensive explanation of lexicon also cannot be considered a pedagogic translation (Atkinson 246–7).

At the same time, Delisle (28) defines the pedagogic translation as opposed to practically oriented artistic translation ("It is never an end in itself, but always a means."), by which he clearly accentuates precisely the potential of translation on the methodology level.

In his work, Duff (68) particularly focuses on the complex overview of the pedagogical translation and identifies its blending with teaching the language and teaching life and institutions. He finds a powerful synthetic moment in the translation, which helps "improve" language (69).

To the contrary, other authors specialize analytically and do not see the pedagogic translation and its place in teaching as some universal technique, but rather define it as a complementary supplement to other methods. For example, M. Lewis (145) studies the pedagogic translation in regard to the mastering of lexicon and higher advancements, as well as grammatical structure. His method is based on directly guided translation activities, in which the pupil studies entire lexical chunks, which, once translated, make the fixation of lexical meaning and grammatical structure easier, with the support and in the background of the mother tongue (L1).

Further, the experimental research of R. Miles (55) must be mentioned, which compared two groups of EFL students from Japan, matching the results of standardized entry and final test and measuring the levels or relative improvement before and after a two-month intensive English language course.

Last, but not least, the research of J. House (12) is also worth mentioning, which monitored the

potential of pedagogic translation in the area of pragmatics and sees in it the imaginary bridge between the practically oriented teaching of the language with the theoretical linguistics and artistic translation.

But despite the above examples, a systematic approach that would describe the potential of pedagogic translation in teaching foreign languages is missing. The purpose of this work and the probe (see below) is therefore to indicate *the potential of translation in the teaching of foreign languages* and outline which are the possible questions on which to focus in relation to pedagogic translation. This specific contribution describes the qualitative research reflecting teachers, educators of future teachers, who presented their opinions and subjective theories in partly structured interviews.

## **Research Methodology**

The qualitative part of the extensive research was conducted with teachers, academic workers and educators of future teachers. Given that the subject of the work is pedagogic translation, that is translation as a tool to be applied in teaching foreign languages (EFL), the experience of the educators of future teacher is irreplaceable.

Establishing the theoretical framework for such groups of teachers – educators of future teachers, was not entirely simple. It was necessary in the very beginning of the research to specifically stipulate what exactly is the subject of research. The most suitable appears to be the research of what T. Janík (15) describes as teachers' subjective theories.

In accordance with Janík, it is necessary for the research of the teachers' subjective theories to understand personal and professional opinion that is a combination of experience, knowledge and authority, which is necessary for later plastic conceptualisation of the subjective theory.

The subject of the subjective theory of a teacher-educator of future teachers is the pedagogic translation in the teaching of foreign languages. The subjective theory also has its subject, which represents the theory (teacher – educator, a specialist familiar with the subject of pedagogic translation) and, last, but not least, the quality that is a collection of postulates and evaluative and descriptive statements, in which a powerful element of subjectivity must be considered in the spirit of this concept.

The research itself is conducted with an awareness of three basic and key principles: the principle of communication validation, the principle of dialog consensus and the principle of explanatory validation (Janík 457). The research as such could then be considered valid, as long as it considers all three of these aspects. Given that the researcher himself is the subject of the research, it is necessary to come to agreement regarding the final results between the subject and the researcher. It is further necessary to come to a dialogic consensus and agree upon a joint terminological and factual interpretation of the results.

The last and critical validity criterion is then the explanatory validation, which, although following the initial, communication validation is considered equally important. The purpose of the explanatory validation is to confirm the correlation between the outlined and described theories and interpretations.

The purpose was for teachers – educators to specifically express themselves on the subject, not regarding their own (imprecise) interpretation, caused by imprecise terminological explanation.

Once we defined the studied sample (teachers – educators of future teachers), established the subject of the research (teachers' subjective theories), it was also necessary to establish a corresponding technique for the research of teachers' subjective theories. For the purposes of the research of the potential for pedagogic translation among teachers – experts, the approach of concept structuring was used (Janík 457). The advantage of this approach is that it can be easily structured.

## Research Design

The research included a total of fourteen teachers-educators of future teachers. These were teachers from Czech universities who teach the English language. However, they did not represent only one area, but a whole range of fields – methodology, practical language, literary subjects and morphology, grammar and linguistics.

The data collection took place over the course of four months, during which a total of twenty-two respondents were contacted, seven men and fifteen women. A total of nine women and five men made up the resulting collection of fourteen respondents. The shortest length of respondent experience was seven years, the longest thirty-two years. All respondents had personal and professional experience with teaching at the levels of both elementary and high school. Not a single respondent's academic position was their first work place, but three of them attended seven work places, three attended four workplaces and for the remaining respondents, their current work place was their second job.

The research itself was conducted in accordance with concept structuring, in order to ensure the validity of this research probe. Beforehand, the respondents were introduced to the definitions and terminology meanings key to the understanding of pedagogic translation and the mother tongue in teaching foreign languages. The actual interview was then transcribed, analyzed and coded according to the basic – binary – category system.

In the second phase, at the second meeting of the researcher with the respondent, an agreement was reached regarding content concepts. In case of discrepancies, all ambiguities were clarified, appropriate corrections were made and the material re-coded. In the last phase, the actual explanatory validation of the content took place.

## The Category System and Results

Within the concept of the research, the results of the qualitative research were intended to enable a further deepening and development of the research and, last but not least, specification. The transcribed interviews are coded at several levels. The initial coding was categorical and it was stipulated beforehand (is relevant = 1 or, is not relevant = 0) and created material for deeper analyses, arising from the analysis of further, specially stipulated codes. In this contribution, I present the results obtained through the initial binary coding. Given the limited scope of this text, the developed positions and interpretations of the actual teacher-experts' subjective theories are not presented here.

The studied collection is limited (n=14) and also offers a limited option for statistical evaluation. The table below shows a portion of the coded results. Teachers-educators are identified here as R1 through R14. The transcribed contributions were read through and coded for phenomenon occurring in the interview (1 = it appears, is relevant a 0 = does not appear, is not relevant). Given the breadth of the materials (approximately nine hours of audio recordings) it was necessary to clearly structure the text using binary codes so that, upon filtering, it would only offer relevant material for a further, second round of coding. The researcher and respondents would, in the second round of the research (reconstruction and validation), work only with relevant verifiable structures according to the methodology of structuring concepts. After this filtering, the created texts were not burdened with historic discourse of the respondents or by veering off the subject of the partly structured interview and were sufficiently clear.

After binary coding, it was possible to statistically treat the occurrence of relevant phenomena in the following table.

Teacher - expert	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	$\Sigma$
Personal experience with translation (student)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<u>14</u>
Personal experience with translation (teacher)	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	<u>10</u>
Significance for building grammar / structure skills	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	<u>9</u>
Significance for building lexicon	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	<u>9</u>
Significance for studying life and institutions and non-language phenomena	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<u>11</u>
Influence of the translation on faster acquisition of language proficiency	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<u>10</u>
Translation and the influence on language acquisition	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	<u>10</u>

Table 1: The results of binary, first-level coding in structuring concepts

Among the interesting findings is the fact that all respondents had personal experience with pedagogic translation from the position of a student. They all encountered at least one of all the possible forms of translation, but many of them have experience with all the forms in which translation appears. For example, R4 states: "Yes, I experienced it (translation) often and in all forms. The drills, translations, translations of texts into English, translations into Czech, the drills can be oral, written, testing..." Other respondents, for example R7, actually specifically delineate, define and include grammar-translation methods: "(I encountered translation) in its most classic form, in that grammar-translation form, this has to do with the fact that I learned English from the text book for language schools, where a translation was always one part of it. And as I recall, the teachers used translation a lot. (...) in high school, well, at the end of the lessons, there was translation as a form of language exercise, so there we translated from Czech to English and from English to Czech, then we also used the testing method, which means we translated sentences for ourselves... ."



Ten of the respondents then use pedagogic translation in their pedagogic practice. They all used it to benefit the teaching of their particular subject or specialization.

(...) when I teach practical language or phonetic and phonology and I want to show intonation, for example, I want to show the difference, the difference of why something wouldn't work in Czech at all and why they therefore have to learn it correctly in English. And they tell me, how would it be said in Czech, and I show it on the difference, how it's important to learn it correctly. (R9)

Nine respondents highlighted the significance of pedagogic translation for the development of grammar skills. For instance, R4 states an example of how she works with translation: "... in grammar, perhaps I sometimes rather pointed out to them what was the same, for example prepositions, when there was the same preposition in Czech and English, I told them to not worry about it, that it's the same, but when it was completely different, then we didn't point that out, but, rather, the differences." In this regard, the respondents also mention the irreplaceable service of L1, which already offers a number of grammar skills which must be used and on which it is possible to build: (part of the teachers of practical language) "... often comes back to the mother tongue, as long as we have the homogenous groups of students, to use it more, they guide the students to find connections and similarities in the languages, in grammar, which would be ideal and that would run smoothly."

The teachers-experts also expressed themselves convincingly on the subject of the benefit of pedagogic translation for the development of lexicon. Respondent 11, for example, states: "Well, just take Harry Potter. Everyone knows it, the kids love it and imagine that you would translate a few names in the English language lessons in elementary schools. Suddenly it would become apparent what all the things they learn are, how many new words kids suddenly know. And translation is not being used in elementary schools, usually they just let the pupils describe the content of a film, but they walk away with nothing from English, from the actual language."

They also see the potential of using translation in studies of life and institutions and other non-language phenomena similarly strongly (10 respondents). Respondent 11, again, says: "Let them translate a recipe for a Christmas pudding and you will see they'll never make a mistake in it again. You give it to them as home work, then you ask, then you can speak English, and it's clear."

Ten respondents also admit to translation occasionally contributing to an increase of self-esteem and proficiency in language studies, that is, the possibility to rely on L1 provides the students with confidence that they can express the required information. Respondent 4 says: "Often they need to translate it for themselves in order to say something, to first put together a Czech answer, then there is the translation, then they tell it to us and we are happy. As soon as we forbid that, we won't help them much, they will be worse off and everything will only take longer." Another respondent, (R6), despite admitting the benefit, also immediately pointed out an obstacle: "In production, sometimes when I test, often those older generations, you can see the film running in front of their eyes and they set the words one after another in English and when they don't know some word, they stop. In this regard, translation can be in the way. But it boosts their confidence a lot, that they say at least something."

A critical but positive result — the way pedagogic translation influences or disrupts language acquisition. Ten respondents state that this is a phenomenon one must take into account but, at the same time, they all attempt to find a solution and approach the introduction of pedagogic translation in a way that would not disrupt language acquisition and they try to respond very sensibly to the time in which it would be suitable to introduce pedagogic translation into the teaching. Respondent 7 warns that "... in the elementary school, that's where 'acquisition' still really works, which is simply an

exposure to a language and perception and many such things the kids know specifically simply from the perception. Conscious learning is present a little bit on the second level, but I think it should really be only at high school, where the kids begin to think about it and start perceiving the language as a system.”

All the results are still subject to further analysis and each binary unit is further coded at the second and third level of coding. However, these results cannot be presented in details in the paper.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analyses and evaluation of the described phase of the research, it is apparent that pedagogic translation certainly offers a stimulus for the development and enrichment of the foreign language teaching methods. At the same time, it shows that many teacher educators, despite having their own experience with translation during their own studies, do not systematically use pedagogic translation as a tool, but rather, randomly. They mostly use translation to showcase parallels, describe correspondences and similarities between the languages systems of L1 and L2. For many teachers – educators of future teachers, the borderline between pedagogic translation and “common” use of L1 is not very noticeable in the teaching process. Despite the fact that that precise validation of terminology is a part of the structured concepts, many respondents overlook this fine line, for example, R9 states that “... among my personal and curious uses of pedagogic translation is the fact that I let them translate as a punishment. It takes up a lot of their time and then they are careful and come to the lessons prepared.”

Despite certain simplifications arising from the fact that during partly structured interviews it was not always possible to specify all the fine shades of translation and pedagogic translation and use of L1 in teaching EFL, the results present convincing findings. 64% of the respondents appreciate or admit positive influences for building grammar skills of the EFL students. For example, R3 says: “Tell them to think about the sequence of tenses for a while, to translate it, and right away they see how it works. Why recite theorems, why drill something for a long time? It’s clear.” Or R4, who points out the benefit of pedagogic translation in studies of English tenses. “I teach them to differentiate the time we live in from the grammatical tenses. A few sentences to translate, the students translate it, that’s no problem to them. Then we sort of have to look at the English and suddenly they see it and understand the future perfect tense. They understand what you would normally explain for an hour and they will never forget it.”

More notable agreement in terms of percentage (78%) was reached in evaluating the significance of pedagogic translation for the understanding of cultural and non-language phenomena. The increasing interconnection and globalization of the “Czech” and “Anglo-American” cultural worlds helps significantly in this regard. Respondent 2 notes: “...and suddenly they know it (film Avatar) and everyone has seen it three times and you can use it to clarify culture, differences, understanding - or not. A report on the subject of Avatar smells from a distance of the Austro-Hungarian style of thinking. But let them translate it or create subtitles. They download it from the internet, they know where to look for it and suddenly there is a translation where they have to deal with and learn many things.”

Also the building of lexicon is a significant benefit, which, however, is somewhat of a natural necessity in studying a foreign language. Mastering is in this case based on the replication of meanings from the system of L1 into the system of L2. Pedagogic translation is rather significant in constant phrases, collocation or sayings. Here we cannot talk directly about lexical units, but rather, together with Lewis (66) about “chunks” which, however, are already well described and often also implemented by teachers using the Michael Lewis lexical method.

Based on the results of the study of partly structured interviews, it would therefore be possible to come to the following conclusion. Pedagogic translation has its place among other methods and therefore can serve as a suitable supplement of any applied teaching method. Its significance differs based on the areas of use and certainly also on the levels of proficiency and ages of the students or pupils. Pedagogic translation is so flexible that it can be adjusted for the purposes on any level of teaching EFL. It therefore seems desirable, that pedagogic translation be better described, structured and presented, not as the return to the grammar-translation method, but as a modern tool, which enriches the current mass used direct methods.

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## The Impact of Comenius Assistantship on Students in a Host School

*Abstract: The paper is divided into three main sections. It starts with a brief overview of the goals of language education policies of the European Union and of the Council of Europe. The second part introduces the aims of the 'Lifelong Learning Programme Comenius' (2007–2013) and focuses on the description of the 'Comenius assistantships' programme. This section also includes examples of activities that have been realised through this programme including CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) classes, drawing on the experience of the author with coordinating and supervising the 'Comenius Assistantships – Host schools' programme. The last section of the article presents the results of a questionnaire study conducted in 2012 among 208 Czech high school students involved in the action. The study focused on the impact the action has had on them. Finally, the role of assistantships in the framework of the new Erasmus+ programme is briefly discussed.*

### Introduction

According to the European Union, one of Europe's biggest assets is its linguistic diversity; the union currently has as many as 24 official languages and over 60 regional and minority languages (European Commission 2013d). In order to ensure that this diversity is endorsed and supported, many language policy documents, whose aim is to define both aims and actions to be taken, have been published.

The most prominent and well-known of these may well be the EU Action Plan 'Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity' (2003), which stresses the following areas: language learning as a lifelong learning activity, improvement of the quality of language teaching, and the development of a language-friendly environment (European Commission 2013a). It hardly need be mentioned that similar issues have also been addressed by the Council of Europe (hereafter COE). In its policy documents, the COE stresses the need to promote plurilingualism, linguistic diversity, mutual understanding, democratic citizenship, and social cohesion. Ideally, a citizen of a common Europe should be able to express him/herself in three different languages, including his/her own, and feel motivated to improve his/her language skills throughout his/her whole life (Council of Europe 2012).

In order to put in practice the aforementioned goals, both the COE and the EU have developed various projects and events, such as the European Language Portfolio and the European Day of Languages (COE), or the European Label and Lifelong Learning Programme (2007–2013, hereafter LLP). With the LLP coming to an end this academic year (2013–2014), and with the introduction of a new scheme, Erasmus+ (2014–2020) (European Commission 2013c), it is time to evaluate the impact of the original programme. The following article presents a description of goals as well as a subsequent analysis of the EU LLP programme Comenius, with a particular focus on the 'assistantships' programme.

### 2. LLP Comenius

LLP Comenius was set up together with the other LLPs in 2006 (by Decision no. 1720/2006/EC) and draws, from among others, on the previously established action programme Socrates. Comenius addresses the needs of pre-school, primary and secondary education, as opposed to say, the well-known Erasmus programme, aimed at the tertiary level.

The aims of Comenius are as follows (European Commission 2013b):

1. Improve and increase the mobility of pupils and educational staff across the EU;
2. Enhance and increase partnerships between schools in different EU Member States;
3. Encourage language learning, innovative ICT-based content, services and better teaching techniques and practices;
4. Enhance the quality and European dimension of teacher training;
5. Improve pedagogical approaches and school management.

LLP Comenius has several sub-programmes, namely school partnerships, individual mobility of students, assistantships, and in-service teacher-training. The focus of this article is the Comenius assistantships programme.

## **2.1. Comenius assistantships**

'Comenius assistantships' is a paired programme, involving 'host schools' and 'assistants'. In this activity, future teachers from the participating countries can apply for a grant to fund their placement at a host school in another European country. Similarly, schools can apply for a foreign assistant in order to realise various projects and activities.

The aims of the assistantship go hand in hand with the general aims stated above. The programme targets young, prospective teachers, whom it hopes to positively influence both in their attitudes and behaviour, as well as motivate them for their future teaching career.

On the side of the host school, the idea is, among others, to develop pupils' multicultural awareness and communicative competence. It is believed that having met a person from a foreign country and having had positive experience in doing so, young people are less prone to xenophobia and racism, and, at the same time, more open to intercultural dialogue. Moreover, the contact with a foreigner and the opportunity and need to use a foreign language for real-life communication should motivate students in the host school to study foreign languages, learn about foreign cultures etc. All of these aims go hand in hand with the current trends in education, and in FLT methodology in particular.

During the application process, both parties fill in an application form in which they describe all the various aspects of the planned assistantship. On the part of the would-be assistant, this includes areas such as a personal and educational profile, any relevant work or teaching experience, a project description listing activities and subjects the assistant would like to become involved in, the aims of the assistantship in terms of personal and professional development, and the assistant's planned contribution to the host school.

On the part of the prospective host school, completing the application involves putting together a profile of the school in terms of its type, size, location, and age range of pupils. At the same time, the schools are expected to provide a detailed description of the activities they plan to carry out during the assistantship, including an overview of both curricular and extra-curricular activities the assistant would be involved in, a description of the way mentoring is to be conducted, as well as the support for the assistant in terms of workplace, access to school computer network. A thorough description of the expected outcomes and benefits both for the students and the staff is also required. In addition to that, host schools may choose to indicate their wishes regarding the assistant's country of origin and mother tongue.

Once the applications have been submitted, they are read and evaluated by the local national agency (in the UK, for example, the British Council is the national agency). What follows next are negotiations among the individual national agencies, matching the successful applicants in order to ensure the highest possible correspondence of the project descriptions and profiles. From the point

of view of the host institution, the project descriptions outlined in the application are most often met in terms of the subjects taught and activities to be carried out, rather less in terms of the country of origin, especially if the school requests a native speaker of a major European language, such as English.

## **2.2. Comenius assistants at our school: CLIL in practice**

Gymnázium Omská has hosted three Comenius assistants, a Swedish, a British and a Bulgarian assistant. With each assistant we focused on different activities and involved them in various subjects and projects.

Our first assistant in the school year 2010/2011, a student studying to become a teacher of Mathematics and History, was, first of all, involved in assisting in English lessons, while dealing with topics such as gender and social equality, that is areas the regular English teachers at our school do not specialise in. The assistant was able to conduct lessons on such issues, as he had attended a special course back in Sweden. At the same time, he prepared presentations on the history and culture of Scandinavia. What was appreciated the most were the History and Mathematics CLIL lessons, such as discussing the history of the Thirty Years' War with the students of Year 3 of the upper-secondary school.

The so called 'content-driven CLIL' (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is a teaching approach connected with communicative language teaching, which means teaching a content subject by means of a foreign language (or, possibly, a second language). As Mathematics and History significantly differ in the teaching methodology, this proved to be a challenging but rewarding experience. The assistant was also involved in the preparation of the MUN (Model United Nations) school team for their participation in the MUN conference, for which the students chose to represent Sweden.

At the end of the placement a small study was conducted to evaluate the impact of the assistantship. Students mostly noted aspects already mentioned, such as motivation to improve one's foreign language skills, or raising interest in studying content through English. Some other comments dealt with the motivation to study abroad, or with the positive experience of speaking English with a non-native speaker other than Czech (students' L1). There was almost no negative feedback on the placement.

The following year (2011/2012) we hosted a British assistant and therefore we put more focus on conversation and on the 'language-driven CLIL'. Thus, the assistant was predominantly working and teaching in EFL (English as a foreign language) lessons, focusing on cultural studies of the English-speaking world. Moreover, the assistant was also involved in lessons of Geography or Social Sciences. At the end of this placement a more thorough survey was conducted. Its description and results are presented in section 3 of the article.

This school year (2013/2014) we hosted an assistant from a completely different cultural background, namely from Bulgaria. This time, the placement focused on yet another subject area, namely Arts. Students were involved in a long-term project which included both theoretical and practical sessions. In their Arts lessons, they were e.g. expected to compare contemporary Czech and Bulgarian art presented in the first part of the project; based on this knowledge, they then created their own work of art inspired by the issues discussed in the previous lessons. Finally, they were asked to prepare presentations which they gave in their English lessons. Thus, we again made use of content-driven CLIL methodology, as well as of various organisational forms, new methodologies and materials. Students were also expected to work with both traditional and modern media and technology, as one of the project outputs was a presentation of manipulated photography including students' sculptures (the presentation can be viewed here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_KVb\\_0JBEIQ&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KVb_0JBEIQ&feature=youtu.be)).

### **3. Research study**

#### **3.1. The context of the study and research sample description**

The study was conducted in June 2012 at the end of a 10-month placement of the British Comenius assistant (school year 2011/2012). For the purpose of easy administration and collection of data, as well as for the sake of ensuring anonymity, the study was designed as a questionnaire (for a detailed description see section 3.3 below). The questionnaires were completed by 208 students (124 girls, 84 boys, average age 16,6) of the upper-secondary level in years 1, 2 and 3 (aged 15-18). These students had by the time of the survey worked with the assistant for at least 5 months, on average once a week (i.e. having one 45-minute lesson per week). As the questionnaires were administered during the last lessons of the school year, more than 90% of all the students in the particular years handed the completed questionnaires back to their teachers.

Surprisingly enough, as far as the author is aware, only one study on the impact of Comenius Assistantships has been conducted, namely the very thorough 'Study of the Impact of Comenius Assistantships', commissioned by the Director General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth of the European Commission (Maiworm, Kastner, and Wenzel 2010).

#### **3.2. Aim of the study**

The current study focused on the impact of the Comenius assistantship action on students of the host school. Its aim was to find out whether the declared goals of the programme are valid.

#### **3.3. Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire consisted of two parts.

The first part of the questionnaire comprised of 10 statements which the students were asked to grade on a five-point Likert scale (scale with five levels: (1) strongly agree – (2) agree – (3) neutral – (4) disagree – (5) strongly disagree). These statements mostly reflected the officially declared goals of the Comenius action.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 3 open-ended questions asking for ideas for improvement and suggestions for activities that could be carried out. Lastly, those who worked with both assistants were asked to compare the experience.

To ensure that all students understand the statement and, at the same time, are able to express their ideas without being restrained by their language skills, both the statements in the questionnaire and the feedback were written in the students' L1 (i.e. Czech).

#### **3.4. Results – Part I**

Below are the results for statements in part I of the questionnaire. First, there is a direct translation of the original statement, followed by the average mark the statement received (i.e. the lower the number, the more the students agreed with the statement).

Statement no. 1 – "It is interesting to have assistants at the school, because we can we meet and talk to people from foreign countries." – score: 1,29

Statement no. 2 – "Thanks to the assistant we have learned more about the culture, traditions, history etc. of his country of origin, than we would have learned in 'normal' classes." – score: 1,95

Statement no. 3 – "Thanks to the assistantship, we were doing activities we wouldn't have done otherwise." – score: 1,84

Statement no. 4 – “It was interesting to have two teachers.” – score: 2,5

Statement no. 5 – “Thanks to the assistantship, I understand spoken English better.” – score: 2,79

Statement no. 6 – “Thanks to the assistantship, I feel more confident when using English actively.” – score: 3,12

Statement no. 7 – “The language aspect (speaking English with a native speaker) is more important to me than the ‘knowledge’ aspect (the fact that we learned about Britain).” – score: 1,84

Statement no. 8 – “Thanks to the assistantship, I started considering studying abroad.” – score: 3,49

Statement no. 9 – “I would like to have another assistant in the future.” – score: 1,49

Statement no. 10 – “I would like a future assistant to be an English native speaker.” – score: 1,62

### **3.5. Results – Part II**

In the second part of the questionnaire, students were first of all asked what other types of activities (except for those mentioned in the project descriptions above) they would like to carry out with possible future assistants. They suggested the following: tour of the capital and other trips where they would show the assistant around; visiting the embassy of the assistant’s country of origin; watching films and getting to know other culturally relevant texts (in the broad understanding of the word), while discussing it with the assistant, including talks about everyday life in his/her country.

Moreover, students who had had experience with both assistants were asked to express their opinion on whether the assistant’s personality influences the success of the placement. Almost all students agreed that it did, noting that the experience of having the two assistants considerably differed. They named both positive and negative aspects and traits which influence the cooperation between the assistant and the students. What the students appreciated the most was not necessarily the methodological aspect of teaching, but rather traits such as being open-minded, helpful, understanding, communicative and friendly.

### **3.6. Discussion of results**

As we can clearly see from the overview, students believe that having an assistant is valuable experience, in particular when it comes to cultural aspects. At the same time, according to the respondents, the assistantship provides the possibility for introducing new teaching methods and techniques into regular classes. Nevertheless, having two teachers does not seem to be generally appreciated, possibly because it creates slight confusion in class management, grading etc.

Even though students thought learning a language was a more important aspect of the placement, in this particular case they unfortunately did not see much improvement in their confidence as foreign language users. What is indeed interesting is the fact that the teachers involved in the programme did not share this opinion and believed that the students’ level and competence in the target language (English) increased. We may speculate about the reason for this discrepancy, one of them being the fact that students are not fully capable of seeing their own progress, or that, in comparison with the native speaker, they still do not feel their language is ‘good enough’. Language development and progress on the part of students involved in the activity has been reported by other teachers and institutions (c.f. Maiworm, Kastner, and Wenzel 2010).

Finally, the assistantship generally does not seem to be a motivation enough for considering studies abroad in the future. This is in contrast with the findings of the previous case study (Swedish assistant, 2010/2011) in which students claimed they felt much more motivated. Here we might consider the fact that as assistant’s presence in the school was not ‘so new’ any longer and the motivation factor thus dropped slightly.



To end on a more positive note, the student-respondents wished to have another assistant in the future, which clearly shows they found the experience beneficial. This notion is also supported by the fact that they came up with various new possibilities of utilizing the assistantship.

#### 4. Erasmus+ and assistantships

The new EU scheme Erasmus+ (2014–2020) is only starting to be introduced, while some of the LLP Comenius activities are still in progress. Unfortunately it is yet unclear what the role of assistantships in Erasmus+ will be. According to DZS, the Czech national agency, there will probably not be more assistantships in the sense of Comenius assistantships. On the other hand, the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission 2014) specifically mentions 'assistantships for student teachers' in the section devoted to individual mobility of higher education students in the form of 'traineeships' (p. 35). At the same time, however, there is no other mention about assistantships in the rest of the document. There is, nevertheless, hope that after the clarification of the individual activities, space for the continuation of this successful practice will be found.

#### 5. Conclusion

In general, the results of the study confirmed the fact that Comenius assistantship is a motivating and beneficial activity, in particular regarding the development of students' cultural awareness. The study has not proved the expected impact in terms of learners' language development. This benefit has, nevertheless, been demonstrated in another study (Maiworm, Kastner, and Wenzel 2010) and was also supported by the staff involved. Let us, therefore, hope that Erasmus+, whose structure is yet to be clarified, will bring even more assistants into European schools and thus provide more students with a multicultural experience.

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## Challenges of Teaching English to Gifted Children

*Abstract: Segregated education for children with general intellectual giftedness has been functioning in Slovakia for over 20 years. It is a generally known fact that gifted children benefit from a unique approach and different methodology of teaching. Great emphasis has been put on creating special syllabi for mathematic and Slovak language subjects, where additional books were created for the needs of gifted pupils. Though English language teaching is considered as one of the most important areas of education in general, there were no special syllabi or books designed for gifted pupils in this subject. The aim of the current research was to employ different methods and activities to English language lessons, which would better suit the abilities and demands of gifted children. Specifically several additional and challenging activities were applied to English classes in the fourth grade of primary school for children with general intellectual giftedness.*

### 1. Education of pupils with general intellectual giftedness in Slovakia

Slovakia has quite a unique system of educating children with general intellectual giftedness. Segregated education for such children has been in existence for more than 20 years. In 1993, an experimental project of alternative education for gifted children in segregated classes at the primary school level was started by Laznibatová (Laznibatová, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2008; Dočkal 2005). The first experimental classroom for gifted children was opened in September 1993 and the first school was officially established in 1998 in Bratislava, with Laznibatová as the headmistress. A year later in 1999, a 8-year-gymnasium as a part of the School for gifted children in Bratislava was opened. Gradually, classes based on the Laznibatová's principle have been opened all around Slovakia. Nowadays, there are 28 schools in Slovakia that offer segregated education for gifted children.

The experimental project for segregated education of gifted children, which started 1<sup>st</sup> September 1993, was officially finished 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The official evaluation took place at a conference with the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Education, European commission for education, three guarantors (National Institute for Education, Faculty of Education at the Comenius University and the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology), many specialists, school directors, teachers, psychologists and parents. Results from the experimental verification were evaluated as highly effective and successful. Based on these results, new alternative curricular documents were accredited in 2007 and modified in the process of curricular reform in 2009:

- a) curriculum for primary education ISCED1 for pupils with general intellectual giftedness (accredited by the Ministry of Education CD-2008-18550/39582-1:914, valid from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009)
- b) curriculum for lower secondary education ISCED2 for pupils with general intellectual giftedness (accredited by the Ministry of Education CD-2008-18550/39582-1:914, valid from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009)
- c) curriculum for secondary education ISCED3 for pupils with general intellectual giftedness (accredited by the Ministry of Education CD-2008-18550/39582-1:914, valid from 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009) (VÚDPaP, 2009).

#### 1.1. Education of pupils with general intellectual giftedness in the process of curricular reform in Slovakia

In the process of curricular reform in Slovakia, the School act 245/2008 § 6 was passed, which introduced two levels of curriculum: the national curriculum and the school curriculum. The national

curriculum serves as a base document for creating curricular documents for pupils with specific educational needs. A School act 245/2008 § 2 letter j) and q) specifies gifted children (pupils) as children with specific educational needs. Children with special educational needs have to be identified by centres of pedagogical-psychological advisory services. According to § 103 (1), special schools offer education for children with:

- a) intellectual giftedness (general and specific),
- b) artistic giftedness
- c) giftedness in sport (VÚDPaP, 2009).

The national curriculum § 103 (1) letter a) number 1 specifies the key stages, core subjects, expected standards of pupils' performance for pupils with general intellectual giftedness. The key competences, which pupils have to acquire, are the same as for the regular pupils. Accordingly, the principles and standards are the same in the national curriculum for both, the regular pupils and for pupils with general intellectual giftedness. The reason for the same standards is for compatibility of all schools, which is necessary in the case when pupils change schools (ibid.).

Apart from the minimum requirements set in the national curriculum, there are certain modifications concerning the contents. Pupils also learn some of the syllabus from higher classes with enriching, additional and widening contents. There are ten additional books for special classes for gifted children at the primary school level. The contents of learning have a wider range and are more demanding than in ordinary classes. Specifics of these classes are that pupils elaborate projects on various topics from the first grade. Every pupil has to elaborate an annual project on a freely chosen topic (geography, history, science, biology, universe, arts, medicine, sports, etc.), which he/she has to defend in front of a group of pupils with similar topics. The best projects advance to inter school presentations, where the representatives from all Slovak schools for pupils with general giftedness present their projects (Vzdelávací program..., 2009).

Another difference in the curricula for pupils with general intellectual giftedness is that the special educational needs of talented children have to be considered, and consequently, suitable approaches, methods, techniques and activities should be implemented. The personal, emotional and social peculiarities and differences in the level of development of gifted children needs to be recognized. Teachers should apply a highly individual approach to pupils and need to regard peculiarities of gifted children (sensitivity, communicativeness, individualism, anxiety, imagination, ambitions, perfectionism, hyperactivity, etc.) with the aim to develop their talents adequately (VÚDPaP, 2009).

Considering foreign language education, the first foreign language is taught from the first grade of primary school. English language is recommended because it is a global language and a language of science and ICT. Two lessons per week in the first and second grade, and three lessons per week in the third and fourth grade are recommended. Because of that the Slovak language has one lesson per week less, as it is recognised that the pupils learn very fast and a lot of them can already read and write in Slovak by the time they start school (ibid.). There are not any specific recommendations on how to teach foreign languages to gifted children. It is all left to the schools and individual teachers on how to deal with peculiarities of gifted pupils. Even though there are ten additional books for gifted pupils, there is none for foreign languages. Therefore it seems that foreign language education for gifted pupils has not been given sufficient weight, and this is an area which would benefit from more attention. I believe my research would be a good starting point with the aim to improve the opportunities for gifted pupils to develop their talents in foreign language acquisition.

## **2. Research aim and research questions**

The aim is to find out whether the more challenging activities enhance talented children's engagement and improve communicative skills in the English language

*Research questions:*

1. What are the problematic issues in teaching English to pupils with general intellectual giftedness?
2. How do pupils with general intellectual giftedness react to the more challenging activities?
3. What kinds of activities evoke pupils' engagement and communication skills?

## **3. Methodology of research**

Action research was chosen for the current study, as it can change and improve practice at a local level to more desirable outcomes. As the name suggests, action research is a combination of the action and research. Action is a form of investigation, in which a personal attempt is to understand, reflect, improve and reform situation. By intervention to practice and close examination of the effects of intervention, educational practice can be advanced (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Action research with no doubt contributes to practice, but should also contribute to a theory of linguodidactics, and the findings should be available to teachers who encounter similar problems.

According to McNiff (2013) action research combines diagnostics, action and reflection, which focus on practical issues that have been identified as problematic and which can be still improved. Action research can be undertaken by the individual teacher, a group of teachers, or a teacher working cooperatively with a researcher (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Teachers often try to improve their teaching, but in action research, the process of improvement is more systematic. The problem must be identified, understood and solved with the aim to change, improve and innovate teachers' own practices. Action research is an ongoing cyclical process of planning, action, observation and critical self-reflection (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). Kemmis and McTaggart (2013) suggest that the process begins with a general idea that some kind of improvement is desirable. The action researcher decides on a field of action where the possible changes can result in a desirable impact. He acquaints himself well with the circumstances and finds out all the facts available about the field. The next step is making a decision on a general plan of action. During the whole time of implementation, effects of the action must be monitored, described and evaluated. The general plan is revised, possibly amended, re-applied, monitored, described and evaluated. Thus, action research is a series of spirals, each integrating analyses, reviews and reconsideration of the problem and evaluation of the effects of intervention. A more detailed description of the model of action research is set out by McNiff (2013) and it consists of: reviewing of the current practice, identifying an aspect which could be improved, planning a way to improve it, implementing the plan, monitoring and reflecting on what happens, modifying the original plan, evaluating the modified plan and continuing until the researcher is satisfied. There is a variety of instruments for data collection, such as diaries, personal journal, case studies, field notes, interviews, observation, audio and video recordings, etc. (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007).

Action research can be applied by several ways and in various areas in education. In linguodidactics, it is mainly replacement of traditional teaching methods by discovery methods, which could encourage learners to have more positive attitudes towards foreign languages. The current research was carried out at the English language lessons of a fourth grade class at a primary school for pupils with general intellectual giftedness. By application of new and improved methods and activities, the teacher and researcher self-reflects their intervention in order to maximize the potential of the talented pupils' development. The participants were an English teacher and a researcher, who

cooperated over a period of 5 months. The action research in this study was part of a larger case study carried out in a class of 12 pupils with general intellectual giftedness.

There were 12 children in the age group 9 to 10 in the class. They have been learning English from the first grade of primary school. Pupils have 3 lessons of English per week and use the course book English Adventure 2. English Adventure is a set of primary course books in English. Familiar, well known Disney characters inspire pupils to learn English and they are combined with real life situations. The pupil's book contains a picture dictionary and a series of stickers for rewarding a job well done. The activity book practices new language skills which have been acquired and it includes Disney storylines to cut out, colour and keep for further usage.

#### **4. Research analyses**

The reason for conducting the current research with pupils with general intellectual giftedness was to investigate if they were also talented for learning foreign languages. The research was carried out between September and February 2013 and the action research was a part of a complex case study.

The action research was chosen for the reason that the pupils, who were observed at many lessons, seemed not to be stimulated with activities and exercises from their course books. Their teacher was trying to solve this problem by giving pupils additional work sheets, playing games and singing. Only the quantity of activities was extended, but they were of the same type, which also did not challenge the pupils' abilities. The activities practiced the acquired language, but did not develop pupils' communicative skills. The activities chosen by the researcher were also games, songs and book exercises, but they were elaborated to a complex set of activities, which tried to challenge the abilities of gifted pupils. The researcher focused on the qualitative side of the activities, and extended them according to how successfully the pupils' interest was stimulated.

##### *Shopping song*

The first technique used was learning a song. There is nothing new about this technique, but we developed it into a multifaceted activity incorporating different techniques, developing several language systems and skills. Generally, songs are short and highly structured literary forms, which are considered to increase the effectiveness of learning and motivation pupils. They loosen stress and bring fun and laughter to the classroom, often producing a positive learning environment where the pupils may not even realise that they are acquiring new language skills. They can be used for learning and practicing vocabulary, phrases, or even grammar structures. Songs are especially beneficial for practicing pronunciation of words, stress and rhythm (Homolová, 2012; Pokrivčáková, 2013; Žemberová, 2010).

English lessons of the particular unit were intended to acquire vocabulary for food, fruit and vegetables and practice positive, negative and interrogative grammar structure such as "have got/has got". The "Shopping song" (Reid, et al., 2011) is a well known tune with new lyrics. The lyrics focus on vocabulary for fruit, vegetables and toys. The added value of the song are pragmatic and sociocultural phrases such as "I would like...", "Now I'm going to join the queue.", "I'll put my things down by the till.", "What will be the final bill?", which are important to acquire for development of intercultural communicative competences (Reid, 2012). The researcher had prepared flash cards with coloured pictures of the items from the song (peas, carrots, apples, strawberries, raspberries, doll, blocks, race car, board game and aeroplane). Pupils were asked to name the items. The ones they did not know, they learnt very quickly. Additionally, pupils were describing the colours of the subjects. For example: "The race car is red and blue and the wheels are black", "The doll has got blond hair, a red dress and a red hat." Apart from practicing vocabulary for fruit, vegetables, toys and colours,

pupils were practicing the grammar structure of “have got/has got”. The pupils reacted very positively to the additional questions, which encouraged the researcher to ask further questions, such as: “Do you like ...?”, “Have you got ..... at home?”, “What toys have you got at home?”, etc. It was obvious that the pupils were challenged and enjoyed such additional questions. Pupils answered with whole sentences, also describing their toys, or briefly explaining why they do not like something. Pupils were given the same flash cards with pictures (uncoloured) for homework to colour according to their own preferences (the next lesson the pupils were asked to describe their pictures).

The researcher gave pupils texts with the song, which they read silently and then aloud. Pupils read the text very well, even the vocabulary and phrases, which were new to them (till, bill, shiny, tray, ripe, queue). The word they had the greatest problem pronouncing was queue, which is not surprising, as it is of French origin. But after practicing pronunciation a few times, pupils adopted the correct pronunciation very well. The meaning of the unknown words was elicited by description or miming. Pupils had no real difficulties with the lyrics of the song. The lyrics of the song were also projected on the white board in front of the classroom.

The researcher played the song to the pupils. Pupils vehemently sang the song several times with and without the CD recording. For revision and fixation, the researcher elicited the pragmatic and sociocultural phrases from the song, by asking pupils how to ask for the final price of their shopping (What will be the final bill?), how to ask a shop assistant for something (I would like...), how to say that they have finished shopping and they are going to pay (Now, I'm going to join the queue.) and how they say that they are going to put their shopping on the desk for the shop assistant (I'll put my things down by the till.). The old and new vocabulary for fruit, vegetables and toys were revised by playing the popular game “Flash”. Pupils compete in pairs one against each other, who is the fastest to say the correct word in English. The slower pupil is out and the fastest of all is the winner.

To conclude, the described technique of learning a song was very successful with the pupils with general intellectual giftedness. We realized that traditional techniques and activities are not stimulating enough for these pupils and additional challenging activities are required. If only traditional techniques and activities are used with talented pupils, then they lose interest very quickly, pay little attention to the lesson and start being restless and impatient. We came to this conclusion from observing previous lessons, when pupils fidgeted and misbehaved when they were not challenged with more demanding activities. The researcher also taught the same song to the pupils in the fourth grade of traditional primary school. The opposite was noticed, which meant that pupils in a traditional class required more traditional approach, such as repetition, very simple questions and not many variations of activities. When there were many variations of activities, pupils became confused and agitated.

Problematic issues identified by the researcher during implementation of the aforementioned technique and activities, was the high tempo by which the pupils reacted to the challenges. The researcher had to react fast to the occurring situations and modify the lesson immediately. Even though the researcher is an experienced English teacher, she found it very challenging to keep up with the speed of those talented pupils. The recommendation is to prepare a lot more extra activities and that the activities should challenge pupils to think and react rapidly. The pupils are naturally competitive – in a positive way - and enjoy doing a great number of activities, where they can utilize their fast thinking and logic.

#### *Games, demonstrating visuals and objects*

The following activities used online games and watching an educational video from YouTube, where pupils observed and noticed particular objects. These techniques and activities were used only

as a part of a lesson in the same week as the previously described “Shopping song” lesson. This lesson was the last - fifth - class on Friday. Therefore the researcher was sympathetic to the timing and chose more relaxing and entertaining activities, which allowed pupils to move around, play and have fun.

According to Pokrivčáková (2013) there is no more attractive teaching technique for pupils than partaking in a game. Games bring positive emotions to the classroom. Along with the amusement and fun, learners practice vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and communication skills. Demonstrating is a technique based on showing and observing real objects, pictures, cards, videos, etc. Objects create a bridge between school and real life and videos give pupils opportunity to listen to the language as it is really used. Video activities are very motivational and provide a break from the usual textbook based activities. Even if the video activities may challenge pupils, learning is more enjoyable.

The “Shopping song” lesson was at the beginning of the week and by Friday most of the pupils had learnt the song by heart. The pupils sang the song very eagerly several times. The researcher gave pupils “tricky” questions about shopping, to which pupils reacted without any problems. Here is an example of a pupil’s answer: “I would like 4 ripe green apples and a tray of strawberries”.

For practicing known and acquiring new vocabulary for fruit, the researcher played pupils an educational video (Pumpkin, 2012). The video lasts three and a half minutes and consists of simple conversations and funny short songs by various types of animated fruit. Pupils reacted with great joy to the video and wanted to watch it several times. Watching the video for a few times was enough for the pupils to acquire and remember new vocabulary for fruit (mango, star fruit, kiwi, pineapple, watermelon). We discussed the newly learnt fruit and also what was said in the video. Pupils found it challenging, but satisfactory, as there were real peoples voices used in the video and the pupils could understand them. Pupils showed no problem understanding the conversations, even though they did not understand everything. This demonstrates their ability to think logically, comprehend the context without understanding every word.

The next activity was an online interactive Pirate board game on fruit vocabulary (ESLGamesPlus, 2013). The researcher presented the game on the interactive board in the classroom. Pupils were used to playing games on the interactive board and they behaved well, waiting reasonably patiently in a queue for their turn. Pupils one by one clicked on the dice to roll. A random number showed up and the ship advanced. There were traps on the way. If they landed on a volcano island or on a pirate, they had to go back to the start. When they landed on an island, a question popped up, which the player had to answer correctly. It was either a picture or pronunciation of a fruit, which the player had to recognize and choose from the multiple choice of words. Pupils had no problem with the questions, never made a mistake, but the landing on volcanoes and pirates kept sending them back to the start. The pupils thought the whole time that they were playing a board game and considered the revision of fruit vocabulary as an easy way to get through the game. The most amazing situation occurred when the bell sounded at end of the lesson. Even though the English class was the final lesson on Friday afternoon, the pupils did not want to stop playing the game, as they were determined to complete it. It took them another half an hour to finish the game, because a lot of times they were sent back to the start. The researcher thought that the pupils would get weary with the game after a while, but she was mistaken as the main aim for the pupils was to win the game. Once the pupils won the game, they were satisfied and allowed the lesson to finish.

There were no problematic issues identified by the researcher. The only minor issue was to keep order in the classroom, as the pupils were moving around the class and sometimes they were impatient to take their turn. The online game and educational video proved to be very suitable techniques



for pupils with general intellectual giftedness. The pupils were engaged the whole time during the presented activities and more remarkably, they did not want to finish playing the game even at the end of the class.

#### *Course book exercises*

The following activities were practicing household vocabulary and grammar structures of "can/can't". A part of the lesson was to practice the mentioned language in exercises from a work book. The techniques of "picture dictionaries" and "close exercises" were used in the work book. In picture dictionaries foreign language words are represented through visual objects. They are especially suitable for weaker pupils, or pupils with learning disabilities (Pokrivčáková, 2013). Close exercises represent a passage of a text in which certain words are omitted. Pupils should complete the text. By fulfilling the close exercise tasks pupils develop their reading, writing skills, vocabulary and grammar (Pokrivčáková, 2012).

The first exercise was using a picture dictionary based exercise. The pictures of items such as a fridge, wardrobe, plate, chair, sink, bin, teapot and cup were cut into pieces like a picture puzzle. There were also written words representing the mentioned items. The aim of the exercise was to connect the pieces of picture items and the corresponding words. This exercise was too simple for the pupils and it took them only a few minutes to complete. The researcher reacted to the situation by asking additional questions with the aim to challenge the pupils and practice vocabulary. Pupils were asked for example about how many chairs they had at home, or how many chairs there were in the classroom, or what colour their wardrobe at home was, whether they had a teapot at home, etc. Pupils reacted very excitedly especially to questions asking about the number of items.

The following close exercise was to complete sentences with words practiced in the previous exercise. The exercise also practiced the grammar structures "can/cannot". The sentences were combining vocabulary items (fridge, wardrobe, plate, chair, sink, bin, teapot and cup), verbs (fly, walk, dance, jump, swim, sing, run) and can/cannot structures. There would be pictures of the items in an action, e.g. walking teapot, flying fridge, dancing chair, etc. Pupils were to complete the sentences, e.g. "A .... can't walk." with a word represented by a picture of a walking teapot. Pupils knew all the words, had no problems with the verbs and can/cannot and completed the exercise very fast. Likewise with the first exercise the researcher had to react to the situation, otherwise the pupils would be bored or restless. The researcher started giving pupils questions about what can/cannot fly, run, walk, etc. Then pupils were working in groups asking each other similar questions.

The mentioned exercises were only to fill a part of the lesson. Based on the teacher's book, the two mentioned exercises were supposed to last for about twenty minutes, but the pupils with general intellectual giftedness managed to do these exercises in about six minutes. The researcher was not prepared beforehand for this situation and she had to react accordingly and improvise. As mentioned before, the speed of pupils, their eagerness and expectations were the greatest challenge to the researcher. With the additional questions from the researcher and work in groups, the pupils' eagerness was satisfied. Pupils especially enjoyed counting items and consequently creating sentences, questions and the fact that they were able to communicate in English.

### **5. Research conclusion**

The current action research was carried out in three individual lessons as a reaction to a longer lasting research phase, where many lessons were observed. Pupils appeared to be unmotivated and restless when there were only simple activities used in the lessons. The researcher attempted to improve the teaching practice by challenging the pupils' abilities.



The answers to research questions summarize the findings. The research questions state:

1. What are the problematic issues in teaching English to pupils with general intellectual giftedness?  
Pupils quickly lost interest, became restless and bored when traditional approach and activities were used.
2. How do pupils with general intellectual giftedness react to the more challenging activities?  
Pupils eagerly cooperated. With the aim to be first to answer, they did not even realize that they were speaking in English.
3. What kinds of activities evoke pupils' engagement and communication skills?  
Activities demanding logical thinking, deduction, counting, and quick responses were attractive for pupils.

In general, it is the matter of approach rather than innovative methods, techniques and activities when it comes to working with pupils with general intellectual giftedness. It was proved in the current research that even the traditional techniques could be executed in more challenging and interesting ways. Pupils reacted positively to a great number of activities and activities challenging their intellectual abilities. When the pupils' interest was roused, they were eagerly creating sentences in English, which was a successful development of communicative skills. After all, working with pupils with general intellectual giftedness is a very demanding task, which requires proficient teachers in language pedagogy and with a high degree of flexibility to adjust to the fast, demanding pupils. However, in order to make the task to teach English to gifted pupils easier, there should be a guide / manual created, or better still an English learning book specifically for pupils with general intellectual giftedness.

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## Translation Equivalents and the process of Comparative Analysis: The Case of *to be able to*

*Abstract: A specific feature of a grammatical category in a Source Language may have several grammatical or lexical equivalents in a Target Language. These different translation equivalents could be considered as signs of the differences in the lexical and grammatical structures of SL and TL. Translation equivalents thus become a part of linguistic analysis. The linguistic significance of translation equivalents is implicitly acknowledged by K. Aijmer (58) who considers translations to be "more accessible and reliable as sources of meaning and uses than native informants since they are produced by trained translators without any theoretical concerns in mind."*

### 1. Introduction

A comparative linguistic analysis incorporating translation equivalents should provide guidelines or rules for the translator suggesting that there are more relevant equivalents of a specific grammatical or lexical feature of SL in TL as well as which linguistic features in SL should be considered to narrow the selection of the equivalents. Such rules or guidelines still provide enough space for translator's creativity, while being of practical use if the specific feature of a SL grammatical category is frequent enough to justify the reasons for a detailed analysis of the different grammatical and lexical equivalents in TL and their subsequent application in the conceptual frame of translation theory.

The above described approach will be demonstrated by different Czech translation equivalents of the past tense of the English periphrastic construction *to be able to* which is well described in English. Two hundred and twenty one Czech translation equivalents of *was able to* found in the Czech National Corpus are not limited to the Czech central modal verb *moci* (can), although there are 52 Czech equivalents with *mohl* (could) confirming J. Coates' conclusion that *be able to* is often associated with the „Ability“ core presumably on morphological grounds (123).

The Czech equivalents of the English construction *to be able to* are considered by Dušková (8.4.) who stipulates the following equivalents:

- a lexical verb *podařit se* (to succeed),
- perfective aspect prefixes,
- other means without a modal verb.

The different Czech translation equivalents may be to a certain degree determined by Czech usage, however the Czech translation equivalents suggested by Dušková imply that the modal meaning of *to be able to* is less important than aspectuality, context and the meaning of the main lexical verb, a view supported by Facchinetti (119) whose extensive monolingual-corpora based analysis of *to be able to* is considered further on.

Facchinetti's approach helps clarify the differences between our method of an applied linguistic analysis incorporating translation equivalents and an approach quantifying specific language data according to their form in monolingual corpora which are subsequently compared to their a priori established meanings and functions. Not all the hits of the construction *to be able to* established by Facchinetti are relevant for our analysis incorporating translation equivalents, specifically the examples of *be able to* suppletive to *can* in a non-finite verb pattern where *be able to* functions like

a modal verb when the paradigm of *can* is defective (118). If *to be able to* only widens the range of syntactic patterns supplanting *can* without a change of the modal meaning it does not impact Czech translation equivalents.

Facchinetti (123) makes the difference between the syntactically and contextually determined use of *to be able to* a focal point of her analysis, claiming that „When *be able to* is used in contexts which are syntactically available also for the modal verb, in majority of cases the two patterns feature different semantic values.“ This assertion seems to blur the concept of the analysis, *can* *to be able to* should only be compared in mutually complementary syntactic patterns with the same meaning, in all other cases *to be able to* has its specific meaning or meanings and its comparison with *can* is morphologically based.

## 2. Contextuality and Actuality

The use of *was able to* in the contexts implying actuality will be further analysed. The meaning of the periphrastic construction suggested by Duková (8.44.11) is not the skill itself but something that has been achieved with this skill or ability, if this is the case in the past only *was/were able* is used instead of *could*, paraphrasable as *managed to*, *succeeded in*. The common agreement is endorsed by Facchinetti (118) who mentions the most common terms describing the same contextually dependent meaning: single action, implication of actuality, dynamic use and emphasis (of the idiom) on achievement.

The Czech central modal verb *mohl (could)* is an imperfectivum tantum and does not emphasize the achievement as all the relevant Czech translation equivalents would do. English compensates the absence of the perfective aspect by expressing achievement/actuality with the lexical verbs *manage to*, *succeed in* or *was able to*, the view is upheld by K. Aijmer (72), who states, that *Manage to has not developed the meaning possibility* more than in a few contexts but has developed aktionsart meaning while *be able to* is either modal or an aktionsart marker.

The irrelevance of the following translation equivalent with the modal imperfectivum tantum *mohl (could/would)* found in the bilingual *Český národní korpus - InterCorp* without the semantic component emphasizing achievement supports the theoretical assumption.

(a) *With no power, but with three energetic paddlers helping her own more skilful blade, Ruby was able to get a quarter of this speed.*

(b) *Bez motoru, jen silami tři energických veslařů pomáhajících jejímu zkušenějšímu pádlu, by mohla (could/would) Ruby vyvinout čtvrtinu takové rychlosti.*

Another rule by Boyd H. Davis and Jeutonne Brewer (107) establishes a lexical and morphological restriction stating that *can* is compulsory when preceding the verbs of inert perception and cognition (*think, see, feel, know, find, understand*). There is the same frequently repeated assertion with the verbs referring to the five senses, *see, hear, smell, feel, taste*, and with verbs that refer to thought processes, *understand, believe, remember, decide*, when *could* is normally used even when we are talking about specific occasions.

However, an analysis of our ad hoc corpus of the contemporary written English shows the ratio of 3% of *was able to understand* compared to 97% of *could understand*. This ratio rises significantly to 15% when the usage of *was able to understand the situation/could understand the situation* is considered.

The morphologically and lexically determined rule of the semantic collocability of potentiality (*can*) and inert cognition (*understand*) seems to be overrun by the need to emphasize the achievement with *was able to understand* owing to the contextually dependent *the situation*. This

assumption will be strengthened if *was able to* does not occur in generic contexts with an indefinite article (*a situation*). An analysis of our ad hoc corpus seems to confirm it, *could understand a situation* has 26 hits while there is no trustworthy case of *was able to understand a situation*.

There is a Czech translation equivalent using a lexical verb to emphasize achievement, *dokázal sledovat* (*managed to/succeeded in following*) of *was able to understand* in (d) below accessed in *Český národní korpus - InterCorp*.

(c) *A September sun was shining through a mix of haze and smallish , gray-keeled clouds, and to the extent that Gary was able to understand and track his neurochemistry (and he was a vice president at CenTrust Bank , not a shrink , let 's remember ) his leading indicators all seemed rather healthy.*

(d) *Směsicí mlžných, malých mráčků s našedlými kýly probleskovalo slunce a Garymu - do té míry, do níž chápal a dokázal sledovat neurochemické procesy ve svém těle (byl zástupce ředitele banky CenTrust a žádný neřůba, na to nezapomínejte) – všechny rozhodující ukazatele naznačovaly, že je v zásadě zdravý.*

The context of (c) above may serve as an example of another meaning mentioned by K. Aijmer (72) with *was able to* implying that when the speaker states that he was able to do something more than actuality is implied, namely that there was an obstacle to overcome and the action is the successful result of an effort to overcome the obstacle. This statement must be supported by an analysis of the contexts explicitly mentioning an obstacle. Although K. Aijmer's claim is not limited to private verbs a cursory analysis of the contexts of *was able to understand* in British National Corpus establishes the presence of a condition required for successful understanding. The contexts of 10 hits include the adverbials *still, but now, once, however*, adverbial phrase *in the hope that* and so on. An obstacle is explicit in (c), cf. *to the extent that Gary was able to understand and track his neurochemistry (he was (not) a shrink)*. Although the Czech equivalent changes the polarity of the sentence owing to a misinterpretation of the word *a shrink*, it implies a presence of an obstacle (he did not have a medical education).

### 3. Context and Implementation

English adverbials in SL and the Czech equivalents do confirm that something more than actuality is implied, namely that there was an obstacle to overcome. The Czech equivalents confirm the hypothesis with the frequent equivalents *podařit se* (*succeed in*), *dokázat* (*manage to*).

There are, however, in the bilingual corpus translation equivalents of *was able to* with the Czech central modal verb *moci* (*can*), some of them irrelevant because the translator associates the periphrastic construction with ability, translating the main lexical verb as a potential and not an implemented process or event. Nevertheless, the *Český národní korpus - InterCorp*. includes Czech translation equivalents with the verb *moci* (*can*) which seem relevant in spite of the fact that the Czech verb *moci* (*can*) cannot be used in the translation equivalents implying achievement involving an obstacle, cf.:

(e) *The tram does not become crowded until it has crossed the river at the steel bridge opposite Tanibashi Station, and so, when Dr Saito boarded one stop after us, he was able to take a vacant seat beside me.*

(f) *Když tedy na další zastávce přistoupil pan Saitó, mohl se ještě posadit na volné místo vedle mě.*

The context of (e) not only does not imply an obstacle but explicitly expresses its absence, and it uses the same construction *was able to* as the sentence (c) with a very similar context but explicitly implying the presence of an obstacle and emphasizing achievement.

- (g) *For most of the journey, Edward had stood, for it seemed every time he was able to take a seat, an elderly woman would flag down the bus and he would rise and offer her his seat* (Stinson, E. Humphrey, 60).

The Czech translation equivalents differentiate rigorously between the contexts emphasizing the obstacle and achievement (*podařil se*) and the contexts expressing the absence of an obstacle (*mohl*). Consequently, we have to broaden the theoretical assumption of the contextual meaning, it is evident that *was able to* is contextually dependent and it is used if the context explicates any specific conditions under which the event was implemented, the context becomes an important lexical component participating in the reading and translation of the periphrastic construction *was able to*.

The broad definition explains the usage of *was able to* such cases when the meaning can be expressed as habitual as well.

- (h) *She had had of experience listening to voices ...* *She was able to draw several conclusions about a person based strictly on his or her inflections.* (Brown, 44)

Semantic weakening of the modal meaning of *was able to* is indicated by the Czech translation equivalents relying on the context.

Further on the Czech translation equivalents from *Český národní korpus – InterCorp.* will be examined as the signs of the differences in the lexical and grammatical structures of SL and TL. The relevant Czech equivalents focus on the aspectuality of *was able to*, sometimes not referring to the semantic content of the context and translating only the main lexical verb in perfective aspect.

Above Dušková is quoted saying that the Czech equivalents of *was able to* do not include the central modal verb *moci*. However, there are 58 Czech translation equivalents translated with *moci* out of 221 English hits with the verb *was able to*, some of the translation equivalents are clearly irrelevant, cf. *Bez motoru ... by mohla Ruby vyvinout čtvrtinu takové rychlosti. With no power ... Ruby was able to get a quarter of this speed*, but in some cases the verb *moci* and the main lexical verb seem acceptable within the specific context. The Czech verb *moci* (Grepel, Miroslav and Karlík, Petr, 181) is a modal verb expressing permission (somebody cancelled the restriction valid for the implementation/non-implementation of the specific activity the agent is motivated to implement or not to implement). Cf. the following examples with *mohla* as a translation equivalent of *she was able to* in *Český národní korpus – InterCorp.*

- (i) *... so she stopped struggling, and that kind of threw him off guard, and she was able to escape.*  
(j) *... a tak se s ním přestala prát, a von si přestal dávat pozor, nó, a vona pak mohla utýct.*

The example does not imply there is an obstacle to overcome, on the contrary its absence is explicated (*threw him off guard*) and the Czech equivalent, reassessing the type of modality, transposes the apparent dynamic modality of *was able to* by denotic modality (the circumstances allowed him/her to sit down/escape), and suggests actuality and possible implementation of the activity as well. It is acceptable as a translation equivalent because it explicitly expresses implementation of the event under specific conditions.

We shall examine in a greater detail the degree of equivalency between the Czech modal verb and the context of the sentence in SL.

The absence of an obstacle in the SL sentence results in the Czech translation equivalent expressing explicitly deontic modality with the verb *moci* and possible implementation of the event. The translation equivalent is not therefore accidental and reveals the intention of the translator to separate the construction *was able to* into the semantic constituents of aspectuality and implementation. If the context explicates specific conditions enabling the implementation of the event the translation equivalents transpose the contextual meaning with the deontic verb *moci*.

(k) *The long-awaited riot ... was able to break out openly and run its course unhindered.*

(l) *Dávno očekávána vzpoura ... mohla otevřeně propuknout a nerušeně probíhat.*

The other most frequent Czech translation equivalents are *dokázat* (manage to), (37x) and *podařit se* (succeed in), (28x). Dušková suggests above they express an achievement through skills or ability. The Czech equivalents from *Český národní korpus – InterCorp.* broaden the definition using the verbs in the contexts excluding the skill or ability meanings.

(m) *In this position he was able to lower himself gingerly into sleep.*

(n) *V této poloze se mu konečně podařilo vrávoravě upadnout do spánku.*

(o) *She dropped the lid of the tea canister twice before she was able to replace it properly.*

(p) *Dvakrát upustila víčko od krabičky s čajem, než se jí podařilo pořádně ji zavřít.*

The selection of lexical verbs (*podařilo*) in the above given examples confirm the semantic weakening of the modal meaning of *to be able to* if the context emphasises achievement. Synonymous with *podařit se* and *dokázat* is the Czech translation equivalent *zvládnout* (3x).

Although the verb *zvládnout* in perfective aspect expresses the semantic constituents of aspectuality and therefore implementation there is an evident need in some translation equivalents to express the perceived modal meaning of ability of *was able to* as well. The Czech translation then repeats the componential meaning „achievement through ability“, cf.

(q) *Operating the board was second nature to her, so she was able to do all this while continuing her conversation with Dean about Gavin.*

(r) *Obsluhovat mixážní pult pro ni bylo druhou přirozeností, a tak byla schopná tohle všechno zvládnout a přitom si povídat s Deanem o Gavinovi.*

The Czech equivalent *být schopen* (to be capable) is frequent (23 out of 221 examples from *Český národní korpus - InterCorp.*). We have analysed the Czech equivalents to find out whether the contexts of the SL examples might not, in spite of our theoretical premises, emphasise the semantic component “ability”. The Czech equivalent (t) exemplifies that when the componential meaning of ability is emphasized by the Czech equivalent, the meaning of the translation equivalent is at least ambiguous as it does not express the implementation of the event and the modal *byl schopen* suggest potentiality of the event only.

(s) *By 1960, he was able to prove that CO2 was indeed on the rise.*

(t) *Už v roce 1960 byl schopen doložit, že CO2 je na vzestupu.*

If the context elsewhere does not explicate the event implementation, or if this meaning is not emphasize by a lexical verb then there is an inadequate shift of meaning from actuality to potentiality in the Czech translation.

#### 4. Conclusion

Our analysis of the translation equivalent in TL seems to suggest that different translation equivalents signify differences in the lexical and grammatical structures of SL and TL and inclusion of translation equivalents to linguistic analysis may be useful for a comparative analysis applied to translation.

The different translation equivalents of a single specific grammatical or lexical structure of SL may have different reasons. In the analysed example of the periphrastic construction *was able to* there are several meanings and functions to be considered: a) aspectuality (implementation of an event), b) a specific context with explicitly expressed conditions determining the event, c) achievement linked to overcoming an obstacle, d) explicitly expressed absence of an obstacle, e) a single non-aspectual event as a part of a general ability or habitual behaviour and probably other contextually determined meanings.



The Czech translation equivalents interpreting the meaning of *was able to* as a modal periphrastic construction resulted in actuality-potentiality shift. The irrelevant translation equivalents emphasizing modal meaning confirm its absence in the SL contexts.

The other Czech equivalents read *was able to* as a component of a complex contextual meaning translating the aspectuality with a main lexical verb in perfective aspect. The transposition of the aspectual grammatical meaning of *was able to* by a lexical verb or perfective suffix is complemented by further transpositions because the actuality of *was able to* is determined by any specific condition under which the event was implemented. The absence of an obstacle is frequently emphasized by a modal verb with a transposition from ability to deontic modality.

The Czech translation equivalents seem to confirm those analyses of the meaning of *was able to* which stress its predominant grammatical function as a sort of analytical marker of the perfective aspect (aktionsart). The different Czech equivalents complementary distributed according to the contexts explicating the presence or absence of an obstacle suggest a more precise description of the contextual meaning determining the use of *was able to*. The analysis of the TL translation equivalents of a carefully described specific morphological-lexical feature in SL provides the guidelines determining TL translation equivalents in several generic contexts.

## Notes

1. The web page *books.google.com* lists from the books published in 20th century 702 000 phrases *could understand* and 19 100 *was able to understand*, 467 phrases *could understand*

*the situation* and 31 *was able to understand the situation*.

2. The verbs of inert perception are not considered here.

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## Literature and Second Language Acquisition: A New Didactic Model in Actual School Environment

*Abstract: The present paper aims to introduce a research project aimed at the creation of ELT materials based on a new didactic model for the optimal use of L2 literature in the foreign language classroom and their verification in the actual school environment. The research project is related to a previous research conducted at the Faculty of Education Charles University in Prague in cooperation with several Czech grammar schools (2007–2009) (Skopečková). The 2007–2009 research resulted in the creation and verification of a new didactic model reflecting the new curricular documents and combining aspects of EFL methodology and literary scholarship. The new research question is whether the new ELT materials are more effective in the foreign language classroom and whether these materials might have a positive effect on students' approach to the whole subject and thus improve their conditions for second language acquisition.*

### A Follow-Up Research

Field-specific methodology “has always been considered as a sort of borderline case, i.e. as an independent discipline at the seam of two or more subject areas” (Příšová 147). This multidimensional and at the same time somewhat elusive character is especially relating to the methodology of foreign language teaching. The field of foreign language teaching has evolved from and been inevitably interwoven with disciplines like psychology, pedagogy and linguistics (Hendrich 20). Especially linguistics has dominated the field of foreign language teaching and influenced many aspects of foreign language class procedures and materials, including L2 literary texts<sup>1</sup>. Despite the fact that currently L2 literary texts have become an almost inseparable part of foreign language curricula<sup>2</sup>, its real use in the foreign language classroom is still full of certain doubts. Following the results of a research conducted at the Faculty of Education Charles University in Prague in cooperation with several Czech grammar schools (2007–2009), foreign language teachers feel still somewhat uncertain about the notions of literature *interpretation*, *reception* of a literary text or its use in the foreign language classroom (Skopečková 145). What is more, a sort of “language-literature dichotomy” has evolved in many university departments and other educational institutions all over the world, including the Czech Republic:

As language teachers are encouraged to help their students not only to read texts for information, but to interpret them for their many layers of meaning, it would seem natural to draw on literature as a means of teaching language. Yet some teachers still feel hesitant to use literary texts in the language classroom. Their hesitation is often reflex of academic self-defence. As language teachers are told they are competent only to teach language, not literature. (Kramsch 7)

Consequently, the majority of language teachers is rather reluctant to use authentic L2 literary texts in class themselves, i.e. to create their own ELT materials using literary texts.

The new research project is then a sort of follow-up to this previous 2007–2009 research, whose aim was to help foreign language teachers and identify a potentially ideal combination of the disciplines related to the field of literature teaching and the use of literature in the foreign language classroom,

i.e. EFL methodology, literary scholarship as well as the outcomes and intentions of the new curricular documents. The 2007–2009 research resulted in the creation and verification of a didactic model for the optimal use of English literature in the EFL classroom in the context of the current trends and changes of the Czech school curriculum and in compliance with the specific features of literature. Nevertheless, the research raised also several questions resulting particularly from the very process of its verification in the real school environment.

### **Research Project, Goals and Research Questions**

As mentioned above, the objective of the new research project is to tackle these questions that have been evoked and reflect the very process of the verification of the new didactic model in the classroom context, i.e. to respond to the results of the encounter of the theoretical aspects and disciplines relating to the field and the *actual* school environment. Accordingly, we aim to create and verify new ELT materials using literary texts based on the new model in the actual EFL classroom in order to find out whether the new ELT materials are going to be *more effective* in the foreign language classroom and whether these materials will really have a *positive effect* on students' approach to the whole subject and thus *improve their conditions for second language acquisition*. In other words, in compliance with the new didactic model we will adapt<sup>3</sup> authentic L2 literary texts for the use in the EFL classroom, use them in the EFL classroom to support the learning process and finally complement and/or amend them with respect to the results of their classroom verification. On that account, the research project implies cooperation with grammar school teachers and their students to provide the necessary school/classroom context and immediate feedback.

### **Context and Theoretical Foundations**

The new didactic model combines aspects of the above mentioned disciplines including the role of literature in education, its specific position in the foreign language classroom or the issue of reading, but also the basic principles of reception theory and Wolfgang Iser's approach to the process of reading and reception. The model reflects also the results of a detailed analysis followed by a comprehensive comparison of the old and new curricular documents with respect to the role and inclusion of foreign language literature (cf. Skopečková 2010). The optimal use of English literature in the EFL classroom implies, however, not only an ideal combination of the disciplines related to the field, but also the conditions and requirements of the real school/classroom environment.

In order to verify the new ELT materials in such an environment, it is essential to consider and explore several aspects of the school/classroom environment itself. First of all, it is important to focus on its participants, i.e. the teacher as well as the student, but also the EFL teaching objectives and educational goals or the general educational circumstances because all that definitely plays a role and determines particular classroom techniques and procedures, material selection and finally also the outcomes and effects of education, including the quality of second language acquisition. As far as the individual participants of the EFL classroom are concerned, we are equally interested in both, the teacher and the student. Namely, we want to analyse the teacher's but also the student's attitude and perception of L1 and L2 literature:

Whereas literary theorists' views of literature have informed educators' perceptions of literature and the pedagogy of literary texts, students' views of literature have rarely informed pedagogical practice or theory. (...) Awareness of students' perceptions of literature empowers language arts

educators to incorporate students' views in the syllabus and engage in class discussion to highlight different points of view and how these views may affect their learning. (...) students' perceptions serve as a catalyst for discussion and further expansion of students' and teachers' understanding of the object of study: literature. (Carroli 32)

Nevertheless, also the teacher's experience and educational background play definitely an important role. In terms of the actual EFL classroom and material selection it is undoubtedly also the student level of L2 proficiency, the size of the group of students and other significant factors reflecting also the educational goals and standards determined by the curricular documents. Last but not least, we will examine L2 literary texts already used in the actual EFL classroom in order to identify key features of these texts and their concrete use in the language classroom. In the EFL classroom, we usually distinguish texts according to their structure, topic, text type, the level of authenticity or the reading strategy employed, etc. In particular, we would like to find out, whether and to what degree the actually used L2 literary texts have been adapted for the EFL classroom by the teacher him or herself. Secondly, we want to examine, what sort of text types these texts usually represent and how often the teacher uses them in the classroom. Finally, we want to recognize, what purpose these texts really have in the language classroom, i.e. what teaching objectives and educational goals they meet or help to accomplish.

Naturally, L2 literary texts assume different forms and importance in the EFL classroom. Usually, they are used as a sort of additional or final text completing a topic, for illustration or introduction of the cultural and historical background, to practise extensive reading, etc. (Skopeczková 68–75). Nonetheless, their position and role in the language classroom has currently been rather stabilized and no one really argues against them:

Many arguments have been made in recent years for including literary texts in the reading taught in language classes. More than any other text, it is said, the piece of literary prose or poetry appeals to the students' emotions, grabs their interest, remains in their memory and makes them partake in the memory of another speech community. (Kramsch 130)

The only question is then, how to use these texts in order to follow the educational standards and requirements of curricular documents on the one hand and to respect the specific features of literature on the other hand (cf. the specificity of literature in Skopeczková). Moreover, as far as L2 literary texts are concerned, another frequently discussed and somewhat *thorny* issue emerges, i.e. the level of authenticity of these texts and the subject of graded readers and their *im/possible* use in the EFL classroom. This long-running and often rather heated discussion was also one of the reasons for the creation of the new didactic model, which introduces authentic L2 literature respecting at the same time the specificity of literature as well as ELT methodology.

Applying the new didactic model to the new literary ELT materials, the actual classroom environment will be confronted with the theoretical aspects related to the field of L2 literature in the language classroom. In other words, the new literary ELT materials will reflect key principles of EFL methodology, i.e. communicative competence and language skills development (including reading), reading comprehension and particularly differences between reading in L1 and L2. These materials will, however, comply also with particular aspects of literary scholarship, i.e. literature and its role in education, the specificity of literature, the reception of literature and "the unique interaction between the text and the reader" (Cook 256), reception aesthetics and the *multivocality* of literary work and

the introduction of the reader into the process of literature reception as well as the principles of Wolfgang Iser's reception aesthetics, i.e. "literature as a specific phenomenon evoking always new possibilities of reception and interpretation with respect to a concrete reader in a given time and context" (Skopeczková 20). Finally, the ELT materials have to adhere to the outcomes and intentions of the new curricular documents, i.e. RVP G/ZV and ŠVP (Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education-Grammar School/for Elementary Education and School Education Programme), the position of L2 literature in the language classroom and the new curricular documents and the comparison of old and new curricular documents with respect to L2 literature.

## Methodology

The research is divided into two phases. Each phase has its particular focus leading to the ultimate research objective: in brief, during the first phase we will explore the actual use of literary texts in the EFL classroom at Czech grammar schools and during the second one – being divided into two stages – we will create and then verify the new ELT materials.

From the theoretical point of view, we will follow the principles of *analytical induction*. Accordingly, the research starts with the formulation of the research problem, i.e. the creation and verification of new ELT materials using literary texts based on the new didactic model in the actual EFL classroom. Following the primary data based on the previous 2007–2009 research, we will formulate our hypothesis for each research phase:

**H1** *Foreign language teachers primarily use L2 literary texts that are part of a textbook or another already prepared language material (often graded readers) and less often use and prepare L2 literary texts themselves using authentic literature.*

And for the second phase of our research:

**H2** *Foreign language teachers who have been acquainted with the principles of the new didactic model are able to prepare L2 literary texts for the EFL classroom using authentic literature themselves and are inclined to use it more often.*

**H3** *Using such L2 materials has a positive effect on students' approach to the whole subject and thus improves the conditions for second language acquisition.*

The next step is the examination of the primary data, i.e. to start with a smaller group of participants, in order to verify the hypothesis itself and if necessary to modify it with respect to the obtained data. Afterwards, the original group of participants will be expanded and hypothesis verified until we get its acceptable formulation and the hypothesis is finally proved (Gavora 142).

From the empirical point of view, the research will in the first place employ qualitative methods representing a much more personal approach, which corresponds to the research objective. Nevertheless, in order to achieve the necessary level of objectivity and complementarity we will apply also quantitative methods.

In particular, during the first phase that focuses on the actual use of literary texts in the EFL classroom at Czech grammar schools we will use the method of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview in order to: first of all analyse L2 literary materials already used in the language classroom and secondly to find out more about the teachers', but at the same time also about the students' attitude and perception of L1 and L2 literature. As implied above, we want to study teachers' as well as students' reading habits, individual views and experience not only with L2, but also with L1 literature. What is more, also the *outside-the-classroom* experience of the participants is important. Employing

the method of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview has proved as an ideal combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for the above mentioned purpose.

The second phase of our research has in fact two stages, i.e. the creation of literary ELT materials and their verification. Following the results of the first phase and the basic principles of the new didactic model, we will create the new ELT materials using literary texts in order to verify them in the actual school/classroom environment. For that reason, we will apply the method of experiment accompanied by the methods of questionnaire, semi-structured interview and observing<sup>4</sup>. The experimental method seems ideal for the process of ELT materials verification in the actual classroom environment, i.e. in order to *measure* the positive effect of such materials on students' approach to the whole subject and the improvement of the conditions for second language acquisition. To verify these methods and the prepared ELT materials, a pilot study will be carried out in the first place.

### **Expected Results and Findings**

The data obtained during the individual phases of the research will be interpreted and analysed with respects to the efficiency of these new ELT materials in the foreign language classroom and their compliance with the specific aspects concerning the use of literary texts in the foreign language classroom. In other words, we would like to find out whether teachers are able to create the above mentioned ELT materials themselves and whether their students prefer such ELT materials (to the ones used before). Furthermore, we want to ascertain whether students attending classes taught by a teacher who prepares such ELT materials him/herself really adopt a more positive attitude to the whole subject and thus improve their conditions for second language acquisition:

Foreign language learners have to be exposed to different types of texts, from the most conventional to the most particular, but if they are eventually to find their own voice in the foreign language and culture, literary texts can offer them models of particularity and opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning. (Kramsch 131)

### **Conclusion**

The position of L2 literary texts in the foreign language classroom has undergone many often dramatic changes reflecting always a particular methodology and a concrete theoretical approach. Currently, L2 literature has become an almost inseparable part of foreign language curricula, including the new curricular documents. The question is, whether literary texts have always been used in accordance with the *specific aspects of L2 literature* (Skopeczkova). The proposed research aims to develop a didactic model for the optimal use of L2 literary texts in the foreign language classroom that will be favourable to teachers as well as students and will contribute to the improvement of conditions for second language acquisition. In other words, the objective of our research project is to contribute to the development of foreign language education and a field-specific methodology whose "primary mission is not really an optimization or formulation of a preferred solution, but something else – self-knowledge." (Choděra 9)

## Notes

1. The abbreviation L2 stands for second language. In the present paper, L2 literary texts imply literature in the English language (i.e. not only English and American literature, but also Northern Irish literature or postcolonial literature, etc.).
2. RVP G (Framework Education Programme for Secondary General Education-Grammar School) and RVP ZV 2007 (Framework Education Programme for Elementary Education) represent the new curricular documents introducing educational goals and standards reflecting the new trends and changes of the Czech school curriculum, including the field of foreign language teaching. Accordingly, we often use the notion of foreign language curricula.
3. The phrase *adapt* or *adaptation* of L2 literary

texts refers here to the process of a preparation of a literary text for classroom use, i.e. to accompany the text with adequate pre-, while- and post-reading questions and tasks in accordance with ELT principles as well as the principles of reception aesthetics of Wolfgang Iser (i.e. bases of the new didactic model). It is important to distinguish between this sort of adaptation of a literary text, i.e. its preparation for classroom use, and adaptation typical of graded readers that reduce all complicated structures and vocabulary, including local expressions, etc. resulting often in the creation of a new text deprived of its originality and the author's voice.

4. The individual steps and a detailed research plan will be part of a follow-up research paper.

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## Effective Support of Learner-centredness in Primary Schools in Slovakia

*Abstract: The paper introduces the study on the learner-centred approach in teaching English as a foreign language in primary schools in Slovakia and presents its current state. The theoretical framework of this paper concentrates on the background of learner-centred teaching (LCT), its important underlying theories and main principles of LCT teaching. It also presents research regarding the topic. The aim of the study was to find out if implementation of a learner-centred approach has a positive impact on the development of language skills of learners and their emotional experience in the English language classes. The research sites represent five classes of third graders at two elementary schools in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia who are learning English as their foreign language. The research lasted for half of the school year (from February to June) starting with the pre-test before the study and post-test after the study.*

The reason for choosing to conduct this study is that there have been rapid educational changes regarding teaching English over the last 20 years in Slovakia. In 2011 The Educational Act (Butašova, 2007) regarding the language policy in schools was established, affecting the topic being explored. This act stated that teaching the English language to all Slovak third graders would be mandatory. The problem with this law is that previous research in this area had not been conducted and they were asking teachers who were not qualified, to teach English in the elementary schools. However, there has been a project called *Koncepcia vyučovania cudzích jazykov v základných a stredných školách* / Training of Primary School Teachers in Foreign Languages in the context of the Conception of Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary and Secondary Education/ running from 2008–2013 in which teachers were becoming qualified to teach English in primary schools from first grade to fourth grade. Since it was a new topic and the teachers were getting qualified while they were teaching, there is a need for this topic to be examined more carefully with the support of research. Second, there are many theoretical backgrounds presented on the topic of LCT in general, but we have only a few empirical studies connected to the topic, and even less to teaching English at the elementary level in Slovakia. The third reason is that the learner-centred approach is widely applied in international schools and results in incredible improvements in the learners' progress of English. It seems that Slovak mainstream schools still provide an English educational classes that are teacher-directed and content-driven to the detriment of learner-centred approach.

### 1. Characteristics of the learner-centred teaching

Teaching the English language as a foreign language has seen many changes over the last 100 years. Different types of methods, approaches and techniques such as grammar-translation method, audiolingual method, direct method, and many more have been introduced and optimizing learning in the foreign language teaching community. Each of these techniques is unique and provides innovative approaches to learning a foreign language.

Now looking back, all of the methods and teaching styles led to conventional teaching with input-oriented curriculum design and an emphasis on the description of the course content with its focus on the teachers, classroom organization, procedures that left a little attention to the learner, and finally their individual differences and needs. It was not until the emergence of humanistic psychology that the teaching process moved in favour of a learner and their uniqueness. The cornerstones of



humanistic psychology put an emphasis on affective and personal factors of a learner that determine the success of the learning process and a belief that everything done in a class has to benefit an individual learner. (Lojová, 2005). It was Carl Rogers, the main protagonist of humanistic psychology and the father of client-centred counselling, who is associated with expanding the approach of student-centredness into the areas of English didactics. A chapter in his 1951 book *Client-Centred Therapy*, "Student-centred teaching," discusses the evolution of his thinking and principles about teaching that became the source of today's approach on centredness of learning.

Nunan emphasizes the fact that learner-centredness is not "an all-or-nothing concept". It is essential to realize that learner-centredness is not about handing over power, responsibility and control to students from Day 1. Rather, it is "a matter of educating learners so they can gradually assume greater responsibility for their own learning" (Nunan 53). Learners are therefore with consistent work of a teacher on skills and knowledge prepared for taking responsibility and control over their own learning step by step.

Likewise, LCT might work as a prepared set of principles and techniques but they need to be adjusted it to the specific context and conditions in a given classroom. So therefore it is important for teachers first adapt the strategies, techniques and activities to their students instead of adopting them (see Nunan, 2012, Tudor, 2006, Weimer, 2013, Campbell – Kryszewska, 1992, Brandes – P.Ginnis, 1996).

## **1.2 Main principles of learner-centred teaching**

Learner-centredness is seen as an approach that requires changes in thinking and it might work as a prepared set of principles, techniques and rules that has to be adjusted to the specific context and conditions in a given classroom. It is essential to point out that learner-centredness should not be labelled as "a single, clearly delimited school of thought with unambiguous definitions and a clear programme of action....learner-centredness should rather be seen in terms of a broad church or community of believers who share main sets of concerns" (Tudor 1). Campbell and Kryszewska (1992) see the learner-centred teaching either as the one and only method used in the classroom or as complementary activities to coursebooks or as an emergency kit to deal with unpredictable situations in a language classroom. Moreover, Nunan (2012) emphasizes the fact that learner-centredness is not "an all-or-nothing concept". It is essential to realize that learner-centredness is not about handing over power, responsibility and control to students from Day 1. Rather, it is "a matter of educating learners so they can gradually assume greater responsibility for their own learning" (Nunan 53). Learners are accordingly with consistent work of a teacher on skills and knowledge prepared for taking responsibility and control over their own learning step by step. Therefore, its effectiveness depends on the involvement of learners and teaching procedure that needs to be adjusted to the needs, characteristics and expectations of the learner with purpose of connecting learning with everyday life of learners.

The principles of nature of learner centredness are best described by Campbell and Kryszewska (1992) and are following: 1. The potential of the learner – every learner brings his wealth of ideas, experiences, opinions and areas of expertise into the class, which are "adoptable materials" for the relevance and topicality of the learning language; 2. Constant needs analysis – throughout the lesson the chosen activities might show the missing gaps in the knowledge of the learners that a teacher can freely incorporate into the following lesson; 3. Topicality – learner-based teaching allows us to introduce local or international issues which interests the particular group of the learners. Its importance lies in the fact that no course book has up-to-date materials to cover such topics; 4. Learners as authors – involvement of students in creating their own materials for language learning is a factor



of motivation that engages students own creativity; 5. Pace – learner-centred teaching provides an open discussion with students on what they want to work on and how much time they want to spend with the certain topic; 6. Peer teaching and correction – activities in learner-centred teaching should allow learners to cooperate together and listen to each other. Even though there are always different levels and backgrounds of English within the group, learners can always learn from each other and are encourage to develop their social skills; 7. Group solidarity – learners are supported in favour of motivating each other and respecting themselves, and therefore they are expected to know how to adapt this knowledge and experience in a real-life situations.

### **1.3 Young learners in the learner-centred classroom**

It needs to be highlighted that in a good learner-centred classroom young learners need to work on foreign language tasks that are meaningful, attractive and require the active participation of the learners (Cameron, 2001, Moon, 2005, Pinter, 2006). First of all, learners can be motivated to speak by incorporating topics and things into the class that are relevant to their lives. It means that a learner will be interested to work on the task because they can find connection with it. The primary aged learner starts taking up hobbies and activities they enjoy or have an interest in, and therefore, they want to express their new experiences and impressions from new things in their life.

Second, learners have to find a purpose and goal in a task they do, and it has to make sense to them. Their view on the world is changing and they sense that the world is governed by rules that need to be kept. If they do not see purpose or goal, they lose motivation, and they just do the task for task itself because it is an assignment, not for themselves and their own joy.

Third, learners need authentic materials that are up-to-date and suitable for their age and interest. It even more enhancing if the topics covered and vocabulary learned in the class is also connected with their hobbies and interests outside the classroom. It is in this stage of their life that their personality is starting to be formed, and if the classwork connects to the real life outside the class then enormous progress will be made in the learning process of a child. Lastly, young learners are naturally curious and want to find answers for an indefinite numbers of questions. If a teacher supports their curiosity through tasks that requires thinking, learners can acquire not only a new language but also new facts. In conclusion, when the entire learning process is personalized and learners talk about themselves in a foreign language, it leads to the increased motivation to express and eagerness of improving themselves in a foreign language.

## **2. Research design**

A quantitative research design (Merriam, 2009) was used to explore if implementation of LCT principles into an English language classroom had a positive impact on learner's language skills development (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and their emotional experience in the English class. The research sample were learners from two elementary schools, specifically five classes of third graders. Within five classes, there were two experimental groups and three control groups.

It was a quasi-experiment (a technically modified research), because the schools for the study were not randomly chosen. The reason for choosing a quasi-experiment type of research is that only a few of the asked schools were willing to cooperate; furthermore, following conditions for schools were set – schools had to have multiple sections within one grade and each section was divided into two groups for the English language instructions; the same teacher had to teach in all groups originally which were compared to reduce all the variables that could have arisen.

The research lasted for half of the school year (from February to June) starting with the pre-test

before the study and post-test after the study. The tests used in the study examined the language skills of the learners and their emotional experience in the English class. The language skills (listening, reading, writing) were tested by the test Farebný test z angličtiny /The colourful test of English/ and speaking skills were evaluated separately. The emotional experience in the English class was modified Zelina's Questionnaire DEP. All of the tests were qualitative-based and the results from pre-test and post-test of all the groups were compared. The data from the tests were collected into an excel chart and put into the SPSS program that was further proceed with the Independent-samples t-test that were used either reject or approve the hypotheses. For now, the results of the study are being processed as it is the final stage of the research design.

### 3. Conclusion

Learner-centredness is about attitudes and relationships; especially when a teacher starts using the ideas of LCT the very first time. This transition from the teacher-centred continuum towards the learner-centredness takes time and requires experience, a risk-taking personality and being able to adjust to new learning styles and teaching techniques. Most critically, teaching community should realize that learner-centred teaching offers ideas and solution to the particular class and its uniqueness. The ideas and principles of learner-centred teaching, therefore, need to be adopted with caution and with the familiarity of the particular group of learners and their personal preferences take into consideration their background and thinking. In a way, learner-centred teaching is a process that cannot be black or white but it is a continuum of development of the teacher and their learners.

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## Digital Tagging and Discourse Theory

*Abstract: Tagging, i.e. attaching a label as a means of digital circulation, is under-theorized and under-discussed phenomena in terms of discourse theory. Importantly, the two main aspects of tagging are: 1) an item can have a large variety of often unconnected tags, and 2) a single tag connects the item with all other items that share the same tag, even though the items themselves are often only vaguely related. Focusing mainly on tagging of various stock photography but also venturing into other fields, the proposed presentation will discuss tagging in terms of Foucault's and de Certeau's understanding of discourse. The presentation will propose that tagging cannot be completely explained by the discourse theories presented by the two scholars, which in turn enhances our understanding of discursive formation as a whole.*

The process of tagging, that is attaching a label to an item, has been theorized from numerous perspectives. Nevertheless, the perspective that is often ignored is the one provided by discourse theory and its relation to power and control. Using the concepts of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau, this paper claims that tagging is a process that ultimately complicates our understanding of discourse. The mechanics of tagging at the same time follow as well as resist the dominant discourse, thus further obscuring the nature of power dynamics in discursive formation. Consequently, more focus should be paid to tagging as a means of creating discourse in the future.

The idea for this paper came from reading "Tourism, Stock Photography and Surveillance: A Foucauldian Interpretation" by William Feighery. In the essay, Feighery discusses stock photography of official tourist organizations – or OTOs – in terms of Foucault's panopticism. Feighery sees the OTO stock photography as sharing many traits with Foucault; for example, the collection of photography that the OTOs make available creates, in Foucault's terms, an archive. The archive serves as a vehicle for collecting and classifying information through which the panopticism of the OTOs is established. OTOs are key players in national and regional promotion when it comes to the construction and subsequent mediation of places as "destinations" and, as Feighery points out, they have adopted quickly to the new technology such as the Internet (165). Feighery also emphasizes that "(t)oday most of the world's significant sights have been photographed and millions of photographic images are available online" (165). In other words, OTOs are active participants in the process of image creation and circulation. The process of dissemination of OTO stock photography therefore does not hinge on destination promoters' or travel agencies active browsing of the OTO archive in order to obtain suitable images; on the contrary, OTOs increasingly – and silently – enter the broader, general market of stock photography; consequently, OTO photography can appear outside the context of tourism. It is therefore not only representations of language, but also visual images that are, as Derrida in his landmark essay "Signature Event Context" claims, *iterable*, that is being able to be cited or repeated. Yet one of the crucial aspects of OTO stock photography – tagging the photographs available in the archive – is commented upon only briefly by Feighery. Importantly, tagging is the process that allows OTOs and other online services to represent a specific discourse through their featured content, therefore informing the user's understanding of the tagged items.

Since the ideas of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau inform this essay, a short discussion of their understanding of discourse is in order. Foucault bases his concept of discourse on Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison model. Following the premises of Panopticon, that is seeing without

being seen, panoptic discourse “automatizes and disindividualizes power” (“Panopticism” 202). In effect, the mechanisms of disciplinary establishments become “de-institutionalized,” that is they “emerge from the closed fortresses in which they once functioned and . . . circulate in a ‘free’ state” (“Panopticism” 211). Yet panopticism is concerned with more than just surveillance or normalization of behavior on a superficial level; as Foucault explains, discipline, the form of control imposed by panopticism, “may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power” (“Panopticism” 215). Disciplinary society is initially formed by institutions such as the prison or the mental institutions, but ultimately evolves into a society that utilizes “an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of ‘panopticism’” (216). Surveillance rather than spectacle defines us as a modern society, but it is a surveillance of discourse itself and not through more explicit methods such as clinical records or, to provide a more recent example, CCTV; the individual is not repressed or altered by such social order but rather “carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies” (217). In “The Discourse on Language” Foucault explains that “in every society the production of discourses is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers to cope with change events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality” (216). Discourse is, therefore, ultimately disciplining and self-disciplining – its mechanism is imposed upon the individual who then internalizes it as his or her own. Conversely, Michel de Certeau does not see the issue as bleak as it may appear to Foucault. Writing about spatial practices and the ways one can escape the routes pre-planned by the administration – in other words how one can avoid being disciplined – de Certeau argues that each individual can resist the official discourse: it can be reappropriated to the individual’s needs through multiform, tricky and stubborn procedures that, although still being inside discipline, manage to avoid the formative powers (*Practice* 96). In his *The Practice of Everyday Life* he also describes this reappropriation as *poaching*: “(R)eaders are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves” (174). Discourse is then permanently in the hands of the sovereign power, yet the individual can still navigate within the discourse on his or her own. For Foucault, discourse is inherently controlling and manipulating, while for de Certeau it can be bent according to one’s will, albeit only temporarily.

The basic idea of tagging is simple. Users upload or select materials – pictures, music, or even whole websites – and give them tags. These tags can be freely chosen by users and are then used to browse through material with the same tags (Steels 287). Although the user does not need to know how a tag has been used by others in order to use it, this does not lead to complete chaos or a totally unstable system (289). On the contrary: “Groups of users do not have to agree on a hierarchy of tags or detailed taxonomy, they only need to agree, in a general sense, on the ‘meaning’ of a tag enough to label similar material with terms for there to be cooperation and shared value” (Mathes). This is further explained by the so-called “power law,” that is a type of distribution produced over time by complex systems such as various Internet sites.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, regardless of how large the system grows, the shape of the distribution in a power law system remains the same and therefore relatively stable (Halpin, Robu, and Shepherd). The above then leads to a power law distribution in which a relatively small number of tags – or “meanings” – are used with great frequency, while a large number of tags are used only sporadically (Mathes). Simply put, while users are free to use any tags they want, a consensus eventually emerges. Importantly, the existence of power law makes it clear that a general interpretation of any tagged item is reached and subsequently proliferated.

That being said, the process of tagging itself can be seen as a prime example of self-disciplining discourse, a notion emphasized by the existence of the power law. Discourse is, ultimately, the most

effective self-disciplining mechanism of power that is at the same time the least visible one, and the process of tagging shows a system that perpetuates itself. Put differently, the users applying tags to various items are self-disciplining themselves as well as disciplining other users. A specific discourse is already present in the minds of the users prior to tagging and it is further proliferated by the tags the users choose. Therefore, tagging is, as Foucault would claim, a mechanism “of power which, instead of proceeding by deduction, (is) integrated into the productive efficiency of the apparatuses from within, into the growth of this efficiency and into the use of what it produces” (“Panopticism” 219). Importantly, the process of tagging is already a sign of self-discipline; tagging is then, in Foucault’s terms, a truly anonymous instrument of power (“Panopticism” 220). An example of the disciplining power of tagging can be seen when searching for the terms “Christian” and “Muslim” in the stock photography database *Shutterstock*. While the former results in mostly uplifting images of people praying or the Christian cross, the latter mostly leads to images of often eroticized Muslim women in hijab or niqab, but also features Muslim men wielding assault rifles.<sup>2</sup> Another example of the proliferation of the dominant discourse can be found in the music website service *last.fm*. The application tracks down the users’ listening habits and suggests new artists based on the tags these artists share. Importantly, *last.fm* tracks the frequency of tags: for instance, the most popular tags for the band Coldplay are “alternative”, “alternative rock”, “britpop”, “indie”, and “rock”, with “british” and “pop” trailing closely behind (“Tags for Coldplay”). The nature of Coldplay’s most popular tags only confirms the previously mentioned power law in both of its aspects: first of all, out of the sixty tags listed only seven show a higher frequency of use; secondly, the top five tags are quite similar in their meaning.

It might be then tempting to simply conclude that popular tags are the result of self-disciplined users, therefore confirming the notion of tags as vehicles for disciplining discourse. However, there are several aspects of tagging that should not be overlooked and which complicate the notion of tags as purely self-disciplining. Firstly, it is the fact that a single image can have a large amount of tags that are often significantly different from one another; these tags, as in the case of the first image Feighery uses, that of a shirtless man on a beach practicing yoga or martial arts, include tags such as “activities”, “blonde”, “english”, “gay”, “surfing”, “sky”, or “yoga” (Feighery 168). Feighery correctly identifies tagging as a “co-opting” of emergent discourses such as homosexuality “into the dominant strategies of established institutions such as OTOs” (167); however, the process employed in tagging a photographic image with multiple tags is not just “co-opting.” As Foucault notes, all authorities exercise individual control function through a double mode of binary division and coercive assignment (“Panopticism” 199). “All the mechanisms of power,” the author continues, “which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distinctly derive” (199–200). Classification and characterization is then a part of disciplinary mechanisms, therefore “emergent discourses” such as homosexuality are normalized and assimilated into the dominant discourse by tags such as those Feighery mentions. However, the important point here is that this process goes both ways – the content does not have to explicitly deal with a given tag in order to be included in the tag’s archive. Simply put, while it might be argued that – to use Feighery’s example – the archive of OTO stock photography assimilates emergent discourses such as homosexuality or ethnicity and then acts as a disciplining mechanism that tries to impose self-discipline into the user, these discourses at the same time proliferate and spread into other – often unrelated – discourses.<sup>3</sup> The boundaries of each discourse then become increasingly blurred. This process is then a constant redefinition of the very content as well as the context of the archive. Foucault writes that “discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as

a 'political' force at the least cost and maximized as a useful force" (221). Consequently, while tagging leads to a normalization of the perceived subject and subsequently also normalizes the discourse surrounding the subject, the overlapping of tags into other subjects at the same time resists these constraints – the panopticising power is focused at the center of the normalizing discourse, yet at the same time the power becomes diluted as the discourse reaches its boundaries and "spills" into the neighboring ones. For instance, some of the less frequent *last.fm* tags of the band Coldplay are "90s", "amazing", "ambient", "female vocalists", or even "overrated" ("Tags"). Through these tags Coldplay are associated with artists of vastly different music genres: Madonna, Pearl Jam, or Backstreet Boys due to the "90s" tag, Brian Eno or Sigur Rós due to "ambient", or "One Direction" and "Justin Bieber" due to "overrated"; all these tags create associations that the item would not have outside of a discourse relying on tagging.

Put differently, there are two facts that complicate the understanding of tagging as purely self-disciplining discourse: firstly, an item can have a vast number of unrelated tags; secondly, a single tag connects the item with other items with the same tag no matter what the other tags are. Importantly, "users can introduce tags without knowing whether and how that tag has been used by others and a tag can attract new links even after it has been introduced by a particular user" (Steels 289). Tagging, then, modifies our understanding of discourse by an unprecedented power of association and creating connection where there has not been one before. Michel de Certeau categorizes practices of behavior and discourse as either a *strategy* or *tactic*. While strategy is linked to institutions and structures of power, tactic is possessed by the individual (*Practice* 35–36). Strategy then prefers a unified view within a permanently delineated space while tactic allows one to maneuver within the realms of a strategy for the individual's benefit. Tagging a picture is then both a strategy and tactic; while the general understanding is often formed in line with the sovereign discourse, users can tag at their own will, create their own tags, and link the tagged item with a seemingly unrelated one in an unprecedented fashion. In other words, while the power law seems to confirm the existence of a general interpretation of the tagged item, it is the linking to items commonly thought of as unrelated that creates new meaning and new understanding of the discourse related to the item. Tagging refashions and recontextualizes the tagged item from the dominant discourse into something new.

Yet this refashioning is not entirely in the hands of the users; while these leaks of meaning, these sites of indeterminacy and ambiguity allow the individual, in de Certeau's terms, to put his or her tactics to use in the most effective manner, the existence of the power law still confirms that the grip of the sovereign power on the item's discourse is not entirely loose. Tagging could be ultimately seen as a representation of the post-modern condition. It is a stoic rebuttal of a clear hierarchy of power, replacing it instead with a system that embodies both the dominant discourse and the individual's resistance to it – both strategy and tactic – in the same position. As Michel de Certeau points out, a dominant institution of power can also be imperceptibly colonized by other, less visible procedures: "(S)ystem of discipline and surveillance, which was formed in the nineteenth century on the basis of preexisting procedures, is today in the process of being 'vampirized' by still other ones which we have to unveil" ("Micro-techniques" 189). Importantly, this vampiric act feeds off itself as it requires both dominant and alternative discourses to be present, therefore establishing and at the same time subverting tagging as the means of production of a dominant discourse. Tagging then shows that there is no such thing as a perfect institution of power; even when such institution tries to avoid the poaching of resisting individuals, there are other, often unpredictable outcomes of application of power that complicate and undermine the disciplining discourse, and even more so in the age of Web 2.0, the age of social media, user-generated content, or filesharing, that is services or applications

that allow the individual to bypass the conventional institutions of power. It can be then argued that technologies of Web 2.0 society lead to a dilution of power over the creation of discourses.

Of course, this research is not exhaustive. For instance, the exact background of individual services that allow for tagging and the ways the tagged content is generated – by individual users or administrators of the service – might lead to a different understanding of the process. For instance, one of Feighery's flaws is his failure to emphasize the exact nature of OTOs. As the name suggests, Official Tourist Organizations are official institutions funded by the government, as is the case of VisitBritain, the name used by British Tourist Authority. Their About Us section states the following:

VisitBritain is the national tourism agency, a nondepartmental public body, funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, responsible for promoting Britain worldwide and developing its visitor economy. Our mission is to grow the value of inbound tourism to Britain, working with a wide range of partners in both the UK and overseas. Through our global reach, we aim to increase visitor spend to all parts of Britain and improve Britain's ranking in the eyes of international travellers.<sup>4</sup> ("Overview")

In other words, the goal of VisitBritain and other government-funded OTOs is to promote a specific image that would not only positively impact the economy of the UK, but also improve Britain's cultural, and in effect political, ranking in the outside world. OTOs then represent institutional as well as institutionalized governance; they are political technologies and panopticising institutions that are parts of a larger technology of power, that of government. What is then disseminated through OTO stock photography is not merely a myth of tourist sites as Feighery claims, a myth that can make certain narratives prominent while silencing others, but also the overall discourse of a nation as well as the dynamics of tourism as a disciplinary practice that creates or is imposed upon other discourses; it is naturally the tagging aspect of the OTOs that give the proper contexts – and therefore proper discourse – to the images. Nevertheless, even when a more or less direct involvement of the government body is excluded in the discussion of tagging as discourse, services relying on tags or keywords can still be thought to display a type of governance. Paul Frosh points out that although the industrialization of advertising and marketing imagery into a unified system of production and distribution – i.e. stock photography – is a relatively recent phenomenon, today "the visual content industry" is dominated by two important transnational agencies, Getty Images PLC and Corbis Corp., and provides around 70 percent of images used for advertising, marketing, or design purposes as well as acts as the main supplier of images for website design and multi-media products (174). In addition, Frosh continues, the visual content industry "controls vast swathes of image production and distribution through its acquisition of major historical and contemporary photographic and film archives (heavily used by journalistic and educational publications and programmers), as well as the digital rights to much of the world's fine art." These images are then omnipresent online, being found in local news articles or commercial websites, and therefore mediate reality according to their tags. Only a precise understanding of the overall tagging process on these and other websites – that is the knowledge of who is responsible for the tagging, the ways the tags are chosen, or the possible mechanisms that check the appropriateness of the tags, among other things – can lead to a satisfying answer to the issue of tags and discourse.

Secondly, there might be significant differences when websites that show the most popular tags are compared to those that only provide a list of all the tags used, such as the *Internet Movie Database* (IMDb). The website shows a list of "plot keywords" for each movie in the database. These



tags do not seem to be in any order nor are the popular tags highlighted in any way, which makes it more difficult to validate the existence of the power law, therefore a broader spectrum of tags is to be expected. For instance, the plot keywords for the motion picture *The Dark Knight* (2008) from the Batman franchise feature tags clearly related to the title such as “gotham” or “vigilante,” yet other tags are significantly more ambiguous; these tags include “money,” “love triangle,” “cellular phone,” or even “accountant” (“Plot Keywords”). While the “vigilante” tag firmly places the movie with the two other Christopher Nolan movies from the Batman franchise, *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012) and *Batman Begins* (2005), into the top three movies bearing the “vigilante” tag, “money” shows *The Departed* (2006) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) in the top three, while “accountant” relates *The Dark Knight* to *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994).<sup>5</sup> The power law in the instance of IMDb is then significantly shaken, which is only emphasized by the fact that the aforementioned *The Dark Knight* has 417 tags. Consequently, IMDb represents one of the many instances in which the existence of the power law cannot be validated, therefore further complicating the dynamics of tagging.

Lastly, most researches focus on the dominant tags, yet it could be argued that it is the less popular tags that help the user navigate the tagged items and therefore add important texture to the general understanding of the item. As the Coldplay example shows, the uniformity of the most frequent tags does not help in establishing the possible uniqueness of the band, nor does it provide additional contexts for specifying the band’s music; only the tags such as “90s” or “overrated” provide satisfying amount of depth to the tags. Nevertheless, due to the many empirical researches done on collaborative tagging and the relative simplicity in evaluating the users’ understanding of tagged items, tagging seems to be an exciting route to take regarding future studies in discourse. Tagging represents a process that imbues the tagged item with new contexts that help shaping the overall discourse related to the item. While the existence of the power law hints at tagging being self-disciplining, the association with unrelated items due to shared tags and the freedom in the use of tags hint at a more complicated process that cannot be wholly explained by either Foucault or de Certeau. Whether this is due to our lack of understanding of discourse as power in general or rather the new possibilities of the current Web 2.0 world should be the focus of future research.

## Notes

1. The complexity can be found in aspects such as a large number of users, a lack of central coordination, or non-linear dynamics (Halpin, Robu, and Shepherd).
2. These results are to be found upon typing the two terms into the search bar and then choosing the “popular” option.
3. For example, the search for the tag “gay” on the stock photography website *Shutterstock* results into explicitly homosexual-themed images but also into unrelated photos such as the one with the self-explanatory title “Best Man

And Groom At Wedding” (see *Shutterstock*, Image ID 151835660).

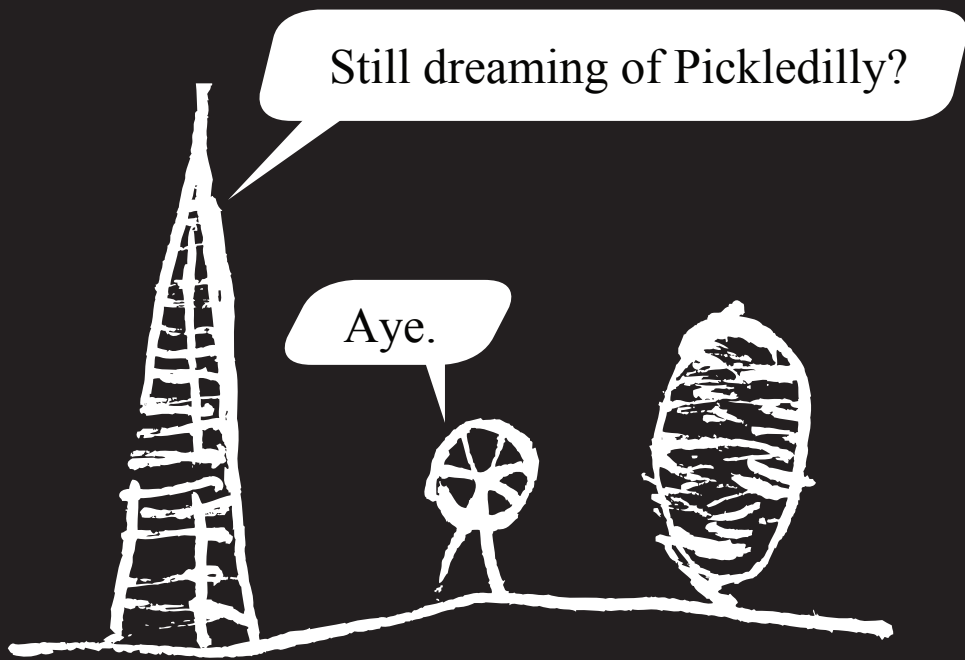
4. While VisitBritain is a non-departmental public body, meaning that it can operate at “arm’s length” and has a private sector Chairman and a Board, it is ultimately funded by – and therefore has to answer to – the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. See “Overview” for more information.

5. The interconnectedness of the movies is based on the movies’ popularity – i.e. the number of votes – which is the default setting for the tag searches.



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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

# **Review of *Horace M. Kallen a vývoj americké kulturní identity* (Horace M. Kallen and the Evolution of American Cultural Identity) by Josef Jařab and Michaela Weiss**

Edition: Periplus: Olomouc 2011, 147 pp. ISBN 978-80-86624-61-7

As the title of the monograph suggests, the main subject matter of this study is rumination on one of the most seminal essays on the evolution of American identity, entitled "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" published in 1915 and written by the American philosopher and thinker Horace M. Kallen (1882-1974). However, the monograph offers much more than its title suggests. From Kallen's revision of the melting pot approach to Bourne's concept of transnationalism, the two authors of the monograph address far more complex issues related not only to the evolution of American cultural identity but also to identity itself, and for the first time they enable Czech and possibly Slovak readers to become acquainted with the work of these early advocates of cultural pluralism.

It was Horace M. Kallen who first referred to the melting pot as a project of the dominant "Anglo-Saxon Americans" the aim of which was to erase the immigrant's cultures not because they were unequal but because "what troubles them is difference" (219). This counterpoint to Israel Zangwill's romantic metaphor of utopian togetherness has become one of the standpoints in revising the idealistic vision of the complete assimilation of ever growing numbers of immigrant groups. Kallen's conception of American identity seen more as more of a 'symphony of civilizations' was later expanded upon by Randolph Bourne's (1886-1918) essay "Trans-national America" in which he introduces the notion of 'transnationalism', according to which cultural minorities are inextricably involved in a reciprocal relationship with their countries or regions of origin.

This monograph explores the contributions of these two important advocates of the cultural pluralism and their responses to the concept of the melting pot both in theory and in practice. Both Kallen's and Bourne's essays are examined through the lens of Josef Jařab and Michaela Weiss.

The treatise is divided into four parts which are preceded by short but very succinct introductions to both of the American essayists. The first two parts of the monograph consist of the first Czech translations of both Kallen's essay "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" (1915) and Bourne's essay "Trans-national America" (1916) by Michaela Weiss. Herein lies the first imminent contribution of this volume as Weiss proves to be a translator who is not afraid of challenging texts. The translation of these texts is demanding not only in terms of the complexity of their content, but also because of the archaic style of English in which they are written. In this respect, Weiss has proved to be not only an excellent scholar but also a very capable translator.

Her chapter titled "Cultural Pluralism versus the Melting Pot: Beginnings of the Search for American (Jewish) identity" ("Kulturní pluralismus versus tavící kotel: počátky hledání americké (židovské) identity") forms the most extensive part of the monograph. Weiss undertakes the daunting task of applying both concepts of cultural pluralism to the evolution of Jewish (American) identity in America. The complex process of the search for identity is highlighted by her placing of the term "Jewish" in brackets in the title of the essay, suggesting both the transverse nature of both Jewish and American identity and the significance of Kallen's Jewish origins. Weiss begins her elucidation of the beginnings of American Jewish identity with a brief historical lead-in going back the Declaration of Independence (1776) which enabled Jews to participate in the political, economic and cultural formation of a new state. The author is very thorough in clarifying the diversity of Jewishness and comments on the process of immigration of Sephardic, German and Eastern European Jews. In

order to connect Kallen's vision of cultural pluralism with Jewish identity, she is not afraid to explicate terms such as Reformed Judaism, Zionism and Hebraism. Nonetheless, Weiss herself does not resort to enumerating definitions; on the contrary she demonstrates her historical research with numerous archival quotations from Jewish newspapers of that time. While recognizing the most dominant intellectual figures of Jewish search for identity such as Isaac Mayer Wise and Mordecai Manuel Noah to name just a few, she also links other influences on the formation of American Jewish identity, paying particular attention to the philosophical underpinnings of the process. In reviewing Kallen's work, she uses Mathew Arnold's critical theory to suggest the connection between Puritanism and Hebraism but also demonstrates the link between Hebraism and Zionism by emphasizing the cultural and historical aspects in preference to a purely religious approach. Weiss is very well acquainted with her topic of research and this is amply demonstrated in her rigorous scholarly approach. However, probably the strongest connection which is made between the visions of both Kallen and Bourne and the historical and philosophical commentary is that which highlights the literary influences on the process of the Americanization of Jews. The writings of Abraham Cahan, Mary Antin, Emma Lazarus, Israel Zangwill, Edward Steiner and many others provide evidence of the gradual transition from the religious phase of American Jewish identity towards a more ethnic and cultural identity.

Jařab's chapter entitled "Between the Melting Pot, Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism" ("Mezi tavicím kotlem, kulturním pluralismem a multikulturalismem") offers a more challenging yet more essayistic explication of all three of the titular concepts. The author justifies the significance of Kallen's rejection of the popular vision of the melting pot within the context of early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, a period which was marked by immigrant groups beginning to create their own cultural identities. However, Jařab's vision is more than a historical discourse on the importance of Kallen's contribution. He sees Kallen's accomplishment not only as a reflection of changing cultural identities but also as a reflection of wider socio-economic forces which were becoming more predominant in both America and Europe in this period. Although he concedes that WWI was not strictly speaking an American War, Jařab asserts that the 1910-20 was a key decade for the future of the United States of America. In addition to mentioning the growing acceptance of different immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, the author notes that American society was also forced to come to terms with the presence of African Americans in its midst. Kallen was often criticized for the omission of African Americans or Native Americans from his 'symphony of civilization', and Jařab makes an interesting reference to Antonín Dvořák's appreciation of both ethnic and racial groups in his New World Symphony in this context (134). Jařab also tries to justify the omission of African Americans from Kallen's vision, suggesting that it could be ascribed to a failure of courage on the part of Kallen to break away from the influence of his Harvard teacher and tutor William Barrett. Nevertheless, as the author asserts, Kallen believed that ethnic, religious and national organizations contribute to better integration of the immigrants. Undeniably, Jařab gives credit to the Czech and Slovak immigrants whom he considers to be a good example of a community which had been fully assimilated into American society but which was still connected to its immigrant past, as can be seen in the community's contribution to the foundation of an independent Czechoslovakia.

Although racial and ethnic diversity represented an obstacle to the process of assimilation, the author also accurately points out the significance of the generational barrier, a concept which was well delineated by Marcus Lee Hansen's law of third generation return. Hansen's law states that „what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember“, and Jařab points out that this idea had been suggested earlier by Margaret Mead; Mead believed that all Americans could be considered

as third generation immigrants in a symbolic sense, thereby laying the ground for the transition from melting pot to cultural pluralism.

Nevertheless, the core of Jařab's chapter lies in the explication of the roots of the racial discrimination towards African Americans. Paradoxically, he asserts the root cause of the change in the mentality and subsequently the politics of the United States towards African Americans lies in the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe. The author then proceeds to demonstrate the impact of African American movement on the formation of the new culturally plural America which was gradually transformed into the phenomenon of a multicultural society. According to Jařab, American society is structurally plural and this allows not only individuals but all ethnic groups to achieve self-realization (142). The final part of author's work is a profound and complex discussion of cultural pluralism and its transition to multiculturalism, a meditation which is enhanced by a more contemporary view on both concepts. American modernism, postmodernism, jazz, pop music, film and literature are the most persuasive instances of cultural pluralism. Jařab questions the extent to which America can absorb this plurality of expression, but states that the historical evolution to date can give rise to a subtle optimism.

The monograph provides ample evidence of the profound interest of both authors in the evolution of American cultural identity and of their ability to conceptualize even the most complex notions. The volume refers to a number of seminal works essential for the exegesis of the evolution of American cultural identity. It is written in a highly academic fashion, yet it is also accessible to the non-academic reader. With Jařab's prediction in his concluding paragraph that we can expect a similar process to occur in the case of European cultural identity, the volume also becomes of interest to students of disciplines other than American studies.

Zuzana Buráková

## **Review of *Jewishness as Humanism in Bernard Malamud's Fiction* by Michaela Náhliková**

Edition: Palacky University in Olomouc: Olomouc 2010, 130 pp. ISBN: 978-80-244-2525-2

Bernard Malamud was first published during an interesting and complex period in Jewish American writing. The 1940's heralded a notable change in the attitudes of Jewish American writers, and classification of their work became significantly more complicated. Many prominent authors of the period rejected the label of Jewish American, and their works concern themselves more with the American experience than ethnicity. As Michaela Náhliková points out in the introduction to this book, Malamud saw himself as "...an American author writing about Jews." (8) Malamud separated Judaism and Jewishness, treating Jewishness as being cultural and historical rather than religious. This extensively researched book sets out to identify the ways in which Malamud's fiction uses this Jewishness to explore morality, the importance of identity and tradition, and humanity.

The book is broken down into five clearly defined chapters. The first serves as a brief introduction to Malamud and his writings. It is a succinct but highly relevant introduction to the book as it clearly highlights Malamud's emphasis on the separation of Judaism and Jewishness. It is this separation which is key to reading his fiction as ethical and humanist as opposed to representative of the struggles of an individual nationality or ethnicity. Náhliková clearly states her goal in this volume to outline how Malamud's idea of the Jewish experience of America and Jewish heritage and traditions are used as a device to explore wider, more universal themes relevant to man in general, regardless of background or religion.

The following three chapters contain the main textual analyses, dealing with Jewish identity, anti-Semitism and Religion accordingly. Each chapter is further divided on a text-by-text basis. The sections are all well-written, well-sourced and easy to understand even for those with only passing knowledge of the themes at hand. However, Náhliková occasionally strays into narration, with a few of these sub-sections being rich in summarisation but a little light on commentary. This can lead to the feeling that some of the conclusions being drawn are rather tenuous. However, the majority of the works being discussed are explored excellently with a clear focus on the overall argument of the book. Themes of identity, acceptance, origin and compassion are skilfully articulated and well-evidenced. The third chapter, which deals with anti-Semitism, is of particular note. Náhliková artfully balances the multi-faceted nature of this prejudice and persecution. The chapter avoids over-sympathizing and impassioned condemnations, and stays true to the book's ambitions. In dealing with anti-Semitism as anti-Humanism, it provides a nice counterpoint to the previous focus of Jewishness as Humanism, while also managing to avoid the common pitfalls many other authors stumble into while writing on this topic.

In contrast, the fourth chapter is possibly the weakest, representing the one significant flaw with Náhliková's otherwise excellent book. In the introduction she takes care to advise the reader that the presented analysis and argument is literary not theological. Ultimately, however, this proves difficult as the fourth chapter veers dangerously close at times to comparative theology. Obviously, in a chapter entitled *Religion: Man versus God*, avoiding theological discussion was always going to be problematic. That being said, it is a shame that some of the potency of the author's argument for Malamud's fiction being cultural, humanist and separable from religion is lost here. On several occasions the analysis is of Judaism versus Christianity in their relative (mis)interpretations; a comparison outside of the scope of this book. In fairness, Náhliková addresses this in the conclusion,

explaining that Malamud's explorations of religious themes are ultimately not theologically centred. As it stands, though, this claim is not sufficiently justified in either the fourth chapter or the conclusion. On its own the chapter is as equally well written as the rest of the book and provides valuable insight into the works being critiqued. However, as a section of this book it is thematically incongruous and not as clearly linked to the original argument as other chapters.

It is of interest that the question of schlemielhood and metaphor is reserved for the closing chapter. Náhlíková justifies this by explaining that this popular approach can colour the reader's view on Malamud's idea of Jewishness; it can reduce complex, free-thinking, free-choosing characters to simple stereotypes and ill-fated, tragi-comic figures. Since this is such a common approach when reading Malamud, this chapter may have served its purpose better by being positioned earlier in the book. One of the ways Náhlíková's book distinguishes itself from the majority of publications on Malamud is in its willingness to acknowledge the characters' responsibility and freedom in their actions. Learning of this distinction at the beginning rather than the end may have helped some readers to understand how Náhlíková's critique differentiates itself from others of a similar nature, which can often be somewhat dismissive evaluations of the characters and their actions.

The well-rounded conclusion underscores a highly-enjoyable, informative and useful analysis. After finishing the text, the reader must agree that Michaela Náhlíková has succeeded in her goal. While the analysis occasionally falters, the overall message of Jewishness as Humanism is clear. Náhlíková deftly shows us that Malamud's Jewishness represents a universal struggle towards moral growth and humanity. Much like the fiction being described, this work requires no deep understanding of, or insight into, Judaism or Jewish culture; it is accessible and both encourages and facilitates further reading. This volume represents a valuable resource to students of Malamud's work. It would be a welcome addition to any library collecting material on American literature or cultural studies.

James David Clubb





## **CALLS**

Dear colleagues,

we would like to inform you that

## **Hradec Králové Anglophone Conference 2015**

will take place on **24-25 March 2015**. The conference is organized by the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, Czech Republic.

We welcome contributions from the following fields of Anglophone studies:

- **Linguistics**
- **Literature**
- **Cultural Studies**
- **Methodology (ELT)**

The conference language is English. Presentations can include lectures, workshops, seminars, poster demonstrations and exhibitions of materials. Selected contributions will be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies*.

All the information, including the registration form, can be accessed on the conference website (<http://hk-anglophone-conference.webnode.cz/>).

The deadline for registration is **15 January 2015**.

Conference Fee is 1,000 CZK or 40 €.

We would greatly appreciate if you could also forward this message to your colleagues.

With best regards,

the Organizing Committee

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Tomas Bata University in Zlín announces its seventh annual conference on Anglophone studies entitled From Theory to Practice. This event offers scholars an opportunity to present the results of their research and discuss newly developed theories as well as their practical applicabilities.

We welcome papers from the following fields:

- ❖ LINGUISTICS
- ❖ LITERATURE
- ❖ CULTURAL STUDIES

The proceedings will include selected papers from the conference; acceptance of all papers is subject to the editors' decision based on the reviewers' comments. The previous four proceedings were accepted into the **Thomson Reuters Web of Science (formerly ISI Web of Knowledge)** database and this year's proceedings will likewise be submitted for inclusion.

<b>Keynote Speakers:</b>	<b>TO BE ANNOUNCED</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 – 4 September 2015</b>
<b>Registration Deadline:</b>	<b>30 May 2014</b>
<b>Fee:</b>	<b>1500 CZK</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Tomas Bata University in Zlín University Centre T. G. Masaryka 5555 760 01 Zlín</b>

The **registration deadline is May 30**. The fee covers a copy of the conference proceedings, organizational costs, and refreshments. **The fee must be paid by invoice by 30 July 2014**. Participants from abroad may pay in cash upon arrival. The registration form may be downloaded from the conference website.

Website & Contact: **conference.uaa.utb.cz \* conference.uaa@fhs.utb.cz**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **We are proud to announce the publication of two monographs:**

**Pavla Machová. *Specifika cizojazyčného vzdělávání u žáků se sluchovým postižením na střední škole*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus, 2014. In print.**

The monograph deals with various aspects of foreign language teaching methodology for learners with impaired hearing and reflects the current situation in the field of ELT in special secondary schools for learners with impaired hearing.

It has two main aims: - 1) to gather knowledge from ELT methodology and combine it with information from other source disciplines, e.g. special pedagogy, pedagogy, psychology, and linguistics to form a coherent basis of special systemic English language teaching methodology for learners with impaired hearing, serving as a ground for other foreign languages ; - 2) to carry out a research project in the field of reading with deaf and hard-of-hearing learners at secondary schools since reading is the skill which is practised by all groups of learners with hearing impairment.

The work summarizes information on these learners, it describes their characteristics and needs. Main communication methods are presented, as well as some thoughts on the development of language and mind of the deaf. A substantial part of the work is devoted to motivation, emotional and personal development of deaf learners and to their practical communicative needs in the classroom.

The work sums up the ELT methodology findings and comments on them from the perspective of a special school teacher. The research part reflects the project findings in the field of reading and compares the results in terms of deaf and hard-of-hearing learners, lower grades versus upper grades of secondary schools, secondary school programmes versus vocational programmes.

**Olga Vraštilová. *Dětská literatura a čtenářská gramotnost v cizím jazyce*. Hradec Králové. Gaudeamus 2014, 224 pages, In print.**

The publication focuses on the characteristics of the reading skill connected with the key competences of the Czech educational system and with the issue of children's literature and its role in the foreign language teaching process at Czech elementary schools. The empirical part of the monograph deals with the research of how much children's literature is used in foreign language education at Czech elementary schools. From the data gained through several research tools it proposes how the contemporary situation could be improved. The Appendices contain among other things also author's own samples of materials used in ELT at an elementary school.

What is “pourquoi”?  
Do, or not do? I would I had bestowed  
that time in the tongues that I have in  
fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting.  
O, had I but followed the arts!

Pourquoi,  
my dear knight?





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# Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies

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