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Implementing selected techniques of the intercultural approach in newspaper-based EFL lessons

1. Introduction

As for many years foreign language courses have tended to focus on the linguistic aspects of the English language, teaching culture was neglected in many EFL settings. However, such phenomena as globalization, rising immigration to the English-speaking countries or numerous opportunities for contact with people who belong to a different cultural background create the need for including culture into language courses. Despite this, many teachers of English are still reluctant to incorporate the cultural component into their classrooms and those who do integrate language and culture teaching prefer to focus on factual knowledge. As a solution, glottodidactics proposes a new approach to teaching culture that is called the intercultural approach which is not merely yet another set of techniques and procedures used to teach culture. It is also a new way of viewing culture and its place in language learning and teaching. The present paper aims at presenting a two-week action research study conducted by the author and based on implementing certain techniques recommended by the intercultural approach to teach some aspects of the culture of Great Britain through the medium of the newspapers.

The inseparable relationship between language and culture is one of the key arguments for incorporating culture into foreign language teaching and learning. Culture is constantly “mediated, interpreted and recorded — among other things — through language” (Kramsch, 1995:3). It has not always been given place in language teaching and learning, but nowadays researchers and educators acknowledge that one cannot teach language without teaching culture. Brown (1994:165) equates the two stating that “the acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition, is also the acquisition of a second culture.” Thus the researcher gives support to the view that teaching culture is to be treated as an indispensable component of L2/FL instruction.

2. Defining the intercultural approach

Since the end of the 1990s culture teaching in foreign language classrooms has followed a new direction which is now recognized as the intercultural approach. It aims at achieving four main goals: helping learners develop the intercultural competence as well as the linguistic competence, preparing them to interact with foreigners, equipping them with understanding and acceptance of members of foreign cultures with different viewpoints, convictions and conduct, and making students aware of the enriching nature of such interactions. The key premises for these are respect and equality as well as integration of culture and language teaching, content-based language teaching and integrating information and topics from various disciplines (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002; *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, 2001)

One of the main aims of the intercultural approach is developing intercultural competence. Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) define it as:

the ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and the ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality (p.10).

This definition emphasizes that students should become intercultural mediators who will be able to avoid stereotyping and, instead of perceiving people through ready-made categories, they will observe and discover the qualities of foreign cultures. Although there is no one perfect model of an interculturally competent person, the widely cited and accepted model of intercultural competence is the one which is based on five components: knowledge, attitudes, skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002).

3. The search for principles of teaching culture

A set of principles has been outlined by specialists involved in researching the issues of the integration of culture into foreign language teaching. The basic ones are worth having a closer look at.

Adopting a learner-centred approach. The approach poses a new role of the teacher who, instead of providing students with ready-made answers and ideas, designs the lesson in such a way that students take the roles of discoverers drawing their own conclusions and inferring them from the information or sources of information supplied by the teacher and sometimes reflecting also on students' own environment (Byram and Planet, 2000).

Establishing “a sphere of interculturality” and finding the “third place”. The principle of establishing “a sphere of interculturality” in the language classroom was formulated by Kramsch (1993:205) who stated that only by setting students’ own culture against the target culture can they understand the latter. She also highlighted the fact that culture teaching should not consist solely of transfer of information but should include non-judgemental reflections on both cultures, which would be possible from the so called “third place” found somewhere between the two cultures: the target one and the native one.

Adopting the comparative approach. Comparing and contrasting is one of the most important principles of the intercultural approach. The comparative approach assumes a crucial role of seeking similarities and dissimilarities between the target and the native culture which is supposed to raise the knowledge of culture as well as provide a basis for successful intercultural communication (Ho, 2009).

Ensuring the objectivity of teachers and materials. Despite the learner’s centeredness, it is the teacher who creates the learning environment and provides the materials and therefore the sources of information from which students discover the target culture. The obvious conclusion is that a subjective teacher and subjective materials lead learners to view the target culture by means of ready-made but untrue misconceptions. Teachers have to avoid cultural imperialism and ensure that students do not regard one culture as superior (Brown, 2007).

Creating open and tolerant educational environment. The atmosphere of tolerance and openness is an absolute must if the teacher wants to train students to be appreciative and respectful of other cultures.

Using authentic materials. Intercultural approach requires using a variety of materials, preferably authentic ones as they provide a direct source of information about the target culture. Authentic materials, for example films, television shows, news broadcasts, photographs, websites, the press and texts used on a daily basis which usually have some specific purposes like restaurant menus or travel brochures, arouse learner’s interest and motivation (Peterson and Coltrane, 2003). They bring to the classroom a sense of novelty and “doing” something else than the traditional learning.

4. Some problems and solutions in teaching culture

Some language teaching contexts provide limitations and teachers attempting to include culture content may face a few problems. Still, they can resolve them and use solutions proposed by educators and researchers in the field.

One of the problems concerns **assessing intercultural competence**. Some elements of the intercultural competence, for instance attitudes and tolerance, are particularly difficult to assess (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002). Possible solutions include indirect assessment tools like self-report questionnaires or direct assessment tools like projects and portfolios or combining both assessment techniques (Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe, 2007).

Also **managing students' prejudices** can be an important task for a foreign language teacher. Today, students have unlimited access to information about the target culture, but the bulk of this information is rooted in stereotypes and hence the cultural information that students acquire is ingrained in stereotypes as well. A possible solution is to implement critical discourse analysis in the classroom. This approach is used to investigate how a particular text, especially an authentic one, "reproduce[s] or resist[s] racism, abuse of social power, dominance and inequality" (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002:27).

Lack of the teacher's knowledge can prove to be a problem in some contexts; many teachers feel that their knowledge of the target culture is insufficient to teach it to EFL learners. However, according to the intercultural approach, the teacher's role is not to transmit information but to provide students with opportunities for cultural discovery, to promote the comparative approach, to raise students' self-awareness, to prepare them to handle day-to-day intercultural communicative situations and to develop their tolerance. To achieve all these aims the teacher does not have to be an expert in the target culture (Byram, Gribkova and Starkey, 2002).

An EFL classroom is often perceived to be **an artificial context for learning culture**. Some adversaries of including culture into an EFL syllabus claim that the EFL classroom provides context that is artificial for culture teaching. However, the supporters of taking the intercultural approach believe that the language classroom can form a reasonable starting point for developing intercultural competence.

Apart from general theoretical guidelines presented above, EFL teachers are in need of specific techniques which may be implemented in classroom settings. Some possible instructional options that can contribute to the development of intercultural competence cover, among others: the comparison method, culture assimilators, culture capsule, drama, culture island, role play, culture wallchart and many other (Chastain, 1988; Corbett, 2010; Hughes, 1995; McGroarty and Galvan; 1985, quoted in Bandura, 2007; Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993). The study reported in the sections to come aimed to demonstrate how the implementation of the techniques discussed can contribute to good quality foreign language teaching with a focus on the development of intercultural competence.

5. The study

5.1 The purpose of the study

The present chapter focuses on teaching some aspects of British culture in a general English EFL course through the medium of British newspapers by using techniques that stem from the intercultural approach. The idea behind the study comes from the current interest in incorporating the elements of culture into EFL classrooms and the relative absence of culture in the context of teaching English in Poland, a fact observed by the author of the study. Consequently, the study aims at establishing whether the British press and selected techniques recommended by the intercultural approach can be found helpful in learning culture in the EFL classroom.

The specific goals of this study were:

1. to familiarize the students with samples of articles from the British press and their value for learning aspects of culture;
2. to equip the students with understanding of some problems of a foreign culture and raise their awareness of its different viewpoints and convictions;
3. to practice skills of comparing, interpreting and relating concepts and events from two cultures;
4. to teach the students culture-loaded vocabulary;
5. to increase students' interest in using newspapers as a means to learn a foreign culture.

5.2 Context and participants

The participants of the study were a group of 17-year-old students attending the second grade in one of the state upper-secondary schools in Lublin, ten girls and seven boys. The assumed level of English was upper-intermediate, but the performance of a large number of students was below this level.

5.3 Materials

The four conducted lessons were based on culture-focused texts and worksheets. Apart from that, two questionnaires were administered and the students' written homework was collected, all of which served as a source of data analysis.

Texts. Each of the four lessons was based on one text that described a certain cultural phenomenon dealt with during the lesson. All the texts taken from British newspapers were adapted in terms of their length and vocabulary complexity and shortened so as to make them suitable for 45-minute lessons. A glossary with difficult vocabulary items was attached to each text.

Worksheets. The four worksheets were specifically designed for each lesson to match the given topic and article. All the activities offered were self-prepared by the author of this paper.

Questionnaires. Two types of questionnaires were delivered: two general questionnaires (pre- and post-study) and four short Polish-culture questionnaires. The pre-study questionnaire aimed at obtaining information concerning the students' experience in using the British press as well as their attitudes towards learning culture during the English lessons and their associations with Britain, its people and culture. The Polish culture questionnaires contained questions about students' perceptions and experiences concerning some Polish culture phenomena. Their aim was to raise the students' awareness of certain cultural phenomena and to prepare them to engage in a comparative analysis of specific issues in the Polish and the British culture. The post-study questionnaire was designed to enable the students to evaluate the four lessons.

Homework. After each lesson the students were given written homework which comprised two essays, a letter to the editor, and a description of a self-designed British tea room, each one with a 150-word limit. The assignments were designed to measure the students' understanding of a given cultural phenomenon and their ability to decentralize from one's own culture.

5.4 Design and procedure

The study lasted two weeks and took four 45-minute lessons. At the beginning of the first week the pre-study questionnaire was administered. Then the students filled the four short questionnaires. During the following two weeks four lessons were carried out with the aim of introducing to the students the idea of teaching the British culture through the medium of the British press. All the lessons started with presenting the results of the short questionnaires which they had already filled. The next stages of the lessons were: a warm-up task (e.g. answering questions or making a list of associations), reading comprehension activities combined with a culture focus, (e.g. true/false tasks, filling graphic organizers or finishing sentences), a speaking activity (involving the technique of finding the "third culture" by taking a perspective of another person when discussing cultural phenomena) and culture-loaded vocabulary tasks (involv-

ing both receptive and productive knowledge). At the end of each lesson the students were given written homework. At the end of the second week of the study, the post-study questionnaire was conducted. Table 1 below presents the details of the design of the study.

Pre-study questionnaire	
Short Polish culture questionnaires	
Lesson 1 – Multicultural Britain	
Article “A house with many mansions” (The Economist: February 1st, 2007)	
Tasks and strategies	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – filling a graphic organizer – skimming while reading – taking the perspective of another person – matching phrases with definitions and pictures – identifying origins of the phrases <p>Homework: a short essay on one of the questions: 1. Is Poland a multicultural country? Why? 2. Would you like to live in a multicultural country? Why?</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understand the term “multiculturality” – know the ethnic minorities that live in Britain, their geographical distribution and situation in the British society – know the positive and the negative facets of mass immigration to Britain – know idioms and phrases connected with nationality and immigration – practice skills of comparing, interpreting and relating concepts and events from two cultures
Lesson 2 - Tea rooms in Britain	
Article “Where everything stops for tea” (The Guardian: October 6th, 2001)	
Tasks and strategies	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – making associations – filling a graphic organizer – drawing cultural inferences – matching phrases with definitions and filling in sentences <p>Homework: writing a description of a self-designed British tea room</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – know the concept of a “tea room” and its features – know idioms and phrases containing the word “tea” – practice skills of comparing, interpreting and relating concepts and events from two cultures
Lesson 3 - British social classes	
Article “Class rules” (The Guardian: October 20th, 2007)	
Tasks and strategies	Objectives

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying factors determining social class - filling in the sentences - drawing cultural inferences - taking the perspective of another person - matching phrases with definitions <p>Homework: a short essay involving placing a British woman in a particular class and providing rationale for the choice</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know the social classes that exist in Britain and the basic facts concerning those social classes - know phrases connected with social divisions - practice skills of comparing, interpreting and relating concepts and events from two cultures
Lesson 4 - British love for the woods	
Article "Care for your local ash tree" (The Guardian: October 31st, 2012)	
Tasks and strategies	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - true/ false reading comprehension task - finishing sentences - drawing cultural inferences - identifying ways of raising nature conservation awareness - taking the perspective of another person - matching phrases with definitions and filling in sentences <p>Homework: writing a letter to a newspaper with reaction to an ecological problem</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - know basic facts concerning the British attitude to forests - know idioms and phrases containing words connected with forests - practice skills of comparing, interpreting and relating concepts and events from two cultures
Post-study questionnaire	

Table 1. Design of the study.

5.5 Results and discussion

The data obtained from the pre- and post-study questionnaires filled in by the students were analysed in terms of frequency of specific answers as well as the opinions provided by the students. The written homework assigned after each lesson was evaluated in terms of the accomplishment of the goals that had been set out for them.

5.5.1 The results of the pre-study questionnaire

Question 1 probed the students' general attitudes towards learning culture. The majority of students (11 out of 17) agreed that learning culture of a given country is important when learning the language of that country. Four students totally agreed with this opinion. In the case of the second statement 12 students agreed that FL lessons should deal with the culture of the countries in which

people speak that language whereas 3 students completely agreed. Eleven students agreed with the statement “I would like to know more about the culture of the English-speaking countries” and 5 students completely agreed with it.

The purpose of Question 2 was to find out how the students evaluated the usefulness of different culture-learning techniques. The students found the teacher’s lecture and discussing current events most useful, and they also appreciated watching films and doing projects. Acting out scenes and reading literary texts were viewed as hardly useful or not useful at all. As for analyzing differences and similarities between cultures, listening to songs, listening to the radio and reading newspapers and magazines the students’ answers varied. Approximately half of the group regarded them as useful or very useful whereas the others as hardly useful or not useful at all.

In the following question the students ranked different aspects of the British culture in terms of their interestingness. There was no one aspect that was viewed consistently as the most/least interesting. In general, the students declared less interest in history, the political system, non-verbal communication, literature, art and music and education (i.e. ranked more often as 6th or higher). Geography, holidays and customs, daily life and family life, culinary traditions and dishes, youth culture and subcultures (i.e. ranked more often as 5th or lower) proved to be of more interest to the students

Question 4 was designed to examine the students’ sources of knowledge about Great Britain. All the students admitted that they had obtained information about Great Britain from the Internet. A number of students selected television and films (16), English lessons (12), and talks with other people (7). Other sources of information such as the press and contacts with the British people (4 choices), and literature and travelling to Great Britain (3 choices) were marked less frequently.

The aim of the fifth question was to find out whether the students had had any experience with the British press. Whereas 12 students admitted that they had had contact with certain kinds of the British press, 6 students declared no contact with it. Journals and on-line press editions were mentioned by 6 students and *Newsweek* by two of them. Five students had had contact with daily newspapers and some of them mentioned their titles (*The Times* mentioned twice). None of the students had ever had contact with Sunday newspapers.

The last question the students responded to revealed different kinds of associations they had with ‘Britain’, ‘the British culture’ and ‘the British people’. The analysis of the data proved to be particularly difficult as the students greatly varied in their perceptions of the categories of culture, the country and the people, and what is more, the same associations appeared with reference to all the three categories. Therefore, the author decided to count the occurrences of

the students' associations collectively disregarding the categories introduced. The most frequent associations mentioned by the students were London (mentioned by 10 students), the queen and the royal family (9 students), tea (8), left-hand traffic (6), Big Ben (5), islands (5) and double-deckers (4). Among some other interesting but less frequent associations there were also Poles working in Britain, obesity, Shakespeare, top hats, the Parliament, English breakfast, rain, the underground and tourists. The students also mentioned some character features. Some students perceived the British as open, helpful, friendly or articulate. Other students viewed them as lazy, selfish, rude and calculating.

On balance, it seems that the students' experience with British culture was fairly limited as it was mainly based on TV, films or on-line papers, rather than on real-life contacts with the country and the people. This could be concluded from the fact that only five students stated that they had had some contact with daily newspapers whereas none of them had seen Sunday newspapers. Moreover, they adhered to very common associations concerning Britain, the British culture and the British people and were not able to classify their views as belonging to one of the three categories.

5.5.2 The results of the post-study questionnaire

The introductory question was to investigate the students' opinions about using the British press when learning about the culture of Great Britain. Whereas 8 students agreed or totally agreed that the lessons had motivated them to broaden their knowledge of the British culture, 8 students disagreed or totally disagreed with this statement. Thirteen students claimed that the British press was useful for learning about the British culture, 3 students did not agree with this opinion. While 6 students admitted having problems with using the newspaper articles, 9 students did not experience any difficulties. Some students did not have any opinion concerning the statements.

The purpose of the second question was to establish whether the students would like to use the British press in four different situations in the future. Out of 17 students, 8 students answered that they would like to use the press in the future while 9 students claimed they would not, 10 students would be willing to use the press in learning English independently, and 12 students in learning about the British culture. As far as reading for pleasure is concerned, only 7 students provided a positive response to the question. Thus it can be concluded that the press was perceived by the students as a useful tool in learning about the British culture. However, as for some students the articles were difficult, they would not treat press reading as reading for pleasure.

In the subsequent question the students were asked to rank the lessons from the most to the least interesting. The lesson about the British tea rooms was found to be the most interesting to be followed by a less interesting lesson on the British social classes. The least interesting lessons were the ones about multiculturalism in Britain and the British attitude to the forests.

Question 4 aimed to find out how the participants assessed the techniques implemented during the four lessons. The two techniques, evaluated as particularly useful were: filling sentences on the basis of the text and written statements (12 answers) and expressing one's point of view (13 answers). The students did not present a consistent view as far as filling tables and graphic organizers were concerned. The short questionnaires, on the other hand, were evaluated by 11 students as not useful or hardly useful while 6 students perceived this technique as useful or very useful.

Question 5 was exactly the same question as Question 6 in the pre-study questionnaire. Its purpose was to establish whether the students' associations with Great Britain, the British and the British culture changed after the four press-based lessons they had participated in. With the results analyzed collectively, disregarding the three categories, it was revealed that some students mentioned 'multiculturalism', 'tea rooms' and 'forests', the three associations connected with the material discussed in the lessons. However, only one of the students included 'social classes' in Britain, which was also the topic of one of the lessons. This points to the fact that the students broadened their knowledge of the British culture, especially with reference to multiculturalism and tea culture. Moreover, the students, like in the pre-study questionnaire, mentioned different character features. Some of the positive ones like helpfulness, openness or sociability contrasted with the British found to be not very expressive and aloof.

5.5.3 The analysis of the students' written homework

After each lesson the students were given written homework connected with the topics of the lessons. The idea behind the assignments was to check whether the students understood the particular cultural phenomena and whether they were able to apply the knowledge gained during the lesson in their written work. However, not all the students handed in their homework when instructed to do so.

Homework 1. In general, the students stated that Poland is not a multicultural country and they provided some reasons for that. The essays showed that the students varied in their perceptions of multiculturalism. On the whole, their opinions were based on stereotypical views of multiculturalism with little attention paid to economic and political issues dealt with in the lesson.

Homework 2. Almost all of the students correctly identified the characteristics of traditional tea rooms. To a large extent they based their descriptions of a self-designed tea-room on the examples discussed during the lesson. Thus they mentioned the traditional elements of their appearance (closely resembling a grandmother's house, namely wooden floors, flowers, pine tables etc.), specific menu (a wide range of tea flavours, home-made cakes, sandwiches, fruit and scones) and staff (kind waitresses with a good sense of humour dressed in uniforms). It can be concluded that the students understood the concept of a tea room. Nevertheless, four students misunderstood one element of the characteristics of the staff. A traditional tea room would employ friendly-looking like women dressed in mob caps and aprons whereas the students wrote that they would employ beautiful, young waitresses dressed elegantly.

Homework 3. This seemed to be the most difficult task of the four assigned. Only one student placed the British woman in the correct social (middle) class. Some students did not understand this phenomenon completely commenting that the social class distinction system is unjust. Whereas in Poland these opinions seem rational, in Britain social classes are still present in the daily life. One may conclude that some students found it difficult to respond to a cultural phenomenon absent in Poland.

Homework 4. The students had to take a stand on an ecological question bearing in mind the attitude of the British. Six students wrote that nature is very important and that when animal welfare is at stake people should act reasonably. Many students proposed alternative solutions. One student stated that forests are not that important and that ecological protests are irresponsible and shameful. In conclusion, the students showed a varying degree of understanding of the cultural phenomena presented throughout the study. Putting themselves in somebody else's position and trying to view culture not from the perspective of a Polish student proved to be demanding for some of them. Others found it less difficult and correctly predicted decisions and reactions of a Briton who would face the tasks assigned to the students.

5.5.4 The analysis of the students' responses to lesson topics and classroom tasks

The most difficult task in **Lesson 1** was the one that required understanding culture by leaving the position of a foreigner and trying to adopt the position of a British person. The students talked about multiculturalism from their own points of view rather than from those of the people whose roles they played. Such tasks were repeatedly challenging for the students throughout the study.

Lesson 2 was the most successful as despite the lack of the students' knowledge about and experience with tea rooms they had the fewest problems with performing the tasks. Tea was something that the students associated the British with. They were able to make some correct associations with the British tea drinking tradition like adding milk to tea. Moreover, tea being connected with the students' daily lives brought the lesson closer to their day-to-day experience. The results of the short questionnaire showed that the students considered tea as important and popular in Poland. The reading comprehension tasks were fairly easy for the students who correctly identified the characteristic features of British tea rooms. The students also efficiently completed an activity that required pointing out the source of a cultural misunderstanding.

Lesson 3 was the most difficult for the students. The topic of the social class system in Britain was completely new to the students, which was revealed by the short questionnaire results. The students found it difficult to accept the fact that the same phenomenon is differently approached by two cultures.

In **Lesson 4**, devoted to the British attitude to the woods and nature, the students had difficulty with performing the reading comprehension tasks. It might have been difficult for the students to understand the ideas different from those represented in their own culture, that is the contrast between the approach in which nature is not that important and does not convey any deeper meaning connected with the Polish identity, and the British approach to the woods and nature discussed in the article.

As far as the **culture-loaded vocabulary activities** are concerned, the students did not have many problems with them. Though numerous vocabulary items could not be directly translated into Polish, the students managed to understand them on the basis of their definitions or exemplary sentences. Moreover, they were able to use them in such productive activities as filling in the sentences.

To sum up, the study proved that it is possible to teach culture to the EFL secondary school students at the upper-intermediate level, yet they have to be provided with proper training in an open and tolerant school environment ready for treating culture as concepts, attitudes and behaviours rather than facts and figures. Some students found it difficult to comprehend concepts or ideas that were completely different from those they knew from their own environment. They tended to look at the British culture or even judge the British culture from the perspective of the Polish culture. Trying to remain objective is definitely the most difficult aspect of any intercultural encounter. This is also what needs systematic training and numerous communicative situations with people from other cultures as the students lacked this kind of training and appropriate experience.

6. Conclusions

The need to incorporate the culture dimension in EFL teaching is now undeniable. The present study has shown that adopting the principles of the intercultural approach accompanied by the use of authentic materials, in this case newspapers, may result in working out efficient procedures for teaching culture in EFL lessons. The analysis of the data revealed some interesting results summarized below.

1. The students found the approach implemented in the study useful for learning culture and would like to adopt it in the future.
2. The study affected the students' perceptions of the British culture and enriched their knowledge of Great Britain and its inhabitants.
3. The study also showed a need to prepare Polish students of English to study culture in a different way from that known to them before implementing the intercultural approach in its complete version. The most difficult problem for the students was to remain objective and stop viewing other cultures through the lenses of being a Polish student.

However, to fully confirm the usefulness of the intercultural approach an extensive empirical research is necessary.

The changing nature of EFL students' encounters with the native speakers of English requires teachers to redefine their attitudes towards culture teaching as well as the means by which they teach culture. Nevertheless, for many teachers this seems a formidable task. The intercultural approach appears as a solution to those teachers who are insecure about what and how to teach when it comes to culture during their English lessons. This chapter has dealt only with some general principles and selected instructional practices the intercultural approach can offer to foreign language teachers.

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Appendix 1: Lesson 2 - British tea rooms

adapted from: The Guardian, Saturday 6 October 2001

Where everything stops for tea

There is nowhere else in the world where they take the ritual so seriously. Stephen Cook recommends some of the best tea rooms in Britain

Stephen Cook

Apoplexy, catarrh, tuberculosis, and gallstones: when tea first came to Britain in the 17th century, the merchants claimed it could cure all of man's illnesses. But what can it do for us as a new 21st-century anxiety descends and we feel that the world has changed?

The consumption of tea has gone down by 30% in the last decade, and the Tea Council is fighting back with new information about the healthy properties of tea, which are more modest and scientifically based than in the 17th century. But the new guide to English tea shops suggests that the institution remains strong and is developing and adapting to modern habits.

Where fat isn't an issue

Joanne Harris thinks the English tea shop draws on nostalgia for something most of us never had - the cake stands, the doilies and the decorative spoons, the kind of crockery you only see in your oldest granny's house.

"I think that when we go to these places, we always take it with a lot of salt," says Harris, author of the cult novel *Chocolat*. "We know it's a bit of a joke, but it's a comfortable joke and one we feel great affection for. The whole ritual is something we never bother with in ordinary life, because who's around for afternoon tea? Who can normally spare an hour at four o'clock, for heaven's sake?"

Her favourite tea shop is Betty's in Harrogate. "When I was a child, political correctness didn't exist, and I used to dream of living in a big house with a maid called Jane and a cook and a gardener, and Betty's is based on the assumption that we all remember something like that."

Margaret Thornby's Guide to the Tea Rooms of Britain features 259 places. They range from thatched cottages to luxury hotels, listed buildings to converted barns, restored railway stations to museums and galleries.

1. **Badgers** - a Victorian-style tea room in a light and airy building where the cakes are home-made and wheeled to your table on a trolley by staff who wear uniforms. The ultimate treat is the Victorian tea - a three-tiered cake stand creaking with sandwiches, cakes and scones. Unit 27, Victoria Shopping Centre. Monday-Saturday 9.30am to 5pm, and Sundays 11.30am to 4.30pm.

2. **The Old Bakery Tea Rooms** - a bakery for more than 100 years, and you can sometimes see the owner emerging from the kitchen with plates of fruit, cheese or cherry scones still warm from the oven. It's a traditional sort of place: flowers on the tables, embroidered linen, friendly welcome. Special feature: window display of home-made cakes. Queen's Head Court, Newark, Nottinghamshire. Tuesday - Saturday, 10am to 4pm.

3. **The Corn Dolly** - a 17th-century cruck-framed building with wooden floors and pine tables. There's good service and a big dresser supporting home-made cakes, some of them with three layers of sponge. A wide range of set teas includes savoury options like the Gamekeeper's Tea. 115a East Street, South Molton, Devon. Monday to

"And so there are plump, jolly waitresses who all have a warm sense of humour and make cheerful conversation. They wear mob caps and frilly aprons and say things like, 'You should eat more, sweetheart, you're looking a bit peaky'.

A big contrast to Betty's are the tea shops she saw in Paris when her book was being made into a film with Juliette Binoche. "You couldn't possibly ask for something like a fat rascal or chocolate cake because you'd be served by a perfectly dressed young waiter in black Armani, who would look at you as if to say, yes, and I know what shape you're going to be after eating that."

‘Where everything stops for tea’ – glossary:

nostalgia - a feeling that a time in the past was good, or the activity of remembering a good time in the past and wishing that things had not changed

doily - a circle of paper or cloth with a pattern of holes in it that you put under things to protect the surface below, or for decoration

crockery - cups, dishes, plates etc

take sth with a lot of salt - to not completely believe what someone tells you

mob cap - a light cotton hat with a decorative edge, worn by women in the 18th and 19th centuries

apron - a piece of clothing that covers the front part of your clothes and is tied around your waist, worn to keep your clothes clean, especially while cooking

peaky - looking pale and ill

score - a small round cake, sometimes containing dried fruit, which is usually eaten with butter

Introduction – Questionnaire on tea rooms (results)

1. Which drink is more popular in Poland?

	votes
tea	11
coffee	5

2. How do Poles usually drink tea?

a. when? -> *morning (9), afternoon (1), after dinner (3), evening (1), all day (2)*

b. where? -> *at home (12), at a café (1), everywhere (4)*

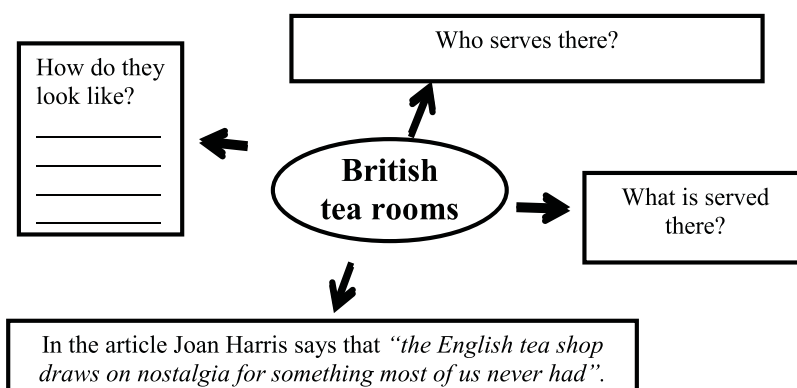
3. A tea room is a place which primarily serves tea and other light snacks.

Are there any tea rooms in Poland?

	votes
yes	5
no	12

Activities

1. The British are often associated with tea drinking. In pairs, make a list of associations that you have with tea drinking in Britain.
2. Read the text about tea rooms in Britain quickly and check whether your associations from the previous task were correct. Is tea really so popular in Britain nowadays?
3. Read the text again and fill the graph with information about British tea rooms.



4. Read the description of the three tea shops again. Now imagine a following situation. A foreign tourist comes to Britain. He's thirsty and decides to have a cup of tea. He enters Badgers and orders 'Victorian tea'. After a few minutes he gets a whole plate of various cakes and biscuits. He's surprised and thinks that the waitress made a mistake. Did she? What is the source of such a misunderstanding? Discuss in groups of three or four.

5. Vocabulary – phrases and idioms with tea

a. In English there are many phrases and idioms connected with tea. Read the phrases below and try to match them with their definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. tea and sympathy | f. tea sandwich |
| b. high tea | g. tea party |
| c. be no tea party | h. not for all the tea in China |
| d. not be your cup of tea | i. a storm in a teacup |
| e. low tea | j. as good as a chocolate teapot |

1. _____ -> to not be the type of thing that you like
2. _____ -> to be very difficult or unpleasant to do
3. _____ -> if you say that you would not do something, you mean that nothing could persuade you to do it
4. _____ -> a small prepared sandwich meant to be eaten at afternoon teatime to keep off hunger until the main meal
5. _____ -> kindness and attention that you give someone when they are upset
6. _____ -> a situation where people get very angry or worried about something that is not important
7. _____ -> a meal of cold food, cakes etc eaten in the early evening (typically between 5pm and 7pm)
8. _____ -> someone or something that is completely useless
9. _____ -> a small meal snack typically eaten between 3pm and 5pm
10. _____ -> a small party in the afternoon at which tea, cake etc is served

b. Now fill the sentences with the correct phrases and idioms with tea.

1. 'It's 6 pm so I think it's high time for our
2. I think you should let me invite a few people and organize a little or something.
3. The test was It was so difficult that half of the class failed it.
4. "Would you like to live in Warsaw?" "Definitely no.!"
5. I don't know why I have to learn Math. I think it's
6. Sometimes sad people want practical advice and sometimes they just want
7. My mum hasn't even started to cook the dinner so let's have a not to starve.
8. I think it's all - there's probably no danger to public health at all.
9. 'I'm a bit hungry. At 4 pm I'm finishing work so maybe we'll go for
10. Jazz just - I prefer classical music.

Homework

You are going to set up a traditional tea room in London. Basing on the text decide what characteristics it will have. Think of what will be served, who will serve, how the place will look like. Write a short plan (on a separate sheet of paper).

Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Pre-study questionnaire

1. To what extent do you agree with the following sentences? Circle the options that you choose.

A – I totally agree

B – I agree

C – I disagree

D – I totally disagree

E – I don't have any opinion

a. Learning the culture of a country is important when learning the language of that country.	A	B	C	D	E
b. The foreign language lessons should also include the culture of the countries where that language is used.	A	B	C	D	E
c. I would like to know more about the culture of the English-speaking countries.	A	B	C	D	E

2. To what extent are the following techniques useful when learning about the culture of a foreign country? Circle the options that you choose.

1 – not useful

2 – hardly useful

3 – useful

4 – very useful

a. teacher's lecture	1	2	3	4
b. analyzing differences and similarities between cultures	1	2	3	4
c. watching films	1	2	3	4
d. listening to songs	1	2	3	4
e. listening to the radio	1	2	3	4
f. reading newspapers and magazines	1	2	3	4
g. discussing current events	1	2	3	4
h. reading literary texts (for example poems)	1	2	3	4
i. doing projects	1	2	3	4
j. acting scenes	1	2	3	4
k. other:	1	2	3	4

3. Which aspects of the British culture are you most interested in? Rank them from 1 to 10 where 1 means the most interesting aspect and 10 the least interesting.

a. geography _____

b. history _____

c. holidays and customs _____

d. literature, art and music _____

e. the political system _____

f. education _____

- g. daily life and family life _____
- h. culinary traditions and dishes _____
- i. non-verbal communication _____
- j. young people's life and subcultures _____

4. What are the sources of your knowledge about Great Britain? Tick the options that you choose.

- a. English lessons
- b. the press
- c. the Internet
- d. talks with other people
- e. contacts with the British people
- f. travelling to Great Britain
- g. television and films
- h. literature
- i. other:

5. With what types of the British press have you ever had contact? If you remember the titles, please write them on the dotted lines.

- a. daily newspapers [],
- b. Sunday newspapers [],
- c. popular magazines [],
- d. thematic magazines [],
- e. on-line press editions [],
- f. other [] what?

6. What are your three first associations with...?

a. Great Britain

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b. the British people

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

c. the British culture

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Information about the person filling in the questionnaire.

1. Gender.

Woman Man

2. How long have you learnt English?

- less than 2 years
- between 2 and 5 years
- between 5 and 8 years
- more than 8 years

3. Do you learn English outside school? Tick all the options that fit.

- Yes, in a language school
- Yes, I have private lessons
- Yes, I learn on my own
- Yes, other:
- No, I learn English only at school

Post-study questionnaire

1. To what extent do you agree with the following sentences? Circle the option that you choose.

A – I totally agree

B – I agree

C – I disagree

D – I totally disagree

E – I don't have any opinion

a. Lessons during which the British press was used have motivated me to expand my knowledge of the culture of the English-speaking countries.	A	B	C	D	E
b. The British press is useful while learning about the British culture.	A	B	C	D	E
c. Using the British press during the English lessons was not difficult for me.	A	B	C	D	E

2. Would you like to use the British press in the following cases in the future? Circle the chosen answers.

- a. during English lessons YES/NO
- b. while learning English independently YES/NO
- c. while learning about the British culture YES/NO
- d. while reading for pleasure YES/NO
- e. other:

3. Decide to what extent the four lessons about the British culture have been interesting for you. Rank them from 1 to 4 where 1 means the most interesting lesson and 4 the least interesting.

- a. multiculturalism in Britain —
- b. British tea rooms —
- c. British social classes —
- d. British attitude towards the forests —

4. To what extent were the following tasks used during the last four lessons useful for expanding your knowledge of the British culture? Circle the options that you choose.

- 1 – not useful
- 2 – hardly useful
- 3 – useful
- 4 – very useful

a. short questionnaires about elements of the Polish culture and comparing cultural phenomena in Poland and Great Britain	1	2	3	4
b. filling tables and graphic organizers on the basis of the text	1	2	3	4
c. filling sentences on the basis of the text	1	2	3	4
d. written statements	1	2	3	4
e. expressing one's point of view	1	2	3	4

5. What are your three first associations with...?

a. Great Britain

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

b. The British people

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

c. The British culture

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Appendix 3: Short Polish culture questionnaires

Questionnaire 1 - multiculturalism

Please briefly answer the following questions:

1. How often do you meet foreigners in Poland? (Once a day? Twice a week? Never? etc.)

.....

2. How often do you think people from towns smaller than Lublin meet foreigners in Poland?

.....

3. Is there in your neighbourhood, city or school...? Underline your answer.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • a restaurant or a pub run by a foreigner | Yes/No/I don't know |
| • a mosque, a synagogue or a temple | Yes/No/I don't know |
| • a non-Polish doctor or nurse | Yes/No/I don't know |
| • a non-Polish teacher | Yes/No/I don't know |
| • a non-Polish student | Yes/No/I don't know |

4. What ethnic minorities live in Poland? (you may give the answers in Polish)

.....

5. What is the proportion of ethnic minorities in the population of Poland? %

Questionnaire 2 – tea rooms

1. Which drink is more popular in Poland? Tea or coffee?

2. How do Poles usually drink tea?

a. when?

b. where?

3. A tea room is a place which primarily serves tea and other light snacks.

Are there any tea rooms in Poland? Yes / No

If Yes, what do they look like?

Questionnaire 3 – social classes

1. What social classes are present in Poland? (you may give the answers in Polish)

.....

.....

2. What decides about belonging to a given social class in Poland? Tick the chosen answers.

- family background _____
- age _____
- salary _____
- place of living _____
- education _____
- lifestyle _____
- property _____

3. Which class do you feel you belong to? Why?

my social class:

because:
.....
.....
.....

Questionnaire 4 – woods

1. Are ecological issues important in Poland? YES/NO

2. Do ecological issues often appear in the Polish media? YES/NO

3. What ecological issues are or were dealt with in the Polish media?

.....
.....

4. Do people in Poland care about the forests? YES/NO

5. What is your personal attitude towards ecological protests?

.....
.....

(liczba znaków ze spacjami: 51 552)