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**DEVELOPING LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY USING
MULTICULTURAL SOURCES AT THE ENGLISH LESSON**

**VALODAS KOMPETENCES ATTĪSTĪŠANA IZMANTOJOT
DAUDZKUTĒRU AVOTUS ANĢĻU VALODAS STUNDĀ**

DIPLOMA PAPER

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Declaration of Academic Integrity

I hereby declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged material from any source.

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ABSTRACT

The present research analyzes the development of intercultural competence by using multicultural sources at the English lesson. The goal of the research paper is to investigate the effectiveness of using multicultural sources at the English lesson. The author of the present research has chosen following methods of the research: theoretical analysis of the literature, case study, questionnaires for the target population and piloting the empirical part of the research. The data gathered by questionnaires, demonstrated a sense of cultural competence, respondents showed the knowledge of different cultural practices, worldviews, and cross-cultural skills and emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character. During writing her Diploma Paper the author piloted the participation of her students in two art competitions “Europe at School” and The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security organized European poster creation competition entitled “Children’s right to protection”. The most important conclusion drawn by the author is: every culture has certain values and traditions that make it different from other cultures and our intercultural competence is being raised by obtaining different cultural information and then applying this knowledge into competence.

ANOTĀCIJA

Pētījums aplūko mijkultūru kompetences attīstību angļu valodas stundā, izmantojot daudzkultūru avotus. Pētījuma mērķis ir – izpētīt daudzkultūru avotu efektivitāti mācību procesā. Pētījuma metodes ir – vispārteorētiskās (zinātniskās literatūras, dokumentācijas analīze), mērķauditorijas anketēšana, pedagoģisko situāciju analīze, datu apstrāde. Anketēšana datu apstrādes rezultātā atklājās skolēnu dziļa kultūras pamatvērtību izpratne, spēja izprast dažādas kultūras, viņiem piemīt plašs redzesloks. Nodarbībā „Indiāņu vārdi” skolēni demonstrēja spējas novērtēt pašiem savas, kā arī citu klases biedru tipiskākās rakstura iezīmes. Pētījuma norises laikā skolēni piedalījās divos Eiropas Komisijas atbalstītos konkursos: „Eiropa skolā” un „Bērnu tiesības uz aizsardzību”. Pētījuma ir secināts, ka katra kultūra ir unikāla un iepazīstot dažādus daudzkultūru avotus mēs attīstām savu valodas un starpkultūru kompetenci.

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INTRODUCTION

Many language teachers have emphasized that the primary aim of foreign language teaching is to enable learners to communicate with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the modern multicultural world.

Planaria J.Price has emphasized that every culture has certain values and traditions that make it different from other cultures. These specific characteristics have developed as a result of the experiences of the people of that culture and the history of the people. (1997:14)

Thus, although the linguistic competence is essential for the development of the communicative language competence, the intercultural competence of learners is also of great importance.

Tales, myths, legends, folk songs, proverbs and sayings, and superstitions are well-known multicultural sources, and they can serve as motivating factors to quicken an interest in the English language.

A number of authors, Susan Basnet (1993), Peter Grundy (1993), Planaria J.Price (1997), and others have investigated the use of multicultural sources in the English language classes; however, to the author's knowledge there have not been many studies in Latvia dealing with multicultural sources at English language lessons.

Therefore, the author considers new methods and theories in developing language intercultural competence worth studying.

The goal of the research paper is to investigate the effectiveness of using multicultural sources at the English lesson.

The following **hypothesis** has been formulated:

Using multicultural sources at the English lesson serves as an effective tool in developing learners' intercultural competence as well as language competence.

The suggested enabling **objectives of the diploma paper** are the following:

- to study theoretical literature on multicultural sources and the development of intercultural competence;

- to design and administer questionnaires for students;
- to pilot the empirical part of the research;
- to draw relevant conclusions.

Research methods:

1. Theoretical analysis of the literature.
2. Case study.
 - questionnaires for the target population;
 - piloting the empirical part of the research.

Structure of the paper: the paper consists of an abstract, introduction, five chapters with subchapters, conclusions, theses, bibliography, and appendixes. Chapter one gives the Definition of Cultural Competence and analyses multicultural world around us. Chapter two presents an overview of Intercultural Competence. Chapter three describes Using of Multicultural sources at the English lesson. Chapter four analyzes Research method of Intercultural Competence development in Council of Europe projects, Chapter five describes the empirical part held in Liepaja secondary school Nr 15.

CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The term “culture” comes from Latin language *cultura* stemming from *colere* meaning nurturing, education, and development.

James Lull (2000:284) provides the following definition of culture:

“Culture is an extremely complex concept defined for our purposes as shared values, assumptions, rules, and social practices that make up and contribute to personal and collective identity and security”.

The term culture was started to be used in the European social though in the second part of the 18th century and its popularity is increasing.

James Lull (2000:129) has emphasized that “culture became an extremely fashionable buzzword inside and outside the academic world in the late twentieth century”.

The word "culture" is most commonly used in three basic senses:

- excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities
- an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning
- the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group.(Online 1)

Every culture has certain values and traditions that make it different from other cultures. Planatia J. Price (2000:12) emphasizes that “these specific characteristics have developed as a result of experiences of the people, and they change over time”.

Another author Ildiko Lazar (2003:8) writes that:

“national culture has a huge influence on people’s values attitudes and behaviors and most of the following exercises can be approached on this level. Nowadays people from different cultures have to negotiate, interact with, understand and accept the behaviors and reactions of people from quite different cultures. Thus is very important that there is an awareness of cultural differences since multicultural groupings are becoming more common in professional settings and elsewhere around the globe”.

Obtaining different cultural information and then applying this knowledge into competence raises our cultural competence. In this way it is possible to understand thoughts, feelings, customs, and possessions of people from different cultural background. We can become acquainted with what they believe in, fear, enjoy, how they speak and behave.

An English author and poet Joseph Rudyard Kipling (30 December 1865 – 18 January 1936) has told “you can not understand your own culture if it is the only culture you know”.

According to Mercedes Martin and Billy Vaughn (2007:31), **Cultural competence** refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four components: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

On the 26th of March 2009 the author of present research presented the seminar “*English at lower secondary- Hell on Earth or a match made in Heaven?*” in the University of Liepaja, led by Rob Dean, teacher Trainer for Pearson **Longman** since 2007. His observation shared during the seminar was that “teenage students still have a lot to learn about the world beyond their own sphere of knowledge. Learning foreign language can't be successful without understanding its cultural background. According to Rob Dean “language needs to have context to have meaning”.

The author of the present research in her practical research focuses on the huge influence on people's values attitudes of culture, that according to author Ildiko Lazar (2003) leads to awareness of cultural differences.

From the above mentioned, we can conclude that raising students' cultural competence comes forward with many benefits, e.g. language acquisition which leads to effective interaction with people from different cultures.

1.1. MODERN MULTICULTURAL WORLD

Most people use the word “culture” to describe activities in the fields of music, art, literature, and film. Expressions of courtesy, rituals and cultural events, family relations, cultural institution are the way of life that is passing on from one generation to another. It includes the mother tongue, the costumes, types of behavior, and values. However, we live in a rapidly

changing world society and closer interaction between various cultures is becoming more and more common. Culture changes, because today many people live alongside others from other cultures and our society is becoming multicultural.

The history of our world gives an obvious evidence of multiculturalism. Throughout history civilizations have influenced other civilizations through trade, migration and conquest. This influence has lasted for thousands of years.

On August the 2nd 2005 British newspaper Daily Telegraph published survey results. In this survey Brits were asked, what Britishness meant to them. Generally, the survey found that the British sense of national identity depends more on shared values and institutions. One British man from Switzerland sent to the newspaper following e- mail:

"Being British is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then traveling home, grabbing an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab on the way, to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a Japanese TV. And the most British thing of all? Suspicion of anything foreign. Diagoras, Switzerland". (Online 2)

The author of present research can surely say that we live in multicultural Latvia. Its culture reflects traditions of Russians, Belarus, Jews, Ukrainians and many other nationalities. Everyone in Latvia has a great impact on by mixed up culture of all nations living her. One of the author's students, Maria Gordina (Liepaja secondary school Nr 15, form 10m), has recently told her:

"I am Ukrainian in Latvia. I have put down my roots here, but I maintain my Ukrainian traditions. I sing in national Ukrainian ensemble "Baravinok" and live in a big pink house with bright blue fence".

CHAPTER II

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Ildiko Lazar (2003:5) has emphasized “the great importance to increase intercultural understanding in the world”. The author of the present research expresses a strong agreement to this opinion, because at the English lesson the priorities are not only to raise grammatical and lexical competence, but raising intercultural competence is also significant. According to Ildiko Lazar (2003:5):

“As teachers educator we have encountered many trainee teachers and language learners who are very highly inexperienced intercultural travelers. Although their grammar and lexical competence in the foreign language may have been outstanding, they did not know how to handle cultural difference”.

2.1. DEFINITION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Nowadays there are modern terms such as intercultural communication, communication and culture, media and culture, culture and the arts, the sociology of culture and many others.

Intercultural competence is a successful communication with people from foreign cultures and as a result- benefiting from the values of different multicultural sources.

Kluckhohn,F.R. (1961:86) emphasizes that “cultural values are invisible until they become evident in behavior”.

The author of present research considers that multicultural sources like tales, myths, legends, folk songs, proverbs and sayings, superstitions and are widely used at the English lessons. Also we can speak about traditions, customs, beliefs and lifestyles.

Ildiko Lazar (2003:19) stresses that

“learning about different ways of thinking leads students to a better understanding of tolerance, compassion and generosity, and advances their acceptance of others, mutual understanding and flexibility in their way of thinking”.

All these ideas are very useful not only for raising an interest of students, but also for teaching grammar, vocabulary and four skills of language.

Ildiko Lazar's (2003:21) observation that:

- intercultural competence must be integrated within the didactic process at the same level as other learning contents and/or skills;
- account must be taken of the learning level and communication needs of the class/group;
- in every process, insistence and focus must be placed on explanations/discussions of the difference;
- it is useful to make use of the experience obtained by certain members of the teaching team and to delegate to them responsibility for teaching of intercultural competence.

has been supported by a number of scholars.

Intercultural competence has commonly been defined as: knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence also plays a role (Deardoff, 2004)(Online 3).

2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

In the past, mainly diplomats and businessmen were doing international transactions. Nowadays the knowledge of the world is especially needed by schoolchildren for many reasons e.g. communicating, working for international companies, managing employees from other countries and cultures, solving global problems etc.

Vivien Stewart, Vice President for Education at Asia Society, and Heather Singmaster, a Program Associate in the Education Program at Asia Society, (2006) consider that international education is generally taken to include: knowledge of otherworld regions, cultures, and global/international issues; skills in communicating languages, working in global cross cultural environments, and using information from different sources around the world; and values of respect and concern for other culture and people.

The author of present research expresses strong confidence that children should be exposed to other cultures. It helps to avoid prejudging the world around them.

Hamburg, David Alan and Hamburg, Beatrix (2004) have noticed that:

“Humans are not born prejudiced against other humans; it is a response to the social environment, reflecting among other things, the need to be affiliated with a group and for adherence to cultural and subcultural norms. If we can constructively expose children to different cultures at a young age, we can reduce the development of prejudice. Simultaneously, this can influence the development of prosocial behavior and foster nonviolent problem solving”.

We live in multicultural environment and raising students` intercultural competence improves their abilities to respect and value other cultures; to be opened to intercultural learning and to people from other countries; to be curious and eager to discover; to be tolerant and success. In addition, there is cognitive benefit e.g. mental flexibility.

The author wishes to emphasize that being intercultural competent is either essential for teacher or student. There are many different ways how to improve students` and teachers` intercultural competence, not only by using course books. We have to supplement them with outside materials. Teachers and students can travel, participate in international exchanges, trying new technology alternatives e.g. videoconferencing, e-mail pen pals, and web quests and many other multicultural sources around us.

Vivien Stewart and Heather Singmaster (2006:10) suggest “Find teachers who are lifetime learners”. They consider that “teacher with a passionate desire to learn provide their students with a richer educational experience. They continue to travel and learn new skills which are passed on in the classroom”.

From the above mentioned we can conclude that intercultural competence should be developed at the English lesson. It is needed by schoolchildren for many reasons e.g. for successful communication with people from foreign cultures, a better understanding of tolerance compassion and generosity, for avoiding prejudging the world around them and mental flexibility

Also we can conclude that being intercultural competent is either essential for teacher or student. There are many different ways how to improve students` and teachers` intercultural competence.

CHAPTER III

USING MULTICULTURAL SOURCES AT THE ENGLISH LESSON

When students learn such themes as houses, clothing, holidays folk tales, music, games and dances at the English lesson different cultural background may be chosen by teacher. E.g. when the theme “folk tales” is being taught teacher can decide to discuss folktales from the native cultures of the students in the class, Russian, Belarus, Jew, Ukrainian and many other nationalities.

Almost everybody today is facing with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students have unique experiences, which as natural resources help them in understanding and respect of other cultures.

To establish a positive learners` attitude and motivation for language at the English lesson is one of the most important aims that is necessary for developing language competence. Increasing positive attitude towards language learning, speaking proficiency, foreign language literacy, cross-cultural awareness, or knowledge about language etc. are different reasons for developing language competence. We can emphasize that language learning is an integral part of a larger life long educational program by highlighting these different reasons.

In order to raise students` language and intercultural competence at the English lesson the author of the present research considers useful the following aspects: students` enjoyment of participating in classroom activities, their ability of linking the real-life language with knowledge obtained in class; enabling to improve their language competence outside the school as well; preserving and developing their natural interest and desire to learn; being interested in building up their cultural knowledge.

The author of the present research considers that using multicultural sources at the English lesson can become a part of the complete language learning experience.

2.1 DIFFERENCE OF THE MULTICULTURAL SOURCES

The goal of the research paper is to investigate the effectiveness of using multicultural sources at the English lesson.

Alan Maley (1989:23) claims that fairy tales, poems, myths, legends and other multicultural sources are "morally educative".

McCarthy and Carter (1994:155) stress the importance of multicultural sources. These sources help learners "to develop a sense of flexibility and versatility of ideas as well as universal values. Stated differently, all texts are ideologically loaded for "culture itself cannot be neutral".

Adrian Holliday (2006:12) stresses that different culture sources can be drawn upon and invoked at different times depending on the circumstances.

These multicultural sources, like tales, myths, legends, folk songs, proverbs and sayings, and superstitions are well known for the author of the present research as an English teacher. Also we can speak about flags, coat of arms, traditions, customs, beliefs and lifestyles.

Although many multicultural sources are being used at the English lesson by the author of the present research, in this Diploma Paper she is studying the Red Indian names, the ethical values found in Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel", symbolic meaning of colors in flags, particularly, Aboriginal tricolor.

Tatjana Lesjak, B.A., (1997:108) University of Ljubljana, Slovenia emphasizes that "words are used to express our happiness or sadness, they can wound, make us happy, and they can give a hope or even drive into despair. Lives are formed through these actions and throughout the history of mankind, great thinkers and charismatic leaders have made people aware of the powerful words".

Anthony Robbins (1991:35) has noted that "words are the material from which all the questions we ask each other are carved out".

From the above mentioned, we can conclude that names have an important culturalogical effect on people.

Native Americans long time ago had recognized the great influence of person's name on personality.

It is considered that Native American names are very interesting as names for babes because they have much meaning behind them. Rooted in forces of nature, religion and personally desired characteristics, they translate into poetic epithets. They are meant to herald great events and are to be celebrated, as these aptly named babies are welcomed into the tribe. (Online 4)

It promotes a sense of common ethnicity. Nevertheless each particular tribe has its own “naming” costumes.

The author of the present research stresses at this point that each of these Red Indian names has very philosophic meaning behind it. Here are some examples following. See *table 2.1*. (Online 4):

Red Indian Name	Tribe	The meaning of the name
BONITA	Cherokee	Beautiful
WOYA	Cherokee	Dove
CHA'KWAINA	Hopi	One who cries
ANYOKA	Cherokee	She brought happiness
ABEQUA, ABEQUE	Cheyenne	Stays at home

Table 2.1.

Tatjana Lesjak, B.A, (1997:108).stresses, that “the language of symbols is used in order to express the cognitive and emotional depths of our Egos (Self- Ego IDENTITY), and in order to enter into communicational interaction with other people”.

We are surrounded by different objects, pictures, written words, sounds, particular marks that represent something else by association. E.g. the first association about country might be its flag. The object-flag we see is usually rectangular or square which is made up of one or more distinctive colors, but it is considered that the colors, used in flags, represent the values or ideals of the country.

Symbolic meaning of colors in flags may have two primary ways- natural associations and psychological symbolism. (Online 5)

The Latvian flag (maroon and white) has existed as a Latvian symbol since the late 13th century and was adopted as the national flag in 1921. Independence lasted until 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied Latvia and

in 1991 Latvian independence was again confirmed. It is difficult to attribute specific symbolism of colors in Latvian flag because of its age. Rather modern interpretation suggests that maroon connotes the blood shed for Latvian freedom and white for purity of freedom. (Online 5)

Flags are used by countries for the main reason - flag is a country's way of portraying itself to the rest of the world. Some flags have specific names e.g. Russian flag is sometimes called "Imperial flag" and the flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland- "Union Jack".

Many hours are spent on their flag design. Each flag has its own "story", history. (Online 5) E.g. there have been some "flag debates" (Australian flag debate, New Zealand flag debate).

Flags change as nation change. The Australian flag has changed five times since 1788. These changes have occurred without any plebiscites or referendums- the current blue ensign was not adopted until 1953 by executive decision. (Online 6)

The study of flags is known as "vexillology" and people who are interested in historical social and symbolical background of flags are "vexillologists". There is a system of flag identification symbols created by Whitney Smith — the founder of vexillology (1957), director of the Flag Research Center.

James Lull (2000:173) emphasizes:

A "symbolic form" can't be thought of as something as simple as physical gesture, verbal utterance, or cave painting, But for our purposes symbolic form refers mainly to the content of human communication mediated by print, photographic, filmic, audio, televisual, or digital technologies of reproduction and transmission.

Symbolic forms don't appear randomly or in isolation. They constitute codes, require literacies, and promote some interpretations over others. They are choreographed to serve the purposes of their authors and sponsors. Although the meanings of symbolic forms can never be completely fixed, they reflect certain social, cultural, and ideological themes and biases. Symbolic forms are shaped into narratives, genres, and discourses by communications media and by audiences. That is an important part of the way symbolic forms assume their character and force.

The author of the present research considers that multicultural source- flags can be used at the English lesson.

One of the multicultural sources – fairy tales, found in various forms that depend on nation can be as a natural starting point for discussions and activities based English lesson. However,

the themes and motifs are very similar in fairy tales from different cultural background e.g. happiness through suffering, wisdom, escaping, generosity and meanness, triumph of the weakest. The author considers fairy tales as an extremely important multicultural source for development of language competence, because students can take an active part in the learning process, they can use their previous knowledge, express their emotions and use their imagination. Fairy tales is a way how to and to find

To raise students` language competence Grimm`s fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel” is going to be analyzed and discussed in class. Useful ethical values in this fairy tale are found by the author of the present research. Students can appreciate the ideas of others and find their own solutions for various situations to learn.

.Jakob Karl Grimm was born on January 4, 1785, in Hanau, Germany. His brother, Wilhelm Karl Grimm, was born on February 24 of the following year. Their writings are focused on national culture, especially folk tales. Both brothers were truly interested in their in the past of their own country. See *figure 2.2*.



Figure 2.2.

Brothers Grimm

The author of present research expresses a strong conviction that nowadays children are surrounded by “wicked stepmothers and witches” in appearance of many addictions: computer games, alcohol, drugs, etc. and there is much to learn how to protect themselves form all these dangers and there is very rich advice found in this fairy tale.

2.3. MULTICULTURAL ENGLISH LESSON

When students arrive to school their personal values are formed by family and childhood messages, folklore of their culture, social pressures: rewards and punishment, religious education, peer groups.

The author of present research observes multicultural society around her at school she works. There are students from very different cultural backgrounds (Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, etc) in each class and they are comparing and contrasting different cultural values with the average values of their culture. Very important areas here would be behavior, cultural reference, beliefs taboos and values.

For the teacher of the English language the most important goal at the English lesson is to raise learners' language competence.

The perception of language at the English lesson depends on many different factors e.g. motivation, teacher's proficiency, appropriate course book and others.

Michael Byram, (1997:10) University of Durham, UK, has prioritized a number of aims for the cultural dimension of language teaching:

- 1) Giving pupils knowledge and understanding of relevant culture;
- 2) Breaking down prejudices and developing pupils' tolerance;
- 3) Giving pupils understanding of their own cultural identity;
- 4) Developing pupils' ability to see similarities and differences between countries;
- 5) Helping pupils to acquire an interested and critical attitude to cultural social issues;
- 6) Making language teaching more motivating.

Roberto Lado (1986:59) in his article "Comparing two cultures" has outlined "For cultural reference, training should be available not only in the use of the excellent culture and language dictionaries which are now in bookshops, but also knowing when cultural reference is vital to understanding and when it is not".

Planaria J. Price (2000:3), the University of Michigan, stresses, that" learning means struggling, questioning, repeating, forgetting, repeating again, making mistakes, and finally internalizing the sound of the word with its meaning". She gives advice to students "open

your eyes and look at the details in the stories and fairy tales and you will be surprised at how easy it will be to find clues to vocabulary and cultural values” because “just one small detail can help you guess the meaning of a word and show the difference between one culture and another”.

An associate professor of teacher education at San Diego State University, California, USA, Jill Kerper Mora considers that during the educational process student “reflects the cultural diversity and creates a bridge between their real-life experience and academic learning”. (Online 7)

From the above mentioned, the author can conclude that multiculturalism should be reflected to the English lesson to raise (Byram, 1997:10) the understanding of relevant culture; breaking down prejudices; developing students’ tolerance; giving students understanding of their own cultural identity and making language teaching more motivating.

2.3.1. USING VISUALS AT THE ENGLISH LESSON

Using Visuals is well known and often used in foreign language teaching. Much research has been done in this field. The main types, techniques and features are explored by David Hill (1990), Jack Lonergan (1990), Andrew Wright and David Betteridge (1991).

The author has observed that students of all ages enjoy learning through visual arts at the English lesson. Visuals offer great opportunities for verbal communication. They provide motivation and give nonverbal stimuli for what is said or done. The human brain is influenced by colors, shapes, images so that more senses are involved in the reception of information. There are different kinds of visual arts:

- Sources of pictures: newspapers, magazines, advertisements, brochures, catalogues, calendars, greeting, postcards, art reproductions, post cards, stamps, collages, teacher’s and student’s own drawings, photographs and slides;
- Video and TV films;
- Theatre, ballet or real life gestures, movements and mime;
- Multimedia computer software;
- Maps and diagrams;
- Symbols and signs.

The author of the present research wishes to emphasize the important role of student's drawings. In this way they set up special relationship with color, value, line, shape, form, texture and space. Students may express their feelings using the elements of art for different activities. They can express "happiness" or "sadness". Therefore using of visual arts can be applicable at the lesson of foreign language.

The author considers that using visuals has become an important tool for raising students' intercultural competence. She wishes to illustrate this assurance with Chinese proverb which says "I hear and I forget. I see and remember. I do and I understand"

Violetta Tacheva(1997: 141), Foreign Language Department, Varna University of medicine, Bulgaria emphasizes that "the direction is from visual arts to verbal communication, or how through medium of visual arts we provoke the students to produce foreign language: to speak, to write, to communicate".

From the above mentioned in this chapter, the author of the present research has noticed that there is still place for acquisition of knowledge about the tacit values believes and practices which make up culture.

CHAPTER IV

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE PROJECTS IN COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Resolution (98) 11 of Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on July 1998 at the 638th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies says:

The Representatives on the Committee of Ministers of the states members of the enlarged partial agreement establishing the European Centre for Modern Languages: Andorra, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia",

Convinced that the continuation of the activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages will contribute significantly and specifically, within the framework of cultural co-operation, to respect for the rich linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe,

Resolve to confirm the continuation of the activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages by means of an enlarged partial agreement of the Council of Europe. The European Centre for Modern Languages will be governed by the appended statute. The services and activities of the centre will be assessed at regular intervals, in accordance with the conditions and the calendar laid down by the governing board. The evaluation reports will be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers. (Online 8)

Also the resolution was accepted that the governing board shall meet at least once a year, in Strasbourg or in Graz.

Ildikó Lázár, a lecturer at the Department of English Language Pedagogy of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary who has obtained an MA degree in English and French Language and Literature (Eötvös Loránd University), and a PhD in Language Pedagogy (Eötvös Loránd University). She is a teacher educator, teaching Language Practice, EFL Methodology and Intercultural Communication courses to pre- and in-service English teachers. She has also been coordinating international research and training projects for the European Center for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe. (Online 9)

Her strong confidence is that "the Council of Europe focuses on language teaching as not only linguistic performance and verbal communication but also such abilities as inter-cultural consciousness and intercultural skills and the ability of discovery of "the other". Under these

conditions the teacher, the backbone of the teaching system, becomes the mediator between two-or more-cultures". (Lazar 2003: 7)

In 2003, the Council of Europe's Centre for Modern Languages in Gratz, Austria carried out research to help incorporate intercultural competence training into teacher education in Europe. The study was led by researchers, Lucyna Aleksandrowicz-Pędich (Białystok University, Poland), Janeta Draghicescu (University of Craiova, Romania), Dora Issaiass (Lanition Lyceum A', Limassol, Cyprus), Nada Šabec (University of Maribor, Slovenia). The research project was a qualitative study using the methods of textual analysis based on questionnaires filled by teachers of English and French. The questionnaire study for the teachers of English was conducted in ten European countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Netherlands, Poland Romania and Slovenia) and for the teachers of French in Cyprus, Estonia, Iceland Malta, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia.

Ildikó Lázár, who was coordinating this international research emphasized:

We followed the exploratory-interpretive paradigm in the design of the research project: (i) non-experimental design, (ii) qualitative data and (iii) interpretive analysis. It is our firm belief that a qualitative study offers valuable insights into opinions and attitudes, and that many processes in education can be best studied by using methods of qualitative research in which emphasis is put on the meaning of the events and the beliefs of the participants in the educational process. Open-ended questions do not impose answers, but invite respondents to provide their own explanations of their behavior. The written texts obtained in the process provide material for discourse analysis and interpretation. (Lazar 2003: 9)

Very important questions were asked:

What are the participating teachers' views on the place of culture in language teaching?

What is the content of individual teachers' cross-cultural instruction in the language classroom?

In order to find answers to these questions questionnaire was prepared which was conducted in the mode of non-comparative analysis. There were made total forty-seven questionnaires for the English group and fifteen for the French. The required respondents were teachers of English and French working primarily with teenagers. This project was conducted entirely on a voluntary basis.

During this research the importance of teaching Inter-cultural competence was compared with teaching grammar, vocabulary and the four skills. Comparing the teaching Inter-Cultural competence to the teaching grammar, vocabulary and the four skills respondents were equally divided. Some respondents expressed their opinion that Inter-Cultural competence is more important than grammar; others considered that both are important. There were respondents who mentioned that they do not attach as much importance to the teaching intercultural competence as to teaching grammar, vocabulary and four skills because it is not included in school syllabus or the school curriculum. One teacher from Estonia admitted that Inter-Cultural competence is “a small component in her teaching compared to grammar, vocabulary and four skills because of the limited number of lessons”. (Lazar 2003: 15)

There are different recommendations of European and national curricula for language teaching and Ildikó Lázár considers that “the focus of language teaching and language teacher education is still, to a large extent, the development of grammatical and lexical competence”. (Online 9) However, she emphasizes that “a good knowledge of grammar rules, a rich vocabulary, a few memorized speech acts and cultural facts will not sufficiently help non-native speakers of a foreign language to socialize, negotiate or make friends in the foreign language”. (Online 9)

She stresses, that “furthermore, native or near native fluency alone will not necessarily help native or non-native speakers of a language to successfully communicate with people from other cultures either”. (Online 9)

The author of the present research gives some examples from the respondents' answers. Dutch teacher, who teaches in a multicultural school, “says that contact with people of other cultures for him does not make a big difference, every one felt that there is a lot to learn and benefit from in such contacts and that it is well worth passing it on to their students”. (Lazar 2003: 14) One teacher from Poland stresses, that Inter-Cultural competence is “inseparable from teaching English”, as “Without it, students will be unable to make sense of the communication process despite their grammar and vocabulary.” (Lazar 2003: 14) The majority of respondents could explain the importance of teaching of Inter-Cultural competence and there were quite a few who did not explain why they hold that particular opinion.

Various aspects of culture, which respondents consider most important in the teaching of a foreign language were mentioned. Items included were:

- traditions and customs;
- history and civilization;
- popular culture, legends and myths;
- stereotypes;
- geography;
- religion;
- beliefs (different ways of thinking and reacting);
- theory and practice of democracy and individual rights;
- socio-politics;
- everyday life and routine, lifestyle and habits;
- art, music, cinema, literature and festivals;
- contemporary life and civilization;
- food;
- social rules and behavior;
- politeness and good manners, and degrees of formality;
- the educational system

Certain general conclusions are allowed according the analysis of the responses to the questionnaires supplied by teachers. All the respondents recognized the important role of Inter-cultural competence for communication in a foreign language and, they recognized its significance in foreign language teaching.

As the most important conclusion the author of the present research considers that skills of Inter-cultural competence should be contained in the teaching process.

This research proved that teachers who have had their own personal intercultural experiences are better able to “find more adequate methodological approaches to present the message of the other cultures”. (Lazar 2003: 35)

CHAPTER V

THE EMPIRICAL PART

5.1. THE PURPOSE OF THE EMPIRICAL PART

The purpose of the empirical part stems out hypothesis of the research paper. The core of the hypothesis is to expose the importance of using multicultural sources at the English lesson which serves as an effective tool in developing learners' intercultural competence. In this paper the cultural context chosen by the author is the well-known multicultural sources - tales, myths, legends, folk songs, proverbs, sayings and superstitions.

Although many multicultural sources are being used at the English lesson by the author of the present research, in this Diploma Paper she is studying the Red Indian names, the ethical values found in Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel", symbolic meaning of colors in flags, particularly, Aboriginal tricolor.

The author considered new methods and theories in that field worth studying.

5.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The respondents are aged from 14 to 16 are the students from grade 8 and 9, having pre-intermediate and intermediate of the English language proficiency. The author has been working with these students as the teacher of the English language for four years. It has given her the opportunity to observe and analyze the students' development in a wide context and apply in practice ideas of "developing students' intercultural competence by using multicultural sources at the English lesson". The subjects were observed and activities piloted by the author during a fixed period of time (between 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 school years) in Liepaja Secondary School Nr 15.

The data of the research has been systematically collected using qualitative elicitation methods and the results obtained were interpreted and explored.

5.3. THE PROCEDURE OF THE EMPIRICAL PART

To accomplish the research, the author implemented the following steps.

The first step was to establish the focus of the study by forming questions about the situation or problem to be studied and determining a purpose for the study, to investigate the object of the case study in depth using a variety of data gathering methods to produce evidence that leads to understanding of the case and answers the research questions. The purpose of the present research is to investigate the effectiveness of using multicultural sources at the English lesson. During this part the author was studying theoretical literature on multicultural sources and the development of intercultural competence.

The next step was to select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques. The most important issue here was to determine what approaches to use in selecting single or multiple cases to examine and which instruments and data gathering approaches to use. A useful step to refer back to the purpose of the study in order to focus attention on where to look for cases and evidence that will satisfy the purpose of the study and answer the research questions posed. Tools to collect data include questionnaires, documentation review and class discussions.

During the present research for data collecting the questionnaires were designed and administered. The author developed the questionnaire to realize the most common multicultural sources for English teachers and learners.

In the process of the empirical part students were invited to reflect on multicultural sources. They were implicated in different activities.

5.3.1. THE ACTIVITIES “RED INDIAN NAMES”

Native American names are found exotic by many students. Their names- Sitting Bull, Running Deer, Rising Sun, certainly capture people’s imaginations. These names exhibit signs of personality of the name’s owner. Indian names have been widely used for different activities by counselor and therapist, Donna Brandes in 1990s.

She single-handedly introduced the now widely accepted methods of Student Centred Learning to WA and founded the Regional Association for Student Centred Learning

(RASCL) in 1992. In 2007 she received from PCTWA a prestigious award for her Outstanding Contributions to Education. (Online 10)

ACTIVITY Nr 1

This activity works well as an icebreaker for a new class.

The research tool was done in form 8 A, 1st group. 10 students, 5 boys, 5 girls, pre-intermediate level.

Aims - Group interaction, imagination, intellectual exercise, fun, getting to know each other.

Procedure

1. Elicit or explain the meaning of American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person.
2. Ask student to imagine that the class is going to be a Red Indian tribe for this lesson.
3. Ask each student to choose a Native American name for themselves and display in a piece of paper , on the board e.g.

RUNNING BEAR

GOLDEN FOX

4. Ask students to exchange these pieces of paper and write one- question letter on the other side of the paper.

Dear Golden Fox,

Does your name mean that you are cunning, but kind hearted person.
--

Your friend,

Running Bear

Dear Running Bear,

Does your name mean that you are very strong and also busy person?
--

Your friend,

Golden Fox

Examples of one-question letters, written at the English lesson,, in form 8A.

Nr 1

Dear Jumping Fly,

How are you? I have only one question for you.

Why are you so nosy?

Your friend,

Sharp Broom.

Nr 2

Dear Silent Water,

How are you? What is the weather in your area? I have one very important question for you.

How can you always be so placid, especially when life is sparkling around you?

Your friend,

Wild Dancer

Variations

1. After activity students can do the home exercise-to write the story about their Indian Name.
2. This exercise can also be used as a way of discussing a play or a novel. Each member of the class chooses a character from the play or novel.

Note

This exercise frees the students to improve face to face interaction.

The conclusions drawn after doing this activity are following:

Students elicited and explained the meaning of American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person. Thus they upgraded self-familiarization skills.

Students were asked to imagine that the class is going to be a Red Indian tribe for this lesson and to choose a Native American name for themselves and display in a piece of paper, on the board e.g. Thus they improved their imagination and then ability of interaction.

Finally students were asked to exchange these pieces of paper and write one- question letter on the other side of the paper. This was the way how students revised their letter writing skills.

During this task students interacted with each other successfully and developed their intercultural competence by imagining that the class is going to be a Red Indian tribe for this lesson and choosing a Native American name for them, as well as they developed their language competence by developing writing and reading skills.

ACTIVITY Nr 2

The research tool was done in form 8 a, 1st group. 10 students, 5 boys, 5 girls, pre-intermediate level.

The Aims

- Group interaction, imagination, intellectual exercise, fun, getting to know each other;
- Learning new vocabulary (adjectives -features of character);
- Doing the questionnaire (the most typical feature of character).

Preparation

Prepare the list of adjectives of character. (Appendix 1)

Procedure

1. Elicit and explain the meaning of American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person.
2. Give the list of adjectives of character to each student.
3. Ask each student to do the questionnaire. See appendix 2.
4. Finally students introduce each other with their lists compare and discuss them.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE “RED INDIAN NAME”

The questionnaire “Red Indian name” about the meaning of Native American names was chosen in order for respondents to explain how natural images are used to describe the character of a person. The results of this questionnaire are shown in the table bellow. There were 10 respondents, 5 boys, 5 girls. See appendix 3.

In the following graphs the author has a detailed presentation of the most typical student's features of character, recognized by their classmates.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE "RED INDIAN NAME"

Evaluating the respondents' writings, the main points about the most typical student's features of character were crystallized.

During the class discussion 90% of students agreed with their classmates' opinion about their character. 10% of student disagreed.

Students were asked to select 1, the most appropriate Red Indian name for him/her. 90% of student found the most appropriate Red Indian name 10 % of students did not find the most appropriate Red Indian name.

In the following graphs the author has a detailed presentation of the most typical student's features of character, recognized by their classmates. See *table 5.1*.

Mārtiņš R	Not evaluated
Elīna	Red Flower
Helvijs	Flying Spoon
Beāte	Trustworthy Fly
Lāsma	Cool Fish
Mārtiņš S	Mini Snowflake
Anžejs	Smart Wind
Kitija	Wild Dancer
Zane	Zany Rabbit
Jānis	Friendly Duck

Students were asked to interpret their preferences viva voce -50% selected the funniest of all (Flying Spoon, Cool Fish, Mini Snowflake, Zany Rabbit, Friendly Duck), 20% selected the name that really mirrors his/her character (Smart Wind; Trustworthy Fly), 10%-it refers to his/her hobby (Wild Dancer), 10%-the name sounds good (Red Flower), 10%- did not find appropriate Red Indian name for him/her.

The results showed the relationship between students is based on observation of personality. Data gathered in this questionnaire, emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character.

The following figures demonstrate the most typical features of character of 10 students of form 8a, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15, observed by their classmates. This data is gathered in the questionnaire “Red Indian names”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF MĀRTIŅŠ R

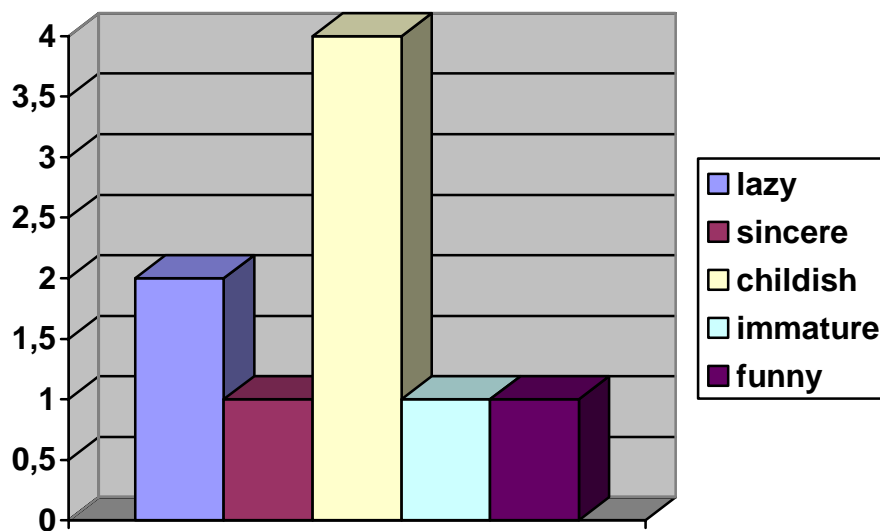


Figure 5.1.

The most typical feature of character of Mārtiņš, observed by his classmates is- “childish”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF ELINA

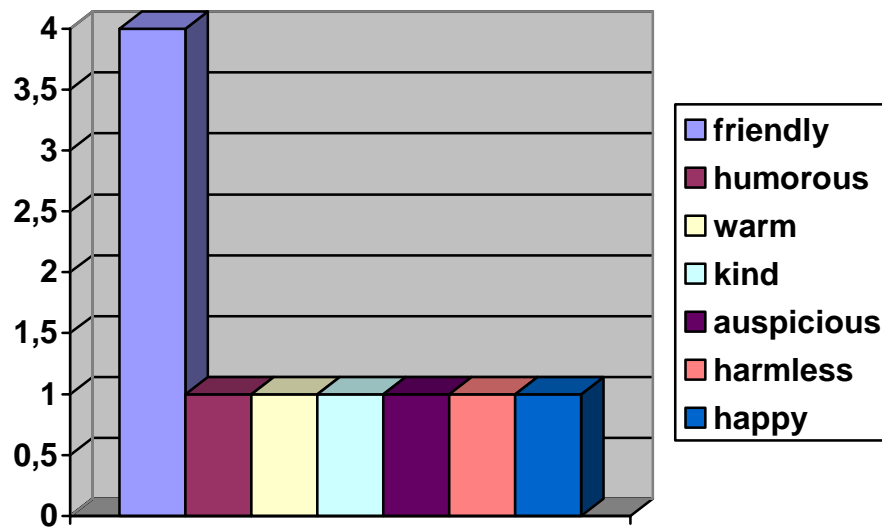


Figure 5.2.

The most typical feature of character of Elina, observed by her classmates is –“friendly”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF HELVIJS

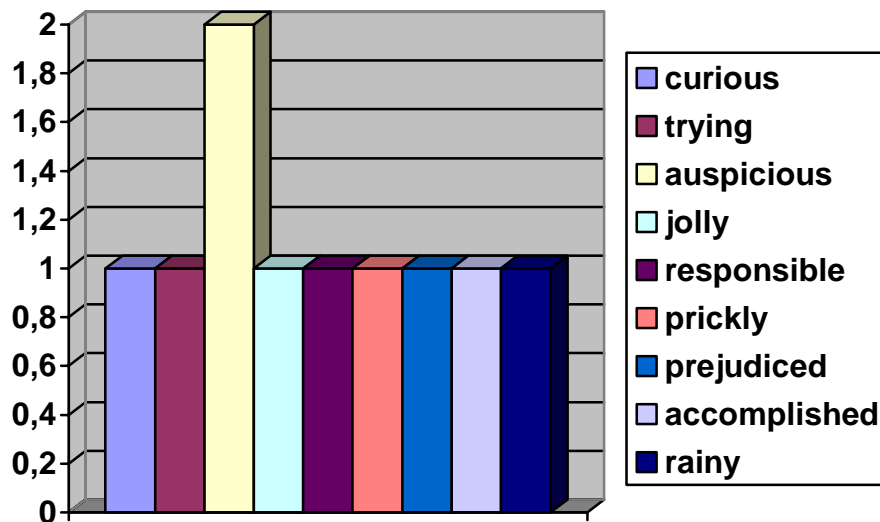


Figure 5.3.

The most typical feature of character of Helvijs, observed by his classmates is – “auspicious”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF BEĀTE

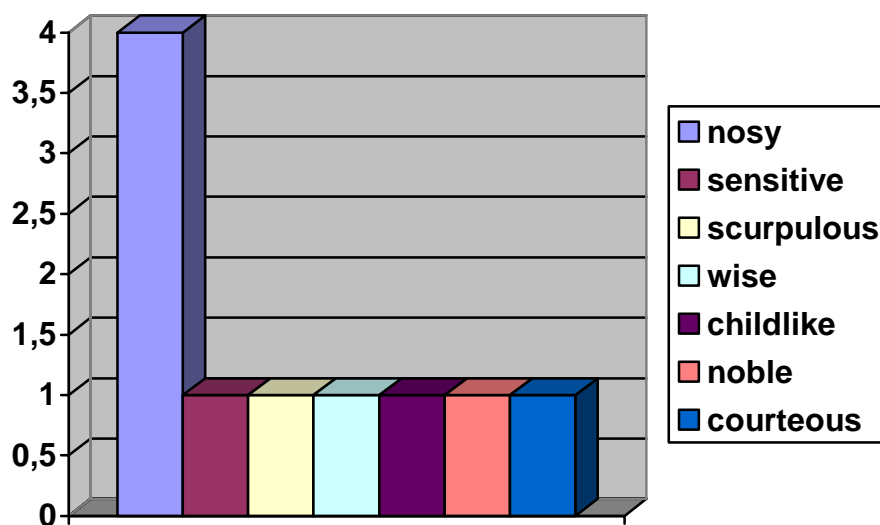


Figure 5.4.

The most typical feature of character of Beāte, observed by her classmates is –“nosy”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF LĀSMA

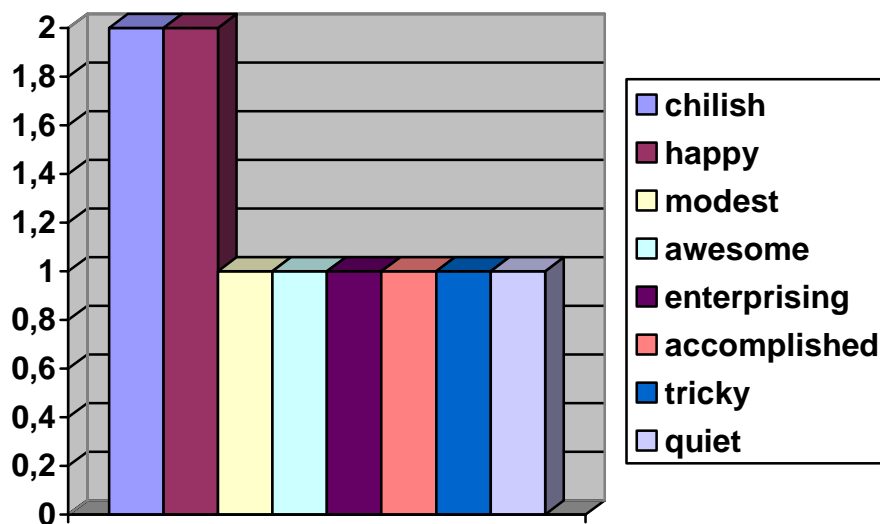


Figure 5.5.

The most typical features of character of Lāsma, observed by her classmates are –“happy” and “childish”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF MĀRTIŅŠ S

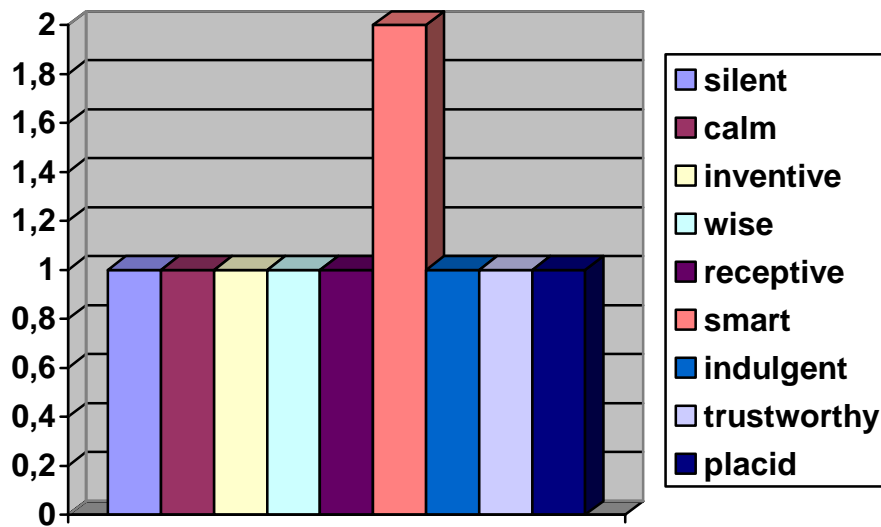


Figure 5.6.

The most typical feature of character of Mārtiņš S, observed by his classmates is –“smart”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF ANŽEJS

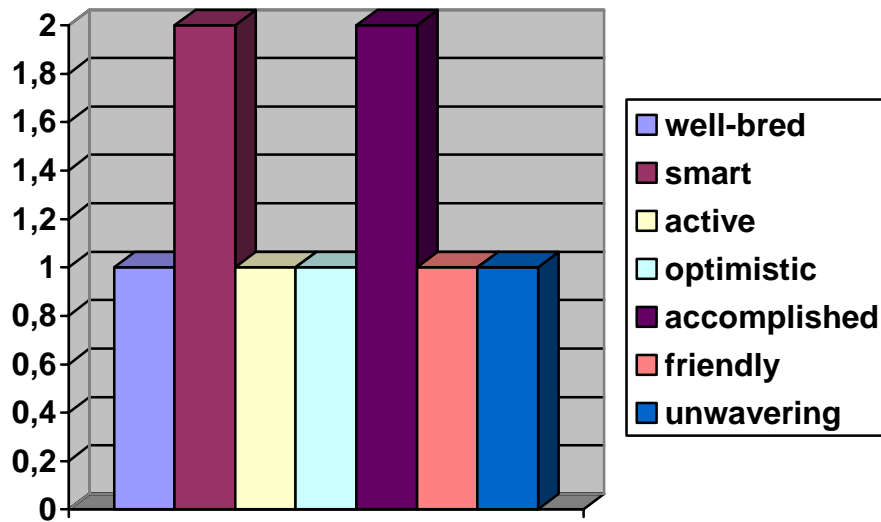


Figure 5.7.

The most typical features of character of Anžejs, observed by his classmates are –“smart” and “accomplished”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF KITIJA

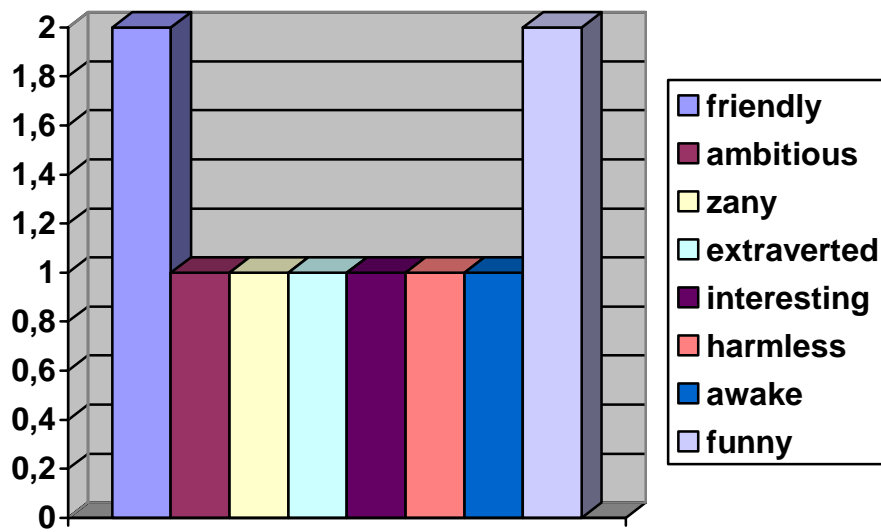


Figure 5.8.

The most typical features of character of Kitija, observed by her classmates are –“friendly” and “funny”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF ZANE

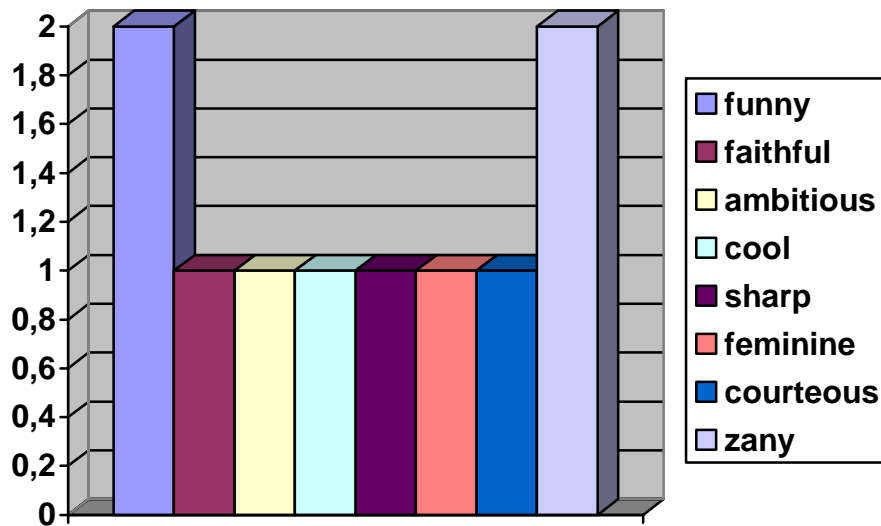


Figure 5.9.

The most typical features of character of Zane, observed by her classmates are –“fanny” and “zany”.

THE MOST TYPICAL FEATURES OF CHARACTER OF JĀNIS

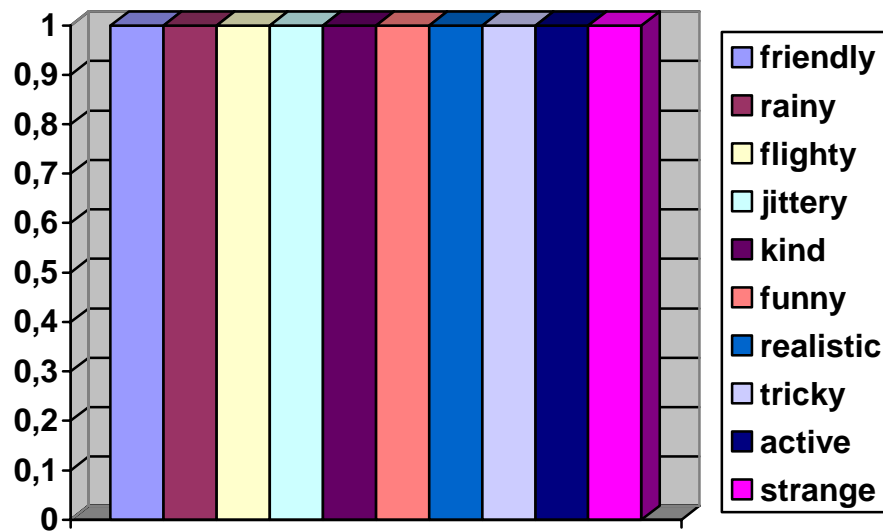


Figure 5.10.

Jānis does not have the most typical feature of character (none of features was mentioned twice at the questionnaire).

The conclusions drawn after doing this activity are following:

Students were given the list of adjectives of character and they mastered obtaining new vocabulary skills. (Appendix 1)

Students elicited and explained the meaning of American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person. Thus they upgraded self-familiarization skills.

Finally students introduced each other with their lists compared and discussed them. This activity provided improving skills of getting to know better each other and one another. They improved their ability of a good group interaction, imagination and cooperation.

The results showed that the relationship between students is based on observation of personality. Data gathered in this questionnaire, emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character.

5.3.2. THE ACTIVITIES “SYMBOLIC MEANING OF COLOURS IN FLAGS”

When one visits a foreign country, it is rarely enough to have a pocket translation dictionary and the proper currency. The merging of culture consists of colors, fonts, shapes, icons and metaphors, geography, language, flags, sounds of other cultures. Our culturability is shown by understanding of these cultural issues.

Recently the author’s students made presentation about one country consisting in EU and Spain was chosen by them. As it can be seen in the following figure, the dominating colors of poster are very similar with those in the flag of Spain. It was just a conjunction, but they explained that these colors, colors of the sun, oranges and passionate red evoked associations of Spain. See *figure 2.1*.



Figure 2.1.

According to Wendy Barber and Albert Badre from Graphics, Visualization & Usability Center/ Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, USA, emphasize, that there are design elements which can be identified as culturally specific. Very often, the colors used in a flag represent the values of that country (or other entity). Some combinations of colors are symbolic in flags, representing ideals or allegiance. (Online 11)

Researchers Patricia Russo and Stephen Boor (1993:346) have illustrated some of the different meanings of colors in the Color-Culture Chart. (Appendix 4)

There are different opinions about symbolic meaning of colors in flags, here are some examples:

- Black often represents determination, ethnic heritage, and/or defeating one's enemies.
- Blue often represents freedom, vigilance, perseverance, justice, prosperity, peace, and/or patriotism.
- Green can symbolize the Earth, agriculture, fertility, and/or the Muslim religion.
- Red often represents courage, revolution, hardiness, blood, and/or valor.
- White often represents peace, purity, mountain snow, and/or innocence. A simple white flag represents surrender.
- Yellow often represents the sun, wealth, and/or justice. (Online 12)

ACTIVITY Nr 1

Creating the story about the symbolic meaning of the Aboriginal Tricolor



Figure 5.11.

The research tool was done in form 8 a, 1st group. 10 students, 5 boys, 5 girls, pre-intermediate level.

The Aims:

- To improve distinguishing among the different countries, their flags and different value systems;
- To create expectations of symbolic meanings of the flags of different countries;
- To improve skills of story telling, listening and writing.

Preparation

The instructive material about Australian Aboriginal culture is prepared. See appendix 5

Procedure

1. Teacher provides some information background about the life of Australian Aborigines and shows the picture of Aboriginal tricolor. (*Figure 5.11.*)
2. Divide the students into groups of three.
3. Each group is asked to appoint a “story teller”, “listener” and a “documenter”. The documenter who has paper and a pen should write notes. The story teller tells the other two in the group the story about the symbolic meaning of the Aboriginal Flag. The listener does nothing while the documenter takes notes.
4. Then the members of the group change roles and the process is repeated.
5. As a result of this activity teacher sticks all the stories onto one big poster, so students can read all the stories.
6. Students do the following questionnaire. See appendix 6.
7. Finally teacher provides basic information about the history of Aboriginal tricolor and symbolic meanings of it. The Aboriginal Flag is divided horizontally into equal halves of **black** (top) and **red** (bottom), with a yellow circle in the centre.

The black symbolizes Aboriginal people and **the yellow** represents the sun, the constant renewer of life. **The red** depicts the earth and peoples' relationship to the land. It also represents ochre, which is used by Aboriginal people in ceremonies. (Online 12)

The flag - designed by Harold Joseph Thomas, a Luritja man from Central Australia - was first flown at Victoria Square, Adelaide, South Australia (see *figure 5.12.*) on National Aborigines' Day on 12 July 1971. It was used later at the Tent Embassy in Canberra in 1972. (Online 12)

Today the flag has been adopted by all Aboriginal groups and is flown or displayed permanently at Aboriginal centers throughout Australia.



Figure 5.12.

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE “SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE ABORIGINAL TRICOLOR”

After storytelling activity respondents were invited to fill the questionnaire about “symbolic meaning of Aboriginal tricolor”. Students wrote following symbolic meanings of the Aboriginal tricolor. (See *table 5.2.*)There were 10 respondents, 5 boys, 5 girls.

What is the symbolic meaning of the half of black in the Aboriginal tricolor?	What is the symbolic meaning of the yellow circle in the centre in the Aboriginal tricolor?	Half of red What is the symbolic meaning of the half of red in the Aboriginal tricolor?
1. Aboriginal Mysterious History	The Sun	All the Creativity of Aboriginal Art
2. The Night	The Moon at Night and The Sun in Day	The Day
3. The Aborigine’s Ancestors’ Spirit	The Heart	Australian Nature
4. The Sky	The Sun	The Earth

5. The Sky at Night	The Soul	The Sky in Daytime
6. The Magic	The Wise Man	Aborigines
7. The Dark Side of Aborigines	Light	Life
8. Australian Nightlife	Shining kangaroo	Morning
9. Peace and Calm	The Sun	War For territories
10. Mysterious land	Folklore of Aborigines	Their Culture

Table 5.2.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE “SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE ABORIGINAL TRICOLOR”

The respondents wrote following symbolic meanings of the Aboriginal tricolor in the questionnaire. Before doing the questionnaire they were asked to create stories about symbolic meaning of Aboriginal tricolor and appointed a “story teller”, “listener” and a “documenter”. The documenter wrote notes. The story teller told to the other two in the group the story about the symbolic meaning of the Aboriginal Flag. The listener did nothing while the documenter takes notes. Then the members of the group changed roles and the process is repeated. Finally teacher stuck all the stories onto one big poster.

The true fact about Aboriginal tricolor is –“the black symbolizes Aboriginal people”. (Online 13)

Respondents have noticed following meanings – “Aboriginal Mysterious History”, “The Night”, “The Aborigine’s Ancestors’ Spirit”, “The Magic”, “The Dark Side of Aborigines” and the others. All these meanings are definitely a part of Aboriginal people’s life.

The true fact about Aboriginal tricolor is –“the yellow represents the sun, the constant renewer of life”. (Online 13)

Respondents have noticed following meanings – “The Sun” (3x), “The Light”, “The Soul”, “Shining kangaroo”, “The Wise Man”, “The Heart”, “Folklore of Aborigines”.

The true fact about Aboriginal tricolor is –“red depicts the earth and peoples' relationship to the land. It also represents ochre, which is used by Aboriginal people in ceremonies”. (Online 13)

Here, the data yield a difference between respondents' opinion and the original meaning of this color. Only one respondent associated symbolic meaning of red in Aboriginal tricolor with “The Earth” and one with “Australian Nature”, the other meanings were – “All the Creativity of Aboriginal Art”, “Their Culture”, “Aborigines”, “Life Morning”, “War For Territories”.

The conclusions drawn after doing this activity are following:

For students this activity was the first exposition of the Aboriginal tricolor. They were really interested in information background about the life of Australian Aborigines and the picture of their tricolor. Students made curious speculations about symbolic meanings of the colors in their tricolor.

Before doing the questionnaire they were asked to create stories about symbolic meaning of Aboriginal tricolor and appointed a “story teller”, “listener” and a “documenter”. Thus they improved skills of story telling, listening and writing.

Finally teacher stuck all the stories onto one big poster so students improved their knowledge about, life of Aborigines, their flag and unique value system.

ACTIVITY Nr 2

Creating a story and a picture of the magic meadow in the very heart of Europe, by using elements of flags of European countries

The research tool was done in form 9b, 24 students, 14 boys, 9 girls, pre- intermediate level, and intermediate level.

The Aim is :

- To pilot the competition “Europe at School”, organized by Academic Programme Agency, Latvia.

- To provide the creative impact of information about the flags of different countries and their important role at representing ideals or allegiance at the English lesson in form 9b, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15. This competition is referred to in various resolutions and recommendations of the Council of Europe and the European Union (appendix 7).
- **To emphasize the great diversity of European countries, their cultural background and traditions.**

Procedure

This task is based on the previous (creating the story about the symbolic meaning of the Aboriginal Tricolor). Students are going to create a picture of meadow full of flowers. These flowers should be colored in the colors of different European countries. The description of this picture has to be added.

1. Teacher provides some information background about the flags of European countries and asks students to imagine “the Magic meadow” in the very heart of Europe which consists of flags of European countries.
2. The background information about meadows in Europe is provided: “The mission of the management of biologically valuable grasslands is conservation of biological diversity that is carried out with the means of the European Society. Therefore, the product of natural meadows is not milk, meat or tons of hay, but in interests of our next generations - conserved natural meadow habitats, diversity of species and landscape”.(Online 15) According to the previous text we can draw parables e.g. diversity of species and landscape diversity in cultures; conservation of biological diversity and maintaining cultural diversity.
3. Divide the students into groups of three.
4. Each group is asked to create the story and a poster of “the magic meadow in the very heart of Europe”, by using elements of flags of European countries.
5. Teacher opens debates about posters and ascertains each country and its flag.
6. Finally the best picture and the best story is chosen for taking part in the competition *Europe at School*, the year 2009 March-May.

The best picture in form 9b was Līga`s Done`s, Rita`s Matutīte`s and Elīna`s Česnauskaite`s poster. (*Figure 5.13.* and Līga Done –*figure 5.14.*)

The following description of the meadow was written by them.



Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13 clearly shows the picture of meadow full of flowers. Each flower is a flower shaped flag of European country. The picture is surrounded by the description:

“Once upon a time a very beautiful full, of magic meadow was born in the very heart of Europe. And it is still there. Have you been there? This is a place where- It is spring and the sun is shining! The skies have been bright blue and it makes you want to roll in the buttercups. Mint, hay, herbs, grass, fresh as a sprint through the meadow in summer. And it begins to wear its autumn colors when it is the mid September- Meadow Saffron, Autumn Crocus. Look, the snowy meadow in winter. Life is sleeping here for waking up again in spring...”

The analyses of description written by Līga's Done's, Rīta's Matuīte's and Elīna's Česnauskaite's

During the classroom discussion, the authors of the description above clarified that they wished to emphasize the variety of countries, their traditions therefore they wrote about diversity in four seasons e.g. spring-“ It is spring and the sun is shining!”,” The skies have been bright blue and it makes you want to roll in the buttercups”. For describing summer the girls stressed the great difference in herbs and fragrances, like “mint, hay, herbs, grass, fresh as a sprint through the meadow”. Late autumn flower meadow saffron which grows in wild in meadows, especially on limestone and is native to Europe was chosen to describe autumn. It is interesting that Latvian name of this flower is “vēlziede” what means to be late in blossom. And the authors finished their description with “the snowy meadow in winter” and life which “is sleeping” for “waking up again in spring”.



Figure 5.14.

Student, form 9b, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15, Līga Done was one of the authors of the poster being seen in figure 5.14.

The conclusions drawn after doing this activity are following:

For students this activity was the resume of the issue about symbolic meaning of colors in flags. They had obtained the theoretical knowledge about different flags at school curriculum of Geography before.

Students were divided into groups of three and create the story and a poster of “the magic meadow in the very heart of Europe”. The outcome showed that students have good skills of interaction and cooperation.

Finally all posters were stuck on the wall and debates about posters were opened. Thereby the great diversity of cultural background of European countries and their traditions were emphasized and students` intercultural competence developed.

One of the conclusions can be drawn here is that interest of maintaining of cultural diversity of European countries in interests of our next generations can be raised at the English lesson.

5.3.3. THE ACTIVITY “BROTHERS GRIMM’S FAIRY TALE “HANSEL AND GRETEL”

Many of Brothers Grimm stories were collected by recording stories told by peasants and villagers. “Hansel and Gretel” is a fairy tale of Germanic origin, recorded by the Brothers Grimm. The story follows to the woodcutter’s children a young brother and sister who have a very evil stepmother. They are led deep in the forest and left there by their father. They discover a house of candy and cake in the forest and a child-devouring witch. The Grimm brothers learned "Hansel and Gretel" in Cassel from the young girl Dortchen Wild.

There are similar tales in the folklores of many cultures, e.g. one of the saddest tales in Irish folklore- Children of Lir. It narrates about king Lir who so adored his four children that their stepmother was driven wild with jealousy. One day she took the children to a lake cast a spell turning them into white swans confined to the waters of Ireland for 900 years. These children

were very weak and died soon. After that King Lir declared that no swan in Ireland could be killed.

The research tool was done in form 9b, 24 students, 14 boys, 9 girls, pre- intermediate level and intermediate level.

The Aim: to realize cultural values related to nowadays teenager's life which students might find in Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel", data analyzing and taking part in The European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security organized European poster creation competition entitled "Children's right to protection".

The Aim of the competition: Guaranteeing and making the "rights of the child" more well-known, in particular that of protection, the prerogative not only of all children, but also adolescent citizens or residents of the European Union, are objectives jointly held by the European Union and its member states.

The Procedure:

Stage 1

Students are introduced with Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel". This fairy tale is charismatic theme in folktales. It deals with universal fears that children have, e.g. fear of separation from parents.

Stage 2

Students, by working in groups, create a piece of advice for Hansel and Gretel to be protected in the deep forest. Then the best slogan for the poster is chosen by class. This slogan is following:

"Hansel and Gretel, Mark Your Way Back"

Stage 3

Participants are required to create a poster illustrating the idea of the right of children and adolescents to protection within the European Union.

The following rules apply:

- poster format: A2 paper (42X59 cm).
- the descriptive form for the work submitted must be enclosed.

The conclusions drawn after doing this activity are following:

There are cultural values related to nowadays teenager's life which students can find in Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel".

Students were divided into groups of four and created the poster and a piece of advice for Hansel and Gretel to be protected in the deep forest. The most adequate "Hansel and Gretel, Mark Your Way Back" had been chosen. The outcome showed that students have good skills of interaction and cooperation.

Finally all posters were stuck on the wall and debates about posters were opened. Thereby the great diversity of cultural background of European countries and their traditions were emphasized and students' intercultural competence developed.

A great creativity was shown by students in class discussion of guaranteeing and making the "rights of the child" more well-known.



Figure 5.15.

1st place (students` age group 16-18) Team „Ansītis un Grietiņa” from Liepaja
Secondary School No.15 (Online 16)

5.4. THE QUESTIONNAIRES OF THE EMPIRICAL PART

The first questionnaire filled out by the respondents was “Red Indian name”, meaning of Native American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person.

The questions were following:

1. What could be the Red Indian Name of your classmate, according to his/her feature of personality?
2. What is the most typical feature his/her character?

The second questionnaire filled out by the respondents was “the symbolic meaning of the Aboriginal Tricolor”. The questions were following:

1. What is the symbolic meaning of the half of black in the Aboriginal tricolor?
2. What is the symbolic meaning of the yellow circle in the centre in the Aboriginal tricolor?
3. What is the symbolic meaning of the half of red in the Aboriginal tricolor?

The questionnaire “Red Indian name” about the meaning of Native American names was chosen in order for respondents to explain how natural images are used to describe the character of a person. The results of this questionnaire are shown in the table bellow. There were 10 respondents, 5 boys, 5 girls. See appendix 3.

5.6. THE SUMMARY OF THE EMPIRICAL PART

The empirical part of the diploma paper proved that using multicultural sources at the English lesson serves as an effective tool in developing learners’ intercultural competence.

Tales, myths, legends, folk songs, flags, proverbs, sayings, superstitions and Red Indian names are well-known multicultural sources, and they can serve as motivating factors to quicken an interest in the English language.

The results of activity “Red Indian Name” demonstrated that relationship between students is based on observation of personality. Data gathered in this questionnaire, emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character. The students had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with Native American names. This activity was a good group interaction, imagination intellectual exercise and a good fun for students. The activity improved learners’ skills of obtaining new vocabulary.

The data of questionnaire “Symbolic meaning of Aboriginal tricolor” demonstrated a sense of a great cultural competence, respondents showed the knowledge of different cultural practices, worldviews, and cross-cultural skills.

During writing her Diploma Paper the author piloted the participation of her students in two art competitions:

- 1) To pilot the art competition “Europe at School”. Here the creative impact of information about the flags of different countries was investigated and the important role of colors at representing ideals or allegiance was discovered at the English lesson in form 9b, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15.
- 2) To realize cultural values related to nowadays teenager’s life students might find in Brothers Grimm’s fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel”, data analyzing and taking part in The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security organized European poster creation competition entitled “Children’s right to protection”.

CONCLUSIONS

Research theme: Students were able to develop their language and intercultural competence by using multicultural sources at the English lesson; afterwards they get familiar with Native American names, Aboriginal tricolor, Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel". They demonstrated their intercultural competence in two art competitions- the art competition "Europe at School" and The European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security organized European poster creation competition entitled "Children's right to protection".

The Goal: The goal of the research is achieved. Students learnt about different multicultural sources and developed their intercultural competence as well as four skills and grammar of the English language. The results of activities in class demonstrated the effectiveness of using of multicultural sources at the English lesson

The Hypothesis: The hypothesis of the research paper is proven: Data gathered in questionnaires, demonstrated a sense of a cultural competence, respondents showed the knowledge of different cultural practices, worldviews, and cross-cultural skills and emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character. Using multicultural sources at the English lesson serves as an effective tool in developing learners' language and intercultural competence.

During the research the author of the Diploma Paper From wished to emphasize the wide variety of multicultural sources, therefore three very different sources were chosen: Native American names, Aboriginal tricolor, Brothers Grimm's fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel".

From students' (age 15-16) replies we can conclude that they understand the meaning of American names, how natural images are used to describe the character of a person, although this was the first exposition of this theme. Thus they upgraded self-familiarization skills. The results showed that the relationship between students is based on the observation of personality. Data gathered in this questionnaire, emphasized that each student has a unique combination of features of character.

Before the activity "Symbolic meaning of colors in Aboriginal tricolor" students (age15-16) were familiar with Aboriginal culture, but this was the first exposition of the Aboriginal tricolor. They were creative in activity of expressing the speculations about Aboriginal

tricolor. Their replies showed competence about life of Aborigines. Respondents have noticed following meanings of “black” in Aboriginal tricolor – “Aboriginal Mysterious History”, “The Night”, “The Aborigine’s Ancestors’ Spirit”, “The Magic”, “The Dark Side of Aborigines” ; following meanings of “yellow” in Aboriginal tricolor “The Sun” (3x), “The Light”, “The Soul”, “Shining kangaroo”, “The Wise Man”, “The Heart”, “Folklore of Aborigines”; and following meanings of “red” in Aboriginal tricolor “All the Creativity of Aboriginal Art”, “Their Culture”, “Aborigines”, “Life Morning”, “War For Territories”. All these meanings are definitely a part of Aboriginal people’s life.

To pilot the art competition “Europe at School” the creative impact of information about the flags of different countries was investigated and the important role of colors at representing ideals or allegiance was discovered at the English lesson in form 9b, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15. After previous activity students demonstrated their skills of making speculations of symbolic meaning of colors in flags during the activity “The magic meadow in the very heart of Europe”. One of the conclusions can be drawn after this activity is that interest of maintaining of cultural diversity of European countries in interests of our next generations can be raised at the English lesson.

There are cultural values related to nowadays teenager’s life which students can find in Brothers Grimm’s fairy tale “Hansel and Gretel”. In groups of four students, form 9b, Liepaja Secondary school Nr 15, created the poster and a piece of advice for Hansel and Gretel to be protected in the deep forest. During this activity, students expressed the strong opinion that “children’s right to protection” on the Internet, vastly depends on themselves, therefore the piece of advice chosen in class was “Hansel and Gretel, mark your way back!” As a result of this activity was participation in The European Commission’s Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security organized European poster creation competition and the first place in Latvia.

From the above mentioned, we can conclude, that every culture has certain values and traditions that make it different from other cultures and our cultural competence is being raised by obtaining different cultural information and then applying this knowledge into competence

THESES

1. Obtaining different cultural information and then applying this knowledge into competence raises our cultural competence.
2. We live in multicultural Latvia. Everyone in Latvia has a great impact on by mixed up culture of all nations living here. Its culture reflects traditions of Russians, Belarus, Jews, Ukrainians and many other nationalities. Raising student's intercultural competence, firstly, improves their abilities to respect and value other cultures.
3. Using of different multicultural sources like tales, myths, legends, folk songs, proverbs and sayings, food ways, superstitions, flags, coats of arms, traditions, customs, beliefs and lifestyles at the English lesson raise students' intercultural competence, by providing the knowledge of cultural values.
4. Multicultural sources contain tacit values, believes and practices which can make up culture.
5. Using of visual arts can be applicable at the lesson of the English language. Visuals offer great opportunities for verbal communication.
6. Developing of Intercultural competence leads to the successful communication with people from different cultures and being Intercultural competent is either essential for teacher or student.
7. The results of the research, carried out the Council of Europe's Centre for Modern Languages in Gratz, Austria, in order to help incorporate intercultural competence training into teacher education in Europe showed that skills of Intercultural competence should be contained in teaching process.
8. Inter-cultural competence has an important role for communication in a foreign language.
9. In the empirical part students demonstrated Intercultural competence at the activities provided by the author of the present research.
10. In the empirical part, students' responses were possible to analyze qualitatively and quantitatively.

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APPENDIX 1

THE ACTIVITIES “RED INDIAN NAMES”

THE LIST OF ADJECTIVES OF CHARACTER

able	depressive	indulgent	powerful	strong
accomplished	despised	intelligent	powerless	structured
acid	detail oriented	intense	precious	stubborn
adaptable	devoted	interested	prejudiced	successful
affective	devout	intolerant	presentable	supercilious
ambitious	difficult	introverted	prickly	superficial
amoral	disgusting	intuitive	prideful	sweet
	dizzy	inventive	private	sympathetic
angry	dominant	investigative	protective	talented
anxious	domineering	involved	quaint	tall
argumentative	dramatic	irresponsible	quiet	tender
arrogant	dull	irritating	rueful	theoretical
artistic	eccentric	isolated	rainy	tired
athletic	educated	itchy	rambunctious	tolerant
auspicious	egotistical	jittery	rare	tough
automatic	elegant	jolly	rational	tricky
awake	emphatic	joyful	ratty	trustworthy
awesome	enterprising	judgmental	realistic	trying
bad	enthusiastic	keen	reassuring	uncertain
beautiful	ethical	kind	receptive	unforgiving
bent	excitable	lazy	refreshing	unhealthy
better	expansive	loud	religious	unreachable
big	expectant	lovable	responsible	unrepentant
bigoted	expressive	loving	ridiculous	unusual
bitter	extroverted	loyal	robust	unwavering
black	faithful	macho	romantic	unwell
blue	fawning	magnanimous	rough	vicious
bodacious	feared	manipulative	round	violent
boiling	feeble	mature	rude	vocal
boorish	feminine	mean-spirited	sad	vulnerable

bovine	fertile	mighty	saintly	warm
bright	fixed	miserly	sarcastic	wasteful
brilliant	flighty	modest	satisfied	watery
broken	flitting	motivated	scary	well-liked
bubbly	foolish	musical	scatter- brained	well-loved
careful	forgetful	narcissistic	scientific	well-bred
careless	fragile	narrow- minded	scrawny	wide-eyed
casual	frail	nasty	scrupulous	wise
certain	friendly	natural	secretive	worldly
cheap	funny	needed	secure	worried
childish	generous	needy	seductive	young
childlike	gentle	new	self-conscious	zany
clean	gifted	nihilistic	self-centered	zealous
clear-headed	gigantic	noble	sensitive	
cloddish	good	nosy	serious	
clumsy	great	nurturing	shallow	
cold	grumpy	nutty	sharp	
common	happy	obsequious	short	
complacent	hardheaded	obsessive	shy	
complex	hardworking	officious	sickening	
confused	harmful	old	silly	
conscientious	harmless	open-minded	simple	
conventional	hasty	open	sincere	
cool	haughty	opinionated	skeptical	
courteous	healthy	optimistic	skittish	
crazy	heartly	orderly	sloppy	
creative	helpful	ordinary	slow	
critical	high-spirited	outgoing	smooth	
cruel	horrible	overbearing	snotty	
curious	hostile	paranoid	sociable	
daring	humorous	particular	social	
dear	idealistic	passionate	spacey	
deceiving	ignorant	pathetic	spiritual	

deep	imaginative	patient	spiteful
delicate	immature	patriotic	sterile
demanding	immoral	perfectionist	stiff
dependable	independent	pessimistic	stingy
dependent	indifferent	placid	strange

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name	What could be the Red Indian Name of your classmate, according to his/her features of personality?	What is the most typical feature his/her character?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		

Thank You

APPENDIX 3

Name	What could be the Red Indian Name of your classmate, according to his/her features of personality?	What is the most typical feature his/her character?
1. Mārtiņš R.	Big Bear (4x); Blonde Bear; Big Bird; Lazy Bear; Mighty Elephant; Big Head; Funny Bear	Lazy (2x), sincere, round, childish(4x), immature, funny
2. Elīna	Lovely Cat; Blonde Swallow; Blonde Crow; Smiley Bird; Blond head; Red flower; Yellow Rain; Golden Hair; Lovable Flower; Jumping Rabbit	Friendly(4x); humorous, happy, kind, auspicious, warm, harmless,
3. Helvijs	Flying Spoon, Cunning Turtle; Big Ear; Mystery car; Black Bird; Loud Bird; Yellow Chick; Cunning Snake; Nonsense; Funny Thoughts	Curious, trying, jolly, auspicious(2x), responsible, prickly, prejudiced, accomplished, rainy
4. Beāte	Small Bird; Pinky Glow, A Little bit Fox, Ambitious Flower, Trustworthy fly, Blond heart, Pink Jumper; Blue Rat, Flowerchild, Pink poo	Sensitive, nosy(4x), scrupulous, wise, childlike, noble, courteous
5. Lāsma	Yellow Sand; Funny Rabbit; Bat Man ; Black Tiger; Big Green Sheet, Black Swallow; Blueberry	Childish(2x), happy(2x), modest, awesome, enterprising, accomplished, tricky, quiet

	Cool Fish; Little Fish; Big Inventor	
6. Mārtiņš S.	Smart Snake; Silent Water; Mini Snowflake; Big Ninja; Grey Wolf; Big Fire Ball; Wise owl; Receptive Mind	Silent, calm, inventive, wise, receptive, smart(2x), indulgent, trustworthy, placid
7. Anžejs	Smart Wind; Red Sun; Sky Star; Minded Wolf; Running Fox; Red Lake; Smart Fish; Red Cliff; Perfectionist; Dream of Mine	Well-bred, smart(2x), active, optimistic, accomplished(2x), friendly, unwavering
8. Kitija	Red Rose; Secretive Area; Wild Dancer; Sharp Broom; Blond Storm; Funny Puppy; Blond Arms; Funny Rabbit; Rare Tree; Indian Cat	Awake(2x), ambitious, funny(2x), zany, harmless; extraverted, interesting, friendly(2x)
9. Zane	Butterfly, Big Ten; Brown Sun; Zany Rabbit; Short Sea; Thunder; White Cloud; Little Mouse; Funny Tee; Big Chatterbox	Funny(2x), zany(2x), feminine, faithful, ambitious, cool, sharp, courteous
10. Jānis	Crazy Eagle; Black Fly; Running Wolf; Slapper; Friendly Duck; Water Fish; Big Turtle; Big Hare; Strange Song; Scriber	Rainy, flighty, jittery, kind, funny, realistic, tricky, active, friendly, strange

APPENDIX 4

THE ACTIVITIES “SYMBOLIC USE OF COLOURS IN FLAGS”

COLOR-CULTURE CHART

Researchers Patricia Russo and Stephen Boor (1993:346) have illustrated some of the different meanings of colors in the Color-Culture Chart. (Appendix 4)

Color	China	Japan	Egypt	France	United States
Red	Happiness	Anger Danger	Death	Aristocracy	Danger Stop
Blue	Heavens Clouds	Villainy	Virtue Faith Truth	Freedom Peace	Masculine
Green	Ming Dynasty Heavens	Future Youth Energy	Fertility Strength	Criminality	Safety Go
Yellow	Birth Wealth Power	Grace Nobility	Happiness Prosperity	Temporary	Cowardice Temporary
White	Death Purity	Death	Joy	Neutrality	Purity

APPENDIX 5

THE INSTRUCTIVE MATERIAL ABOUT ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Australian Aboriginal culture is one of the world's longest surviving cultures, which dates back at least 50,000 years and there are many who think it could be closer to 150,000 years! All of Australia's Aborigines were semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers, with each clan having its own territory. Those communities living along the coast or rivers were expert fishermen. The territories or 'traditional lands' were defined by geographic boundaries such as rivers, lakes and mountains. All Australian Aborigines shared an intimate understanding of, and relationship with, the land. That relationship was the basis of their spiritual life and shaped the Aboriginal culture. Land is fundamental to the well-being of all Aboriginal people. The 'dreamtime' stories explain how the land was created by the journeys of the spirit ancestors. Those creation stories describing the contact and features which the spiritual ancestors left on the land are integral to Aboriginal spirituality. 'Ancestor Spirits' came to Earth in human and other forms and the land, the plants and animals were given their form as we know them today. The expression 'Dreamtime' refers to the 'time before time', or 'the time of the creation of all things', while 'Dreaming' is often used to refer to an individual's or group's set of beliefs or spirituality. (Online 12)

APPENDIX 6

THE QUESTIONNAIRE “SYMBOLIC MEANING OF THE ABORIGINAL TRICOLOR”

What is the symbolic meaning of the half of black in the Aboriginal tricolor?	What is the symbolic meaning of the yellow circle in the centre in the Aboriginal tricolor?	What is the symbolic meaning of the half of red in the Aboriginal tricolor?
Your name:		
Class:		
Thank You		

APPENDIX 7

Background

Today's *Europe at School* activities are the result of 55 years of continuous work and experience in the field of European education. *Europe at School* has proved its worth as a project which allows schools, teachers and pupils/students to develop and carry out their own initiatives within a general framework of clearly defined rules. It is thus an appropriate tool for the promotion of a European dimension in education. *Europe at School* is a serious educational activity which is widely and officially recognized and as well as in official documents issued by national education authorities. (Online 13)

Objectives

Europe at School provides a framework for projects in the field of citizenship education, preparing young people for democratic participation, imparting basic knowledge about Europe, and encouraging young people and teachers to reflect on basic values and their own attitudes towards Europe and life in multicultural societies. Readiness for lifelong learning and the development of new information technology skills are important objectives of *Europe at School*, as is transnational co-operation in the field of European education. *Europe at School* seeks to achieve these aims through the contents, structure and methodology of its activities, by integrating European themes of key concern into education. (Online 14)

Activities

- The main instruments of *Europe at School* are Annual European Projects as an offer for pupils and students from all types of primary and secondary schools to work on a common European motto and on corresponding themes.
- The annual European Competition for artistic, written and multimedia works, prepared on a voluntary basis and evaluated by national juries.
- Multinational European youth gatherings for prize-winners of *Europe at School*.
- Training seminars for young youth leaders.
- Teacher seminars on the European dimension in education.
- Experts' conferences on transnational co-operation.

With its activities, *Europe at School* seeks to encourage young people to explore and work on European themes. (Online 14)

Structure

Europe at School is a transnational initiative run within the framework of a well-established network of co-operating partners, currently comprising 15 countries. The partners are governmental and non-governmental institutions. At the European level, *Europe at School* operates under the joint patronage of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament. In each country involved, a National Committee is responsible for running the activities at the local, regional and national levels. The National Committees are part of or supported by the ministries of education. At the European level, representatives of the National Committees meet to discuss the general policies and to decide on the motto for the year. For the time being, the German Committee of *Europe at School* is acting as the secretariat for the network. (Online 14)

Funding

As most of the activities take place at the "grassroots" (national) level, most of the total expenditure is incurred here. The basic financing is, in most cases, assured by national authorities, public institutions and additional private sources. In special cases, a project (e.g. a youth gathering or a teachers' seminar) can be co-financed by one of the European Union's programmes in the field of education. (Online 14)