THE NEWLY DESIGNED COURSE THE CROSS-CURRICULAR

TOPIC MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ENGLISH CLASSES

Lenka Hessova

Abstract

In the paper I focus on implementing intercultural aims in L2 classes as intercultural education has become a compulsory part of the Czech curricula. We can see reforming attempts to include intercultural education in school curricula across the whole Europe and we can say that the challenges arising from these attempts are shared and experienced by many European countries. I would like to describe a course "Multicultural Education in English classes "I ran in 2014/2015 for the pre-service teachers at the University of South Bohemia. I will describe the background of intercultural education and I shall explain why courses similar to mine are needed at universities in the Czech Republic and, I dare to say, anywhere in Europe.

In the course I introduced essential theory first then I provided students with examples of practical activities developing communicative language competence described in Common European Framework of Reference for languages (2001). Within the seminar I offered room for the students to create and to try their own intercultural L2 class in form of peer teaching. The lesson plans for peer-teaching were then published on the Internet for in-service teachers to use. Though the course is aimed at Czech students, it is based on policy promoted by the Council of Europe and the Centre of Modern Languages so it allows the course itself to function internationally and slightly modified version of the course can then be used anywhere in Europe.

Key words
cross-curricular topics, intercultural, L2, the course

Introduction

Since 1989 the Czech educational system has been going through a long-term reforming process due to the necessity of trying to address the modern society demands. This tendency can be seen not only in the Czech Republic or Europe, but worldwide. The globalisation process with its increased mobility and migration possibilities brings along many positive but also negative aspects that everybody has to face and deal with. It was simply logical that the Czech educational system had to reflect all the ongoing changes and that it keeps trying to find ways of how to prepare its citizens for life in the modern and challenging world.

The results of reforming attempts in the Czech Republic are represented by the new documents and curricula obligatory for the whole educational system in the country. The pioneering document was in this sense The White Paper (Bila kniha, 2001) where all the queries for essential changes in the Czech

educational system were articulated, this document was followed by the School Bill (Skolsky zakon c.561/2004 sb) and these two important documents prepared the ground for a new multi-dimensional educational system which is sheltered by the state and promoted by the Ministry of Education. It introduces the overall concept of the Czech educational policy and it offers to schools in the Czech Republic unifying methodical tool in form of new curricula called Framework Education Programme (FEP).

The most striking novelty connected with the new multi-dimensional system of education is the freedom but also the responsibility given to each individual school when it comes to implementing new curricula into a concrete school setting, see FEP. Each school is obliged to create its own so called School Framework Reference Programme based on suggestions from FEP but is allowed to adjust it taking into account individual and local needs. FEP functions here just as a set of recommendations that shall be followed but the realisation and fulfilling of educational aims is left up to individual schools. The headmasters and other educational staff are given great freedom when choosing the way of implementing concrete educational aims outlined in FEP but they also put on their shoulders great responsibility for the success of the whole educational process.

Since 2004 when the Czech Republic joined the European Union there have been visible and continuous attempts to meet the educational standards of other EU countries and to conceptualize the education policy so that it can provide the Czech citizens with necessary skills and competencies to function in a democratic Europe and to benefit from living there. In this connection we very often speak about competencies rooting in the needs of the modern intercultural society. Very often we come across terms like intercultural competence, pluriculturalism and plurilingualism. All these terms are closely related to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (www.coe.int/lang-CEFR), where they are introduced and descried in detail. They are connected with the foreign language learning and teaching policies. I believe that introduction of such terms is essential in today´s world as we are more likely to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds on daily basis thanks to new technical possibilities, international business corporations and more open borders of individual states. No matter what our reason for moving to a foreign country is- be it tourism, better job possibility, higher living standard or marriage- the interaction is always easier when we are more open and curious when encountering the unknown. It is not unusual that most of us when meeting people from different cultures may be surprised by some habits as what is seen as a sign of respect in one culture may be interpreted in other culture as an act of disrespect. It is essential that we bear in mind the fact that the world may be seen and understood from slightly different perspectives by different people and we shall actively work with that notion and respect other interpretations of the world as well.

Here I finally come to the reasons that led me towards creating a special course on implementation of intercultural aims in L2 classes, in my case in English classes. As I have mentioned above we are facing the new challenges in our educational system and these challenges are also parts of reforming

218

attempts in the European Union and I am not afraid to say, almost anywhere in the world. The teachers are under great pressure when implementing new curricula and very often it is the case that they do not quite know how to include the novelties in their daily practice because there are many theoretical visions but very few concrete examples. That is also the case with the newly introduced cross-curricular topic Multicultural education. As I am a university lecturer I felt that I could actively help to change the current state and that I could contribute with my share when it comes to improving good teaching practice. The reasoning behind my decision to create a course for our students was that as the situation at Czech secondary schools is, to put it in mild terms, slightly confusing when it comes to concrete implementation of ME I shall show my students- future teachers of English at lower and upper secondary schools- how to implement intercultural education in an L2 class and how to combine linguistic and intercultural aims in one class. One just has to consciously work with culture/cultures and language. I also wanted to point out that L2 classes are ideal for promoting intercultural aims as an L2 class forms a natural environment for such attempts. When conducting an L2 class we already work with at least two language codes and two or more cultural backgrounds (C1, C2) and we can also use L2 as a mediator when talking about other cultures/languages. I do hope that if my students are introduced to the topic of Multicultural Education and become familiar with it they will be capable of changing the situation at secondary schools once they start with their teaching careers. The seminars´ content also aims indirectly at helping the in-service teachers because when meeting the seminar requirements the students need to do peer-teaching and create their own practical activities combining intercultural and linguistic aims in an L2 class at secondary school. The lesson plans for peer-teaching with the activities described in detail are then posted on the widely used methodological website for in-service teachers in the Czech Republic so the activities prepared by my students can also serve as an inspiration to in-service teachers who always welcome more practical examples and concrete help with their teaching routine.

In this paper I would like to describe the seminar to the wide audience as, slightly adapted, the ideas from the course can be used internationally, not only in the Czech educational context. At first I will briefly introduce the political, psychological, linguistic and philosophical background behind the course, then I will cover concrete teaching methods and strategies that can be used and finally, I will describe the seminar itself offering an example of a practical activity I used in the course and also an example of activity used by the students in peer-teaching.

Confusing terminology

Before I start describing the course I need to clarify the fact that I use the term Multicultural Education which is the official name of the cross-curricular topic set in the new Czech curricula (Framework Education Programme, 2013). But the word phrase "multicultural education" in its meaning and content as I understand it corresponds more with the terms intercultural and pluricultural. The phrase Multicultural Education was

introduced in the first version of the reformed Czech curricula (Framework Education Programme, 2005) in times when the terminology was very confusing and when each author used his or her coined word. For some reason the phrase "Multicultural education" has survived even in the new curricula published and compulsory since 2013. When I try to describe the terminology around the cross-curricular topic ME to my students I use the metaphor comparing the current situation in terminology to the scene from the film Monty Python´s Life of Brian (Monty Python´s Life of Brian, 1979) when there is a number of political groups fighting for the same goal but giving their movements slightly different names and fighting each other more than fighting the common enemy. For the needs of the seminar and also for the needs of this paper I understand ME in the meaning of pluriculturalism and interculturalism described in CEF as:

"Pluriculturality is the desire and ability to identify with several cultures, and participate in them. Interculturality is the ability to experience another culture and analyse that experience. The intercultural competence acquired from doing this helps individuals to understand cultural difference better, establish cognitive and affective links between past and future experiences of that difference, mediate between members of two (or more) social groups and their cultures, and question the assumptions of their own cultural group and milieu" (Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education, 2010: 16).

Once the readers of this paper have been informed about the term cross-curricular topic ME in the Czech educational setting and once it has been explained that even though the name itself for the obligatory cross-curricular topic remained "multicultural" its content corresponds with modern ideas of pluriculturalism and interculturalism I can start with introduction of my newly designed course for pre-service teachers at the University of South Bohemia in the Czech Republic.

Political Background
When it comes to political background of ME I wanted to make sure that my students become familiar with all the necessary documents in the Czech Republic but also in Europe as the Czech educational system tries to meet the European standards and it is greatly inspired by the educational policies promoted by the Council of Europe. In the course, for previously described reasons, I give lectures on political documents that have formed the base for ME as we know it now. I describe in detail three of the most essential documents for ME. I feel that my students need to know these documents to understand ME´s fitting into the educational context. The three documents are:

- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (representing international level)
- The Czech White Papers (representing local level)

- The Framework of Education for Secondary Schools (also (representing local level)

These documents, especially CEF, are widely known and mentioned in many scholarly papers but let me just briefly remind you what they are about and what their relationship to ME is. Firstly I will have a look at The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). The document itself is the result of a long process which started even in 1971; the works on its form took place between the years 1993 and 2000 when experts from all around Europe appointed by the Council of Europe cooperated on its final form. Originally it was published in the two official EU languages English and French but translations in more than thirty European languages shortly followed (39 by now). It is meant to be used as a unifying "know-how" tool when developing new curricula, language exams or language books anywhere in Europe. The Framework shall also serve as a common and objective evaluation tool for measuring the levels of language education reached in all the EU countries. For this purpose common reference levels, ranging from A1 to C2, have been developed (see CEF 2001, p. 21-42). For my seminar it is important that the Framework, in agreement with the language policy of the Council of Europe, stresses cultural aspects in language learning and teaching. This approach can be seen in foreign language teaching and learning but also in mother tongue teaching and learning as the key philosophies introduced in CEF are plurilingualism and pluriculturalism. I have already given the definition of pluriculturalism but what does the term plurilingualism mean? In the Framework the plurilingual approach is described as the one that:

emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact.(CEF, 2001: 4)

If I simplify the statement I can say that plurilingualism is about creating a "bank of possibilities" based on all our experiences with language learning be it our mother tongue or any foreign language. Everything is stored together and we use the content of our "bank" according to the needs of concrete communicative situation and we rely on all our experiences with language learning. The Framework is designed to meet the aims and objectives of the language policy promoted by the Council of Europe (see CEF, Chapter One, p.3) and all the aims and objectives are closely connected with promoting intercultural understanding, e.g.:

the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding.(CEF, 2001: 3)

From the previous description of CEF, stressing pluriculturalism and plurilingualism and bearing in mind that the Czech curricula build on the Framework when it comes to language learning and teaching policies, it is obvious why I feel that my students, future teachers of English should be familiar with this document. I work with CEF which is an objective tool for teachers but I also introduce my students to self-evaluating and more subjective tools for the learners of language related to CEF: European Language Portfolio, Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters and the Images of Others. The first one mentioned serves as a self-evaluation tool for learners to work out the level of proficiency in L2 they are on, it is advisable though, that young and unexperienced learners are guided through the ELP by their teachers and they can also consult their ELP with peers. The second document was created especially for noting down and analysing learners´ encounters with different cultures. It originates from a part of ELP which needed more space for itself because when working with ELP in an L2 class there was usually no time left to stop and thoroughly reflect on intercultural aspect of a concrete language encounter. The third tool, Images of Others, is just a modified version of AIE as AIE serves for a direct encounter with other culture but IO serves for indirect encounter brought to learners through visual media, e.g. TV, the Internet, newspapers etc.

The second important document that I describe in my course is The White Papers (WP, 2001). It is a national Czech document where the needs for all necessary changes in the Czech educational system were first articulated. The final version of WP was discussed, agreed on and passed at the Government meeting on February the 7th, 2001. WP represents the national legally binding programme of educational development which marks the path for the ongoing changes in the field of education. Originally the educational reform was meant to be completed by the year 2010, now it is obvious that this deadline has not been met and the attempts with smaller or bigger achievements still continue. The strategies in WP were formulated in correspondence with the educational policy of EU countries and it is also inspired by the educational tendencies overseas. The stress is put on work on developing the potential of each individual to enable him or her to benefit from living in today´s interconnected and intercultural society. As today´s world may be on one hand quite demanding but on the other hand offers many opportunities for those who manage to understand its system. Also, for the first time in the Czech educational history the need to introduce multicultural education into compulsory school curricula was expressed here. And it is only logical that WP served as a base for the creators of new and reformed compulsory Czech curricular documents for education called Framework of Reference for Education which are then divided according to types of schools (for preliminary, elementary, secondary, higher etc.). Here I come to the last important document for my students to acknowledge, that is the Framework of Reference for Secondary Education (FRSE). The FRSE is a curricular document which must be taken into account when creating an individual school plan. All the aims and objectives from the document must be met by teachers but it is up to them in what form they will work with them.

222

In a way teachers are given great freedom when creating a school work plan but they also take over the responsibility for the success of the whole educational process. FRSE makes all cross-curricular topics compulsory (one of them is ME), but again, it allows the headmasters to choose the way of implementing cross-curricular topics into the school plan. Cross-curricular topics can be taught as individual school subjects or can be taught as a part of any existing subject (L2, Literature, History, Geography class etc.). There is even a possibility to include cross-curricular topics in individual school curricula as a project with variable duration. Very often it is suggested that ME would form an ideal part of an L2 class but the problem we still face is that neither the pre-service nor the in-service teachers are told how to work with ME in L2 class.

This brings me back to the reasons that led me towards decision to create a special seminar course for pre-service teachers, explaining and showing them how to implement intercultural aims in L2 class (in my case English) and how to combine intercultural aims with the linguistic ones.

Psychological background
When doing a research in a field of psychology I came across the theories of intercultural psychology which support perfectly the course concept as intercultural psychology seeks answers for questions like:
- who are we?
- what is typical of our culture?
- in what ways are we similar or different compared to other nations?

(Morgensteinova - Sulova, 2007; Prucha, 2007)

Not only that, it also works with important terms for ME such as:
- culture – for the course´s needs I understand it as the opposite to nature deriving my conclusion from various definitions provided by Murphy (1998), Geertz (1973), Parekh (2000), Hinkel (2005), Hofstede (2002), Průcha (2006), Encyclopaedia Britannica etc.
- prejudice – a negative opinion of an individual on a certain group which is based on direct experience but not on objective facts (Hartl & Hartlová: 2004)
- stereotypes- a collective and neutral simplification of the world around us which can have positive or negative connotation and is passed on from generation to generation; it is not based on a direct experience (Nakonecny: 1997)

My students need to be able to understand these terms, be familiar with the national stereotypes and reflect on their own prejudices in order to be able to work on spreading intercultural awareness. An important message of the course is that one has to start with deep reflection on one´s own personality before trying to change the world around. My students are encouraged to stop and think about themselves and their ideas and beliefs before trying to implement the ideas of ME in an L2 class.

Linguistic background
In the field of linguistics I was looking for theories supporting the assumption that a language is culture-dependent and most appealing from these theories I

still find the ones developed by the structuralists, mainly the Prague School. Because not only did the Prague School agreed with Saussure (Czech translation, 1996) that language is an artificial sign representing reality and that the relationship between the sign and the reality is based on convention (this statement suggests that language is culture-dependent) but especially Mathesius stressed the important role of language function in a concrete conversation (for detailed information see (Vachek, 1999). The theories of the Prague school may seem to some researchers quite old as the group produced their major works in the twenties and thirties of the 20th century but their theories were very modern and complex for their times and to me many of their thoughts remain modern even now. I highly appreciate the fact that not only they produced scientific theories they also put these theories into practice and elaborated many practical books for teachers to be used in daily teaching practice. Also the fact that the group itself consisted of various strong and very different personalities who were dealing with different aspects of language and were using totally different approaches but who were still able to communicate among each other, be friends, respect each other and be faithful to basic ideas of the group I find particularly impressive and I see there a certain version of "interculturalism" in their approach towards linguistics, towards each other and even towards the rest of the world. At this point I must add that I have borrowed their main ideas about language but I see the term "language" as the combination of langue and parole together. To be more specific for me the term language shelters everything connected with language knowledge and language usage e.g. structures and their understanding, vocabulary, pragmatics etc. It may seem too ambitious but for the needs of my course I basically applied the theory of pluriculturalism introduced in CEF on the language itself.

Philosophical background

In my understanding philosophy is about asking and seeking answers for deep questions in life. As a language teacher trying to implement the new curricula into my everyday teaching practice I have a set of questions that to me are important and at the same time difficult: What culture aims shall a teacher include in an L2 class? Shall I include mother tongue culture? Shall I include target culture? Shall I include other cultures, excluding C1 and C2? Shall I include all cultures?

These are the questions but what are the answers? As according to Parekh multiculturalism is a political construct (Parekh, 2000) there are certain philosophical theories in politics that teachers can follow when seeking answers for their questions. For a detailed study see Parekh´s book "Rethinking Multiculturalism – Cultural Diversity and Political Theory".

In this paragraph I will briefly sum up a chapter of interest from his book (pp. 17-49). There is a certain old-fashioned but unfortunately still quite common theory of monism which promotes the statement that only one way is right and no shifts in opinion are allowed. This, applied on L2 teaching, means that a teacher chooses his or her approach at the beginning of his or her career and is not allowed to change the original opinion. So he or she will for example

include just C2 in L2 classes. Then there is a theory of pluralism which is more respectful when it comes to opinions of the others but the rule here is "I respect your approach but for that I will not change mine". I always mention these theories because I find them extremely dangerous and I want my students to be aware of the fact that in reality even among teaching staff they may still face people who worship either of these two theories. The theory that seems the most suitable for the course's needs is the theory of modern liberalism which allows open approach to the world and its rules and it also allows individuals to make mistakes, learn from these mistakes and even change our practices when we find a better approach or when a situation needs a certain change and flexibility. When modern liberalism is applied to L2 teaching teachers can choose what approach is most suitable for the needs of a concrete L2 class, sometimes they implement only C1, sometimes only C2, sometimes other cultures or they work with all these possibilities together in correspondence with the ideas of pluriculturalism.

Working with culture in an L2

Before I describe the course itself I will introduce some possibilities that we as teachers have when working with culture in an L2 class. As we shall bear in mind Byram's remark:

…the assumption that language learning leads to positive attitudes towards other peoples and cultures cannot be held without further reflection. Attitude formation and attitude change are complex processes and mere exposure to language learning and information about other cultures will not necessarily lead to the desired results. (Byram: 1994, p.40)

For teachers there are many concrete possibilities of working with cultural aspects in an L2 class. Most of the approaches presented here are borrowed from the researchers working in the field of teaching English as a second language (ESL), but their ideas and methodology can be applied in any L2 class be it ESL or EFL (English as a foreign language). In the paragraph on the linguistics background I mentioned that an important aspect of language usage is the function it represents for the purpose of concrete conversation. I believe it is then only logical that most concrete and practical works on implementing culture in an L2 class come from researchers dealing with ESL. For ESL learners mastering the L2 language and understanding its cultural background is essential for their survival in a new country as based on their knowledge of English they are given the legal status to live in that new country.

According to Robinson (1985 in Tomalin & Stempleski: 1993) when students face a new culture in an L2 class they have to deal with its three dimensions which are interconnected. These dimensions are:

- Facts- these are the most visible to students, for example in other country a telephone box looks different.
- Meanings- in other country people may assign different meanings to certain signs, for example there is a different notion of the word "tea" in the Czech language and in English.
- Interaction patterns- the way people interact with each other may also be different, for example in the United Kingdom it is very important to

be polite and use words like "please" and "thank you" quite a lot otherwise an innocent foreigner visiting the country is considered rude.

Similar patterns are introduced by Stern (1992) or Hammerly (1982), for detailed study see their works.In previous years the traditional approach towards foreign language learning and teaching stressed mostly the facts connected with the target culture or any culture. The theory that the notion of what we call "culture" is a social construct, a social reality and as such is a product of itself had not been taken into account. Lately such an approach has been challenged and for example Kramsch (2001: p.205-206) suggests that we see an L2 class as an opportunity to:

• Establish a sphere of interculturality where all cultures have equal rights and can be discussed.
• Teach culture as an interpersonal process when social aspects of conversation are mentioned and taken into account.
• Teach culture as a difference, but approach shall be handled with great sensitivity.
• Cross borders of the classroom and take learners for example to a gallery, museum or a cinema.

When we look at Stern´s Issues and Options in Language Teaching (1992: 226-232) we are offered concrete methods we can use when implementing intercultural aims in an L2 class. These are:

• Cultural problem solving approach- we can use an activity called culture assimilator, during this activity students are given a situation which can be misunderstood by any American/British/Czech citizen etc. and students are asked to discuss the possible reasons that have caused the misunderstanding.
• Behavioural and affective approach- it is based around three types of activities. The first one is a total physical response (TPR) when cultural situations are dealt with in form of simple commands given by the teacher/one of the students (e.g. a restaurant visit). The second type of activity is a role play, again an example with a restaurant visit can be used but this time students are not told what to do, they need to act it out and rely on themselves. The third type of activity is called a mini-drama which is very similar to culture assimilator with the difference that students are asked to be in the position of a person who has misunderstood the situation and they deal with the same model situation at a subjective level.
• Cognitive approaches are for those who want to feel more in charge of their educational process and would do their own research on language even outside the classroom in form of theoretical research of the language, reading fiction or non-fiction, direct exposure to desired culture (emails, facebook), face-to-face contact or visit of a country where L2 is spoken.

The description of the newly designed course The Cross-curricular topic Multicultural Education in English classes

The course called Cross-curricular Topic Multicultural Education in English classes (official abbreviation in the university system is KAJ/MVA) was designed as a part of my dissertation project and was run for the first time at The University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice in the Czech Republic, in the winter term of academic year 2014/2015. It was offered in form of thirteen seminars of ninety minutes. The participants were pre-service teachers, future teachers of English. The students were in their first or second year of a follow-up Master's programme for secondary school teachers. The course was on offer in the compulsory-optional subjects section and only 14 people were allowed to sign for the course because as I was about to deal with sensitive and sometimes controversial issues I wanted a smaller group of students to create an atmosphere of trust and openness. This is always easier to do in a small group. The official languages of the course were both English and Czech with respect to the needs of plurilingualism and as it sometimes may be easier to formulate answers to complex questions in students' mother tongue. When the students met all the conditions and requirements of the course they were awarded with the final mark "započteno" which means "fulfilled". There was no exam.

The requirements for the course participants were and still are:
• entry L2 level upper-intermediate
• active participation in seminar work
• keeping a diary with notes from each seminar where the student is present
• preparation and realization of peer-teaching
• reflective essay at the end of the course
• minimum of two absences

The aims of the course were and still are:
• to introduce the students to the background of ME and offer necessary terminology connected with the cross-curricular topic Multicultural Education
• to demonstrate sufficient amount of activities combining cultural and linguistic aims
• to give room for peer- teaching when students demonstrate their understanding of ME using their newly designed activities combining cultural and linguistic aims
• to post lesson plans for peer teaching on the Czech educational website for in-service teachers called Metodicky Portal

The objectives of the course were and still are:
• At the end of the course students will have complex theoretical knowledge of the cross-curricular topic ME
• At the end of the course students will be able to prepare an activity combining cultural and linguistic aims in an L2 to be used at secondary school
• At the end of the course students will have their lesson plans for peer teaching posted on the Czech educational website for in-service teachers

The course work plan
Seminar One - The importance of culture in an L2 class.

Seminar Two - The cross-cultural topic Multicultural education in English classes.
Seminar Three - Plurilingualism, Pluriculturalism: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
Seminar Four - English teacher according to the EU standards.
Seminar Five - Combining linguistic and intercultural aims (speaking, listening).
Seminar Six - Combining linguistic and intercultural aims (reading, writing).
Seminar Seven to Twelve – Peer-teaching; content analysis.
Seminar Thirteen - Content analysis of the whole course.

The course content
I divided the course content into the three follow-up parts. As at the beginning most of the students had not even been aware of the fact that the cross-curricular topic ME exists and that it is a compulsory part of secondary education in the Czech Republic. I had to introduce some theory first, explaining the background of ME and its place in the Czech educational system and I had to explain how ME corresponds with modern language teaching and learning policies promoted by the Council of Europe. Naturally, for the first part of the course I chose the form of lectures (4 lectures) but in each seminar a concrete lecture was introduced and also followed by a practical activity combining intercultural and linguistic aims (time management of the activities: 20, 30+20, 20mins). Twenty minutes from the lecture time were devoted to discussions and question asking as students were always encouraged to express their opinion on a given topics and to seek for more information.
The second part of the course was devoted to demonstration of practical examples of activities to be used in an L2 class. The activities addressed the skills described in CEF – understanding (listening, reading); speaking (speaking interaction, speaking production) and writing (writing). At this phase I had undergone a couple of brainstormings with the students looking for answers these questions:
• what culture to teach?
• what type of activities to choose?
• where to find ready-made activities that can be used as they are or adjusted to our L2 classes?
The last part of the course was in hands of my students as they in pairs had to prepare a peer teaching activity simulating an L2 class at secondary school. Each peer teaching lasted forty minutes which is very close to the duration of a real L2 class at secondary schools in the Czech Republic (these last forty five minutes). The students were asked to prepare a lesson that can be used at secondary school and each activity from their class had to involve both cultural and linguistic aims. I shall also mention that at this point of their study programme the students were at the same time parallel to my course doing their teaching practice in year seven at a local secondary school or they were about to do their practice in near future.

228

In my paper I have already mentioned that the lesson plans for peer-teaching were posted on the Internet for the in-service teachers. For this purpose I have chosen a website called Metodickyportal.cz which is the most famous platform for Czech teachers to exchange their ideas and tips on conducting classes at all levels of the Czech educational system.

Sample Activity created by the lecturer of the course

As a warm-up activity for the lecture on plurilingualism, pluriculturalism and CEF I found a Japanese version of a well-known song by the famous band Queen on the Internet
(http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x86upq_japan-we-are-the-championsg-u-r-u_music). It was used in the first part of the course when most of my activities were designed to awaken self-reflection in students. I played the song and waited for students´ reaction. They heard something familiar but in totally unexpected form and some of them were laughing at such a form. Then I initiated the discussion suggesting that maybe for the Japanese people the Czech version or even the American version of the song would seem equally strange. A discussion on different ways of how people see or represent the same reality followed. The conclusion of our discussion was that we shall avoid thinking that there is only one truth when it comes to describing a concrete thing/reality/notion and that the angles from which people see the reality may vary and that it is quite all right and we shall respect that. This brings students back to the fact that we all shall be careful and do not follow monistic approach in our teaching practice and life.

Sample Activity created by the students for peer-teaching

Here I have chosen an activity that I particularly enjoyed for its´ simplicity and effectiveness at the same time. Students had found it on the Internet (www.busyteachers.com) and they presented it as a closing activity for a class on Thanksgiving. The students worked in a pair (so in a way, at the same time they practiced team-teaching). One of them explained to their peers that all American families say thanks during their Thanksgiving dinner and that they are thankful for different things. The second student was meanwhile giving to everybody three sticker papers and then drew a tree on the white board. Then both the students asked their colleagues to write down three things they are thankful for. They asked the class to write each thing on one of the given papers. The class was given five minutes to do this task, then everybody was asked to come one by one to the board and to stick their papers on the tree and also to repeat the model sentence "I am thankful for…"

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to mention that after the first year of running the course I had a very positive feedback and for the first time in my career of a university lecturer I experienced true and unconditional interest on the side of my students. They were willing to discuss any issues openly, they always actively cooperated in class work and they even thanked me for the possibility to be a part of the course. I had developed a three level system evaluation for the course and the results on all the three levels were

surprisingly very positive. The students mostly appreciated the fact that in seminars theory was always put into practice and that they were allowed enough room for their own experiments (peer-teaching). The only negative comment concerned the fact that in class we were all always pressed for time and for that reason there was little room for direct feedback on peer-teaching. Feedback in written form was provided though and students were also encouraged to discuss with me their experiences with peer-teaching during my office hours outside the class.

The running of MVA in winter term 2014 proved that such courses are needed and appreciated by students especially for focusing on the practical aspects of the issue of interculturalism and pluriculturalism. I do hope that we will be able to continue offering the course to teacher trainees at the University of South Bohemia and also that via the Internet with my students we will help to enlarge the bank of practical examples of implementing interculturalism into L2 class at secondary schools for in-service teachers.

Bibliographic references

Autography of Intercultural Encounters. 2014. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/AUTOBIOGRAPHY/AutobiographyTool_en.asp

Bila kniha. Narodni program vzdelavani v Ceske republice [White Paper]. 2002. Retrieved from http://www.msmt.cz/file/35405_1_1/

BYRAM, M. – MORGAN, C. 1994. Teaching and Learning Language and Culture. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. 2014. Retrieved from www.coe.int/lang-CEFR

Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2015. Retrieved from www.britannica.com

European Language Portfolio. 2011. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/

GEERTZ, G. 1973. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. In HINKEL, E. 2005. Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education. 2010. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Source2010_ForumGeneva/GuideEPI2010_EN.pdf

HAMMERLY, H. 1982. Synthesis in Language Teaching. In STERN, H. H. 1992. Issues and Options in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HARTL, P. – HARTLOVA, H. 2004. Psychologicky slovnik. Praha: Portal.

NAKONECNY, M. 1977. Mala encyklopedie soucasne psychologie. In Prucha, J. 2007. Interkulturni psychologie. Praha: Portal.

HINKEL, E. 2005. Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HOFSTEDE, G. J. – PEDERSEN, P. B. – HOFSTEDE, G. 2002. Exploring Culture, Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press.

Images of Others. 2013. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIEVM_en/AIEVM_autobio graphy_en.pdf

Japan-We are the champions (G.U.R.U). 2009. Retrieved from http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x86upq_japan-we-are-the-championsg-u-r-u_music

KRAMSCH, C. 2001. Language and Culture. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Metodicky portal (2012). Retrieved from www.rvp.cz

GOLDSTONE, J. (Producer) – JONES, T. (Director). 1979. Monty Python's Life of Brian [Motion picture]. Great Britain: HandMade Films.

MORGENSTERNOVA, M. – SULOVA, L. 2007. Interkulturni psychologie. Rozvoj interkulturni sensitivity. Praha: Karolinum.

MURPHY, R. F. 1998. Uvod do kulturni a socialni antropologie. In PRUCHA, J. 2006. Multikulturni vychova. Praha: Triton.

PAREKH, B. 2000. Rethinking Multiculturalism – Cultural Diversity and Political Theory. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

PRUCHA, J. 2006. Multikulturni vychova. Praha:Triton.

ROBINSON, G. L. 1985. Cross Cultural Understanding processes and Approaches for Foreign Language, English as a Foreign Language and Bilingual Educators. In TOMALIN, B. – STEMPLESKI, S. 1993. Cultural Awareness. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ramcovy vzdelavaci program [Framework Education Programme]. 2005. Retrieved from www.nuv.cz/file/138_1_1/

Ramcovy vzdelavaci program [Framework Education Programme]. 2013. Retrieved from http://www.msmt.cz/file/29397/download/

de SAUSSURE, F. 1996. Kurs obecne lingvistiky. Translated by CERMAK, F. Praha: Academia.

STERN, H. H. 1992. Issues and Options in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skolsky zakon c.561/2004 Sb. [School Bill]. 2004. Retrieved from http://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/novy-skolsky-zakon

Thankful for activity (n.d.). Retrieved from www.busyteachers.com

Vachek, J. 1999. Prolegomena k dejinam prazske jazykovedne skoly. Jinocany: H&H.

Mgr. Lenka Hessová
Department of English studies
Facuty of Education
University in České Budějovice
Jeronýmova 10
371 15 České Budějovice
Czech republic
hessova@pf.jcu.cz