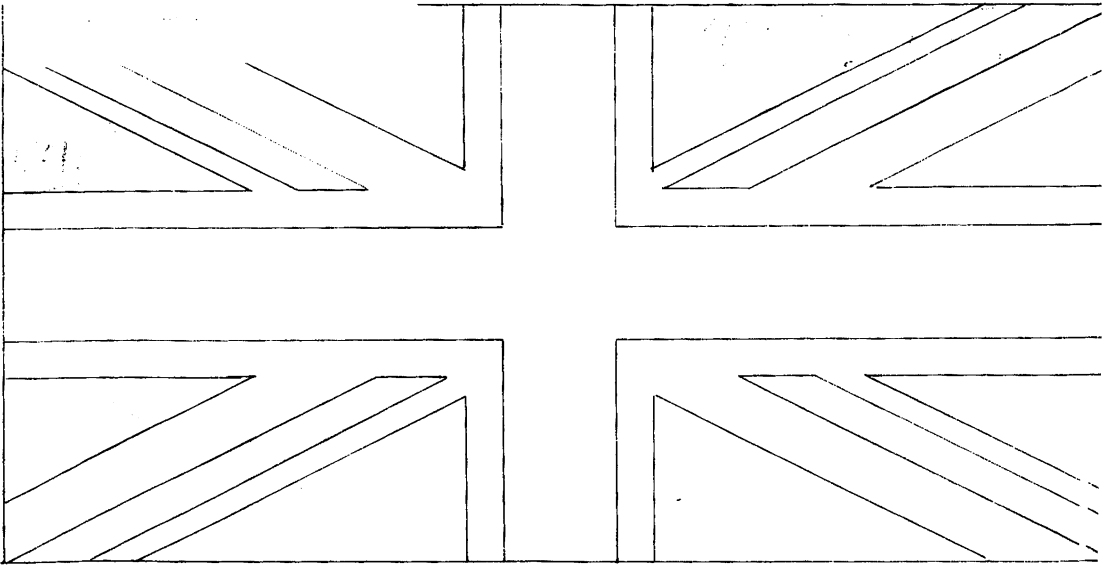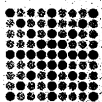# JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF
BRITISH CULTURES

Edited by Jürgen Kramer, Bernd Lenz and Gerd Stratman

German Perspectives of the Study of British Cultures

with contributions by
Susan Bassnett, Ulrich Broich, Gisela Ecker, Hans Kastendiek,
Friederike Klippel

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Contents

Cultural Aspects in Foreign Language Teaching

Friederike Klippel (München)

Every German pupil receives at least some instruction in a foreign language while he or she is at school. For most children the first and most important – and sometimes the only – foreign language is English, which some encounter as early as in class 3 at primary school and others may study for a lengthy period of 9 to 11 years. At present the vast majority of all pupils begin with English as their first foreign language at the age of 10 or 11, when they are in their first year at secondary school. However, a number of German states plan to introduce foreign language teaching at primary level within the next few years. This will undoubtedly lead to changes in the general format of foreign language instruction at secondary level.

I have sketched the current situation in German schools because it is the backdrop for my discussion of the cultural aspects of foreign language teaching. As a teacher trainer involved in preparing teachers of English for their work in language classrooms at all types of schools and at all levels, I would like to tie theory to practice. And for me, the field to which theoretical reflection on the place of cultural studies within foreign language learning applies, is that of teaching-learning situations involving German pupils, of all ages, being taught English, by German teachers of English, in Germany. It is vital to keep this in mind if we want our theories to have a positive impact, changing and improving English language learning.

One might look at the cultural side of foreign language teaching from two perspectives. The first one is the outward view. In this we try and place English language teaching in the German school system within a global framework of English language teaching worldwide. On the one hand this perspective needs to take into account the role of English as *the* international language. It is only a very small point, but the fact that this paper is written in English attests to the powerful status of English. Critical voices refer to "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson 1992) and "linguicism" (*ibid.*), albeit mostly with regard to countries outside Europe. On the other hand German English language teaching as *foreign* language teaching is part of teaching about the world, of global education and should also reflect global issues. More and more foreign language educators urge the language teaching profession to take up the challenges of peace education (e.g. Christ 1988, Freudenstein 1992), of education for human rights, of education for the environment, and, most recently, of education for language rights in a report prepared for UNESCO (Batley *et al.* 1993).

The second perspective is the inward view. It focusses on the relationship between language learning and culture learning. Foreign language learning

implies and embraces culture learning. As foreign language educators and teacher trainers we have to be aware of this relationship and suggest ways in which it may be reflected in English language teaching curricula and methods. My paper concentrates on this second perspective. But, of course, the role of English in the world today affects our ideas of cultural learning within English language teaching. The two perspectives mentioned cannot be kept totally separate.

It seems to be generally accepted that language learning and culture learning are linked. Learning a language therefore implies learning something about culture as well. This is certainly true for one's first language, but also for further languages acquired. However, this is as far as the general agreement goes, if we ignore the fact that terms like *learning* and *culture* and *something* tend to be given different definitions. A great number of disciplines have tackled aspects of culture and cultural learning, which accounts for the differences in emphasis and opinion, but which also renders the field so fascinating. I am going to look at cultural learning with the eyes of a foreign language educator. And although a great deal of my argument applies to foreign language learning and teaching in general, any specific points necessarily refer to the situation of English language teaching in Germany which I sketched at the very beginning.

Cultural learning in the foreign language classroom touches three spheres: empathy and understanding, knowledge, and communicative skill. A foreign language course which incorporates all three aspects trains its learners for intercultural competence and is likely to be an enriching experience. Again, there is general agreement among syllabus designers and curriculum planners to strive for intercultural competence in the foreign language. There are, however, divergent ideas of how one gets there; doubt is expressed if one can reach this goal at all, and there are different notions of what exactly the learners should be able to do as interculturally competent individuals.

I feel that two aspects of the intercultural component of foreign language teaching have largely been overlooked so far. The first of these is the issue of fitting cultural learning to the age group of the learners concerned. By talking about learners in general we tacitly assume that cultural learning is the same for everybody. But are children capable of perceiving, interpreting, and learning cultural matters in the same way as adults? The second aspect which has not been given a great deal of attention, is the role of the teacher as a mediator of cultural learning. In discussing the three components of cultural learning I shall try and shift the focus a little to the learners and their teachers.

1. Understanding the other

In recent years the German discussion of this aspect of cultural learning has been dominated by two terms: *fremd* and *verstehen*. I felt a cultural gap very acutely, when I was trying to find adequate translations for these words. The German noun *Fremdverstehen*, which combines the two terms and which to my mind

labels the field of empathy and attitude in cultural learning very succinctly, cannot be replaced by just one English noun without losing a number of important ideas. Something which is *fremd* may be called strange, unknown, exotic, distant, foreign and alien in English. Each one of these adjectives denotes part of the idea of *fremd*. And because I did not want to stress any one of these aspects more than the others I opted for a completely different word: the other. With this choice of term I deliberately widened the field to include otherness in general, although this involves a certain loss with respect to the notions of distance and the foreign.

A great deal of thought has been given to analysing the other, or the foreigner in a range of academic disciplines: sociology, ethnology, philosophy, psychoanalysis and psychology, to name but a few. It is difficult to see in which way these theories may be applicable to foreign language learning in schools. School learning differs in significant ways from personal encounters with other cultures and foreigners which form the foundation of philosophical and other studies. Further and more essentially, foreign language learning in schools is for children and adolescents, whose perceptions and reactions are not necessarily the same as those of adults. This important caveat should be kept in mind when we consider what it means to strive for an understanding of the other in our teaching.

Julia Kristeva (1990: 213) has pointed out that we all are foreigners in the multinational and multicultural societies of today, no longer united and protected by a common philosophy and religion, dependent on our very personal moral code in our encounters with the others. When we meet the other, the foreigner, we are reminded of the unknown, the alien part within ourselves (11). Confronted with the other we ask ourselves if we, too, could be the other, be in their place (23). Kristeva claims that those who realize they are foreigners inside themselves will neither suffer from their status as foreigners in the outside world nor will they glory in it (209). Kristeva's view seems to me to be a very European one, because it is founded on an idea of human personality where the individual is aware of the facets of his or her identity.

Can we assume that children possess this kind of self-awareness? Probably not. Developmental psychology says that it is only with the end of puberty that each individual's identity becomes firmly established. If we leave aside the issue of general identity formation and just look at the growth of children's ideas about their own national and regional identity, we have to refer to studies undertaken several decades ago by Jean Piaget and Anne-Marie Weil in Geneva (cf. Schmitt 1979: 51 *seq.*) and Gustav Jahoda (1963) at Glasgow. Piaget and Weil based their theory of children's egocentrism in part on the results of an empirical investigation, in which they asked children about their nationality, about their ideas concerning geographical locations of Swiss towns and also about their feelings towards different nationalities. Piaget and Weil distinguish three stages of development: Small children up to the age of six have no concept of their own country and other countries; at this age children presume their environment to be the only possible and natural one. The

second stage applies to seven to ten-year-olds, who have vague notions about their own nationality and country and hazy ideas about other countries. It is only at the third stage when children are ten years and older that they can provide clear and correct information about nationality and regional facts.

Jahoda's findings support those of Piaget and Weil; the process of becoming aware of one's own national and cultural identity continues beyond primary school age. Some of the ten to eleven-year-olds in Jahoda's study were not able to distinguish clearly between nationality (British), region (Scotland) and language (English). One child said, "One week I'm Scottish and the next week I'm British" (Jahoda 1963: 60). There is a dire need for more research in this field so that we may find out if the TV watching children of today retain these developmental stages. Is it possible that the greater exposure to other cultures which comes both from TV and their personal experience as tourists or within their own classrooms has accelerated the children's grasp of nationality and cultural diversity?

However, the fuzzy notion very young children have of their own national identity can lead to behaviour which is reminiscent of Kristeva's analysis, they are all foreigners. Whoever has the opportunity of observing young children of different cultural backgrounds, who are strangers to each other, begin playing together, will notice how successfully they manage to interact, to establish a flow of communication across all language barriers, to accept each other as partners in the game.

There is another aspect, in which these children differ from adults. They perceive other things. What strikes adults as strange or foreign is not always considered noteworthy by children. Colin Rogers gives a summary of the research into the child's perception of other people from the area of developmental psychology. He argues that "the child, in common with the adult, will react not to other people directly, but to his own impressions of those other people" (Rogers 1978: 108). Therefore we need to understand how children perceive others. A number of studies used children's descriptions of other people as their starting-point. These studies suggest that the development of person perception moves through stages: Young children at the age of six or seven describe others mainly in concrete terms, especially with regard to their social role and their appearance; ten-year-olds are more concerned with other people's behaviour; thirteen-year-olds refer to the behaviour of others and, increasingly, to personality traits and attitudes. With increasing age, the children's descriptions move from the concrete to the more abstract, and from a characterization of either simply pleasant or unpleasant to a more differentiated picture (cf. Rogers 1978). So far, anecdotal evidence from lay observations of children's behaviour seems to be backed up by psychological research. When we want to consider encounters with the other in foreign language teaching we must not forget that children's and adults' perceptions of the other are not alike.

Psychological theories of perception have established that we perceive both on a conscious and a subconscious level (Guski 1989: 11). As we perceive our sur-

roundings in order to orient ourselves in the world and to survive, we structure and evaluate our perceptions according to certain rules. In Gestalt psychology these rules are linked to characteristics of the things we perceive, like salience, similarity, proximity (Guski 1989: 53*seq.*). But because our perceptions are also influenced by our momentary needs and attitudes, certain things in our environment acquire greater importance than others. This explains in part why children see differently and consequently act differently from adults; their needs and interests do not always coincide.

A further factor to be taken into account when discussing variations in perception is our knowledge of the world. What we know and what we therefore expect considerably influences what we see. Helmut Heuer has shown that this is true for the intercultural perceptions of language learners (Heuer 1992). Again, it is obvious that children and adults must differ in this respect. However, it is by no means the case that adults always see things more accurately because of their greater knowledge of the world. A child's view may be far more perceptive and penetrating just because it is not hampered by culturally biased presuppositions emerging from a greater store of knowledge.

Finally, the way in which we come into contact with the other may play an important role. So far, I have tacitly assumed that meeting the other, the foreigner, happens as a personal encounter between individual people. But meeting the foreign in the English language classroom occurs mostly – and for a majority of pupils exclusively – through the medium of texts and pictures and the work of the teacher with these materials. Learning theory has taught us that experiential learning is superior to book learning in terms of retention and involvement, but we know little of the effects of these types of learning on the development of perception and understanding in children. It is important for teachers to know how children see cultural differences when they occur in factual or in fictional texts, in films or in role plays, or in real-life situations and personal encounters. It is even more important for teachers to know how they can help children in their learning and understanding. Especially with younger pupils the teacher's personality and attitude towards the other will certainly colour her pupils' perceptions and reactions. The picture which emerges is far from simple. How children perceive the other is influenced by a great number of factors, e.g. by their interests and needs, by their knowledge of the world, their awareness of their own identity and the context in which they encounter the other.

Thinking about how we perceive the other must be followed by thinking about how we interpret the other and how we react to it. The English translations for the German adjective *fremd* which I listed above, point to a number of possible reactions. Something strange, different, alien may be considered interesting, exotic, boring, incomprehensible or threatening among other things. For our goal of understanding the other some of these reactions are less desirable than others.

If we reject the other as boring, we refuse to become involved. If we are fascinated by its exotic nature, we are simply reacting to the obvious differences

from the familiar. Bernhard Waldenfels (1990: 57*seq.*) has outlined how we try to cope with the other and the alien by appropriating it in various ways. According to Waldenfels an ethnocentric attitude shows itself in taking one's own values, behaviour and ideas as the yardstick against which to measure the other. It is only when we stop seeing the other purely in contrast to our own culture and begin to reconsider the familiar in the light of the other that we may understand. Waldenfels argues that we need to experience the other, to enter into a dialogue with it. This experience is a process which requires neither that we keep the other and the self totally separate nor that we fuse them, but which leads to greater differentiation. Both the other and the self are changed in the course of this interaction.

Can we be certain, however, that this process is completed by an understanding of the other? Can we possibly understand other cultures at all? There are two schools of thought concerning this question. The first one claims that the other culture must remain strange. As we are able to understand something only on the basis of our personal knowledge and experience, a foreign culture will never be fully understood (cf. Brenner 1989). The goal of understanding is not only thought unattainable but it is also challenged. It is Hans Hunfeld's belief that the differences between the other and ourselves should not be levelled and that the other has to remain a permanent riddle. Hunfeld thinks that we should learn to live with our inability to understand the other (cf. 1991, 1992).

In the context of foreign language teaching, and it is interesting to note that both authors quoted who are supporting this pessimistic view are foreign language educators, this position has serious repercussions. An approach which stresses the foreign culture as basically incomprehensible and enigmatic will rely heavily on those aspects which are very different from the home culture. Therefore the pessimistic view of intercultural understanding might foster a more superficial and distanced attitude in the learners. They could feel that there was no need even to try and understand the other if a complete understanding lay outside their reach.

The second school of thought acknowledges the problems which exist for any attempt at intercultural understanding, and yet, it does not view the gap between the other and us as unbridgeable, because we all inhabit a common world. For his "pedagogy of intercultural understanding" Lothar Bredella draws together potent arguments from a wide range of disciplines. In ethnology, sociology, philosophy and literary studies he finds ample support for his thesis that some kind of intercultural understanding is possible. In his conclusion he says,

> [...] the methods for understanding the foreign do not have to make the students forget their prior experiences, concepts and values but can acknowledge them. The success of understanding the foreign depends on the intensity of the interaction in which one's concepts and values are clarified and put at risk in the encounter with those of the foreign culture. The foreign culture is not a closed horizon, and we should not erect an unbridgeable barrier between the foreign and ourselves in order to protect it from us (Bredella 1992: 594).

In a similar way Christine Schwerdtfeger (1991) draws our attention to cultural symbols as the bedrock of intercultural understanding. She uses the term "cultural symbols" for those areas of experience which are universal to humankind, e.g. our concepts, values and behaviours as regards time or space, death or illness, evil or friendship. It is obvious from this list that a view of intercultural understanding which touches on these basic issues of life cannot restrict itself to rational thought but must recognize and give space to feelings. Therefore Schwerdtfeger rightly stresses the importance of emotions for our encounters with the other. Her aims as a foreign language educator are to make learners aware of cultural symbols and, consequently, to link this heightened perceptiveness to their own feelings and their foreign language learning. Awareness becomes a key term.

Aiming for an understanding of the other in foreign language teaching involves a wide range of aspects. In fact, this aim points to the educational dimension of foreign language learning, to – and here I must use the German term – *Bildung*. Helping learners achieve intercultural sensitivity (cf. Meyer 1993), establishing a willingness to understand, creating an open-minded attitude towards their own and the target cultures, taking their feelings and perceptions into account, in all these ways foreign language teaching can contribute to the personal growth of the learners and pave the way for lifelong intercultural learning. Yet, in classroom teaching, attitudes and feelings are always connected with some topic or situation. Cultural awareness needs information and discussion to grow.

2. Cultural kernels

The teaching of facts about the target culture, i.e. *Landeswissen*, has been a traditional component of foreign language teaching in Germany for some time. Though there is no general agreement on a canon of knowledge to be imparted, nevertheless certain criteria for the inclusion of cultural information in foreign language textbooks have been developed. Information should be correct, authentic, topical, representative and unbiased (cf. Sauer 1975, Grothuesmann/Sauer 1991, Doyé 1991). It should also be suitable for the age group of the pupils concerned. This is usually interpreted to mean that topics to be introduced have to build on the interests of the particular age group.

The problem of material selection is a very serious one for English language teaching. For a start, there are a number of different Englishes spoken in our present world; then there is the role of English as an international language; and, finally, there are many different English-speaking cultures to choose from. What should German school children be taught about this array of English-based or English-using cultures? Is it necessary for them to be familiar with, e.g. the geography of Britain, the American frontier or the history of Australia? Or should we restrict our teaching to the every-day life in one of these countries? We may find answers to these questions when we put the acquisition of knowledge about the target cultures into the general context of teaching for intercultural competence by using English.

Which functions does factual knowledge about a single or several target cultures fulfill in this context? With regard to working towards an understanding of the other, the cultural aspect discussed so far, knowledge plays a supportive role. A foreign language learner will be able to arrive at a more balanced view of the target culture, if she or he knows something about it. However, receiving information in a foreign language class is no guarantee for developing cultural awareness, empathy and a willingness to understand (cf. Meyer 1993: 127–128). There seems to be no straightforward causal relationship between knowledge and attitude.

Gisela Hermann's research (1978) sheds some light on the role of knowledge. Pupils with low scores in ethnocentricity were typically those who knew a lot about the target country, but who were also interested in subjects like Geography and History. The reverse was also true: markedly ethnocentric ideas came from pupils with little interest in and little knowledge about the target culture. A very important contributing factor was the individual's success as a foreign language learner. Failure in English, which was represented by a bad school report, correlated with high ethnocentricity. Still, we cannot automatically assume that the interested pupils grew to be like this in their English lessons. A general thirst for knowledge and a positive attitude towards the target culture may have been the cause of their interest and success in English as well as the result of excellent teaching. And their home environment and their parents' attitude may have been instrumental for the development of intercultural sensitivity. We simply do not know enough about the cross-fertilization between attitude, curiosity and the acquisition of knowledge, and the respective influence of home and school in this context.

There is another point to consider in connection with factual knowledge when aiming for intercultural understanding. If we follow the reasoning of Bredella, Schwerdtfeger and others, then understanding is helped along by going back to basic human experiences. This might be a point, where attitude and knowledge – both about one's own and the target culture – can profitably intersect. Let me give two examples. Studies of German immigrants in Britain (Berghahn 1988) and in Australia (Berloge 1990) suggest that food and the way we organize our personal space, our home, are two such basic cultural practices. In the case of the emigrants, the arrangement of living-room furniture in a German manner or the preference for certain kinds of food and the observance of German-style meals and mealtimes were kept, sometimes into the next generation (cf. Berghahn 1988: 223 *seq.*). Some Australian friends of the German immigrant women even adopted things like "Kaffee und Kuchen" into their daily routines (Berloge 1990: 111). Maybe the globalization of hamburgers, pizzas and TV dinners to be warmed up in the microwave has changed the present generation's link with the local cuisine, but the question of personal space seems to me to be a cultural kernel.

Taking basic human experiences, cultural kernels, as the starting point, we may be able to develop thematic units for intercultural learning within foreign language teaching. For teachers of German as a foreign language Paul Mog and

Hans-Joachim Althaus (1992) have edited a reader which exemplifies this approach at a very advanced level. A more accessible study for Britain is the book by the anthropologist Nigel Barley about his "native land" (1989). In English language classrooms at German schools cultural kernel topics would have a dual purpose: on the one hand they could provide information on the target cultures, on the other hand they could motivate the learners to look at their own culture, too. Decisions as to what target cultures to include, whether to contrast Germany and Britain, for instance, or whether to adopt an international stance, are dependent on the age group, the location and, perhaps, the type of school. And because cultural kernels are common to us all, we can bridge the gap between cultures to a certain degree. Students can become aware of and build on their own experience. And this works at all age levels if the teacher takes the pupils' perceptive powers into account. Experience is a key word. For the foreign language classroom that means that we cannot rely on book learning but have to include some "field work" (Michael Byram), when learners have the chance to observe the target culture. As Michael Byram (cf. Byram/Esarte-Sarries 1991: 186*seq.*) and Généviève Zarate (1990) have shown, an ethnographic approach can be very fruitful.

Although we should try and create as many points of contact between home and target culture for the learners, we must admit that within the state school system field work is going to be a rare occurrence for most pupils. Imaginative foreign language teachers have demonstrated that it is possible to provide opportunities for meeting people from the target cultures here in Germany (cf. Edelhoff/Liebau 1988, Müller 1989). Still, the majority of language learners will encounter the foreign culture mainly in their textbooks and in texts. In the last two decades numerous suggestions have been made concerning the way of dealing with all types of texts from a cultural studies point of view (cf. Buttjes 1981, 1986/ 1987, 1992; Kramer 1990; Kramsch 1993; Kuna/Tschachler 1986 – to name but a few).

The main purpose of any general foreign language course is to enable the learners to communicate in this new language. And here lies a second very important function of knowledge about the target cultures: it is also strategic knowledge. This is not necessarily a different kind of knowledge from the cultural kernels mentioned above. A trivial example: knowledge about personal space and physical contact will make learners aware that shaking hands is not always as common as in Germany. Even if they get it wrong occasionally, this tiny sliver of information will make them realize that their own behaviour is not the only pattern possible. Knowledge, then, is useful. It helps learners to grasp something about the other culture and to become aware of their own cultural values and practices; it also helps them to survive better, i.e. with fewer misunderstandings and breakdowns, in crosscultural communication.

3. Crosscultural communication

According to Karlfried Knapp and Annelie Knapp-Potthoff the study of intercultural communication deals with the effects which cultural diversity has on interpersonal contact. They see knowledge about other cultures and cultural awareness as subordinate to the general aim of intercultural communication (Knapp/Knapp-Potthoff 1990: 83). Their intention is to devise a theory of intercultural communication in general. Consequently, they focus on that type of intercultural communication which is not culture-specific, but occurs in all kinds of crosscultural interaction. It is evident that for this type of communicative skill, knowledge of a certain target culture is not essential. What is important is an insight into the culture-dependent nature of communicative styles and behaviours. A number of strategic skills need also be acquired, if the intercultural communicator wants to identify and correct misunderstandings, or if she has only a very basic foreign language repertoire to draw on. As regards culture-specific concepts of intercultural communication Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff are rather sceptical. They fear that learners may be lulled into a false sense of security because of their rudimentary knowledge of the target culture. Furthermore the authors warn of the dangers of stereotyping and of "going native", which they see in connection with a culture-specific preparation for intercultural communication.

Where does all that leave English language teaching in German schools? If we adopted the course favoured by Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff we would have to train German learners of English in the use of English as an international language. That this aspect has largely been missing from the English language syllabuses has been criticized recently (cf. Hüllen 1992). If we modified the overall goals of English language teaching to include cultural awareness, this would provide a more international perspective. And it would equip language learners to manage intercultural encounters in the English language, even if these are not with native speakers of English.

In concrete terms a general English language course would have to incorporate communicative training for negotiating some kind of "intercultural meeting point" between speakers. Strategies for this purpose include explaining one's own cultural presuppositions and associations with certain words as well as finding out about these things from one's partner. This general demand has to be specified for different kinds of courses; slow learners might practice asking questions politely and giving basic information about their own cultural background. Again, the age factor needs to be considered, not least of all, because the language behaviour which is acceptable for younger children is no longer considered adequate for adolescents.

There is a certain danger in this proposal for communicative training based on cultural awareness. If we try and make communicating in the foreign language a conscious process of choosing words and phrases not only on the basis of their grammatical and lexical accuracy and communicative appropriateness, but also

on the basis of their cultural connotations we raise the barrier for speaking. Especially the timid and the sensitive will be even more afraid to say something for fear of being wrong, if they have to monitor not only grammar and vocabulary but also cultural adequacy. Any foreign language teaching before the age of puberty, before the individual personality becomes more stable, must weigh the gains in cultural awareness against the losses of spontaneity and willingness to speak. A lot will depend on the actual realization of intercultural aims at the different levels. So far, research in intercultural pragmatics has concentrated on adult second or foreign language learners (Kasper 1993: 42).

Learning a foreign language at school, far removed from the target culture where it is spoken and with only few opportunities for personal encounters with that culture and language, creates a very particular learning situation. We are told and many of us know from experience that acquiring a foreign language reshapes our own cultural and language identity and can be a deeply enriching process. But does this happen at school? Do ten-year-olds who are highly motivated when they begin their English lessons feel that learning English is a key to new experiences? Or is it nor just fun to learn new words, a bit like a secret code? Whenever I ask students of English at university what they felt about their English learning at school I hear descriptions of the drudgery of textbook work, the pain of grammar practice and the constant threat of tests. But in most cases there were two things which made English meaningful to these students during their school years – and they probably would not have chosen English at university otherwise, real-life encounters with an English-language culture during a year abroad or an exchange visit and at least one enthusiastic teacher.

4. Teachers of English

Foreign language teaching theory can build beautiful intercultural castles in the air. But if we want to change the quality and the direction of English language teaching in our schools we will have to convince the teachers. Teachers are the mediators of the foreign cultures, they are also the best models their pupils have of successful and confident intercultural communicators. The teacher's functions do not lie solely in the dispersion of linguistic knowledge and the training of skills, teachers are also vital for creating motivation for their subject. The teacher's personal involvement with other cultures can greatly stimulate the learner's interest. The younger the learners the more important the teacher.

Teaching English for intercultural competence in the areas of attitude, knowledge and skill outlined in this paper requires teachers who can bring the foreign culture into the classroom. That does not mean that a teacher needs to have an encyclopedic knowledge of all English-language cultures plus his own; neither does it mean that teachers of English have to be bilingual. But it does imply that an English teacher remains curious and willing to learn about English-speaking

cultures, that he or she has embarked on this lifelong road of discovery and is willing to let the learners share some of this experience. If teaching the English language for intercultural competence is meaningful for the teacher on a professional as well as on a personal level, then it may become meaningful for some of her pupils as well.

It is the task of foreign language teacher training, mainly at the universities, to establish courses of study where the students are prepared for this kind of English language teaching. Intercultural aspects and their didactic application deserve to be given room in teacher training if we want the next generation to learn English at school in a wider intercultural context.

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