INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE ACROSS THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

Case studies drawing on insights gained from the Permit Project

edited by:
Neva Čebron

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Introduction

NEVA ČEBRON

The discussion encouraging the incorporation of intercultural education across the curriculum at all levels of schooling has become mainstream within the EU in recent years. It stems from views promoted by the constitutional documents of the EU such as the *Treaty on European Union*, which declares in its Preamble that the EU Member States desire »to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions«. Moreover, education to intercultural citizenship, enhancing plurilingualism and pluriculturalism within the context of the EU educational system is firmly encouraged in the documents promulgated by the Council of Europe, such as the *Recommendation 82/18* stating that "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".

The PERMIT Project (*Promote Education and Reciprocal Understanding Through Multicultural Integrated Teaching)* followed the above guidelines from its inception by proposing to extend the plurilingual and pluricultural education framework to include Turkey as an aspiring member of the EU family. The broad aims and objectives were to further mutual understanding between participants from the three countries: Italy, Slovenia and Turkey, by exploring different facets of their rich cultural and linguistic heritage. Such enhanced knowledge of diverse cultures would thus form the backdrop to raising intercultural awareness and discussing active citizenship concept, so as to foster intercultural communicative competence among teachers and students in actual encounters, virtual or real. The specific goal of the project became to develop approaches and strategies that could serve as models for integrating intercultural and citizenship issues into classroom activities across the curriculum at a secondary education level, as well as to implement these models in the actual educational process thus assessing their validity. Twenty-four experienced teachers from twenty secondary education

institutions in partner countries covering various specialisms from the fields of Science, Humanities and Languages were recruited to participate in this project. Within international workshops teachers advanced their understanding of methods, approaches and strategies to tackle intercultural and citizenship issues in the classroom, designed new teaching materials and piloted them during their lessons, thus engaging more than 500 students into the Permit project activities. The activities of the project were organized and facilitated by a group of international researchers from the three countries, while their work was steered by the Scientific Committee composed of renown scientists: Prof. Çiğdem Kağitçibaşı from the Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey, Prof. Füsun Ataseven from the Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul, Turkey, Prof. Emine Demirel from the Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul, Turkey, Prof. Dr. Lucija Čok from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Primorska in Koper, Slovenia, Prof. Umberto Margiotta from the Centre of Excellence for Didactic Research and Advanced Training at the University Ca' Foscari of Venice, Italy. The project was sponsored by the EU under the grant scheme entitled *Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue between EU and Turkey.*

The purpose of the present publication is, therefore, to present the methods adopted in the PERMIT project and the results yielded during its experimental stage. The majority of articles were written by researchers from the three universities involved, the Faculty of Arts and Science at the Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul, Turkey, the Centre of Excellence for Didactic Research and Advanced Training at the University Ca' Foscari of Venice, Italy, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Primorska in Koper, Slovenia. The articles therefore report on the theoretical background of the activities devised by the researchers for the international teacher-training workshops, on the process of monitoring and guiding teachers' work in terms of materials development and their implementation in classroom practice, as well as proposing an analysis of the results of activities carried out within the classroom and within the virtual space.

In the paper *Toward a Brain-Friendly Approach in Intercultural Education: the Permit Project Experience* Dr. Anna Lia Proietti Ergün shows the usefulness of brain-based teaching and learning for raising intercultural awareness and developing empathy among members of culturally diversified groups. The article first briefly sketches the main tenets of this approach, which draws on awareness of »how the brain learns«, and points out that »learning something new actually helps the brain to grow by building new neural pathways and connections«. It then presents the core research methods of analyzing learning styles and the *Multiple Intelligence Theory* by introducing the leading scientists of the field and continues by outlining what a brain-friendly approach can have in common with »intercultural education« as proposed by the leading researchers of the field, such as Mike Byram, Milton Bennett and Çiğdem Kağitçibaşı. Dr. Proietti Ergün claims that introducing the Turkish teachers to the above theoretical insights within the Permit project workshops helped them »reflect on many aspects of their own culture and the role that education plays within it in order to give meaning to the process of integrated, intercultural education in their classroom practices«, since teachers were encouraged »to create a "brain" and "interculturally" friendly environment« in their courses and thus help students achieve »a holistic acceptance of otherness«.

In the second study relating the reaction of Turkish teachers to the PERMIT project entitled *A Comprehensive Analysis of the Views of Turkish Teachers on the Process of the Permit Project* Dr. Sertel Altun reports on various steps introducing intercultural issues and on the responses of teachers to the teacher-training seminars. She begins by noting that "both business and educational worlds increasingly attach importance to the intercultural identity of individuals", which "is built on democratic values fostering plurality". Dr. Altun then argues that "the current educational objectives of Turkey include developing respect and sensitivity toward different cultures", but "the teacher who implements such an aim should possess adequate knowledge about the subject" and quotes the goals of the PERMIT project as pointers in the right direction. Investigating the response of ten Turkish teachers to training within seminars and on-line collaborative activities, she lists some core issues tackled, such as "the basic aims of teachers in participating in the project", "achieving familiarity with different cultures and people", "obtaining project experience", "developing professional and language skills" and "the benefits to teachers from the project". The conclusions drawn from this action research was that within the project teachers developed competencies and skills which allowed them to improve their professional status as well as to develop their linguistic skills and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, training and sharing in an international group "enabled teachers to have an empathetic point of view towards other cultures which also leads to a positive effect on their students". The comment of one of the teachers interviewed in the article confirms Dr. Altun's claims by stating that the teacher "saw that answers to universal problems would be looked for when we interact with foreigners".

Like Dr. Altun and Dr. Proietti Ergün, in her chapter Dr. Sadriye Güneş is interested in finding out more about the response of the Turkish participants, specifically the teachers of science, to the approaches introduced in the PERMIT project. She describes the introduction of methods used in cognitive linguistics, namely, metaphorical language, to enhance a discussion on raising intercultural awareness and empathy in the classroom. After a brief outline of "the theories

of metaphor" and the use of "the metaphorical element" in communication, the main body of the article is dedicated to presenting the application of "metaphor activities" in the teaching materials, as well as to the responses of the students. For the purpose of various science subjects a number of metaphors were proposed to students to reflect and elaborate on, which resulted in a number of essays, posters or other visual presentations. Dr. Güneş reports on a number of exceptionally imaginative interpretations of metaphors, linking scientific insights with intercultural insights, such as the essay from which "can be seen that students appropriated the *heat* concept using their own situations, and the *heat exchange* concept with a process of recognizing people different from themselves, communicating with them, being open to sharing. The students demonstrated their abilities for self-identification and identifying others. It can be asserted that new and positive thoughts and feelings have taken the place of previously negative thoughts and feelings." She therefore concludes that by exploiting the novelty of metaphor activities intercultural communicative competence was enhanced and suggests that in this manner "the concept of empathy could be handled in an effective and efficient way".

In her overview article on *Intercultural Education within the Curricula,* Prof. Dr. Lucija Čok, as a member of the Scientific Committee proposes as the goal of the PERMIT project "to improve the current situation" by suggesting "a systematic modification of the educational approach within individual school subjects" which requires "the support of a substantiated empirical practice presented to teachers, a modified teaching process and determination of the effects of altered actions". Recalling the noble ideas and beliefs underpinning such compelling documents as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,* she addressed the challenges of the ever more heterogeneous society within the EU, such as encouraging multilingualism, advancing of a healthy multilingual economy, and maintaining an increased social cohesion. Pointing out the fact that language knowledge should also be viewed as human capital, "enabling an individual to acquire financial means and improve their standard of living", she demonstrates that language learning can be perceived "as an investment in one's knowledge", since "for an individual, the knowledge of languages and understanding different cultures is basically an accumulation of intellectual capital". The article pays special attention to the theoretical input introduced within the workshops, as well as to the applied pedagogical elements such as the *PERMIT Portfolio for Teachers,* which monitored the "travelled path". Prof. Dr. Čok concludes by praising the outcomes of the project and suggesting that its "innovation will continue to serve as a basis for a critical friendship and exchange of experiences in the future".

In her overview of approaches to introducing literature into intercultural education entitled *Literary Education in Intercultural Perspective,* Dr. Nives Zudič Antonič proposes a novel manner of "listening to space and time", a privileged perspective proposed by literary texts that can carry us across "unknown cultural grounds". She refers to intercultural competence as "the ability to enter properly into a relation with a variety of cultural contexts" which is developed by observing the world around us and acquiring culturally sensitive knowledge. While the analysis of language and culture is key to overcoming ethnocentricity, literature helps us to develop an appreciation and respect for "otherness" and thus "cross the borders". Drawing on studies proposed by Bennett, Kramsch, Balboni, Byram, Giroux and others, Dr. Zudič Antonič suggests her own teaching strategy that can help students "to overcome negative attitudes towards other cultures, to outgrow the limitations of their world view". Literary expression allows for a more subtle linguistic appreciation, a discovery of "a language whose meaning becomes manifold" and therefore opens up a range of perspectives, experiences, sensations, which in turn help students to express more accurately their own views and insights. In this manner a dialectics is established between the text and the reader which transcends "subjectiveness" and leads to "intersubjectiveness, intertextuality and interculturality". According to the author at this point students "cross the border between information exchange and personal participation" and become "authors of their own learning".

Dr. Neva Čebron in her article *Intercultural Awareness across the Curriculum: Approaches to Promoting Intercultural Communicative Competence within the Permit Project* first discusses various approaches to acquiring intercultural communicative competence which formed a theoretical framework of the activities within the PERMIT project. Grounding her arguments on the premise that in a globalized world teachers and students should centre their classroom endeavours on intercultural awareness and competence, she proposes a number of research questions that can help us gage the level of intercultural communicative competence. By analyzing the answers retrieved from Slovene students participating in the project, Dr. Čebron tries to map a number of parameters defining the level of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism among Slovene high school students. In conclusion she also introduces the views of the teacher participants as to the effectiveness of the teaching materials developed on the above principles, pointing out that the PERMIT project triggered a lot of enthusiasm, generating "hunger to better understand and engage with this intriguing otherness that has transpired from their activities and results".

The articles in this book are thus meant for teachers, researchers and other practitioners interested in enhancing intercultural approaches in their work. It

was a privilege to be able to participate to the PERMIT project and sharing the insights gathered from its various activities with a wider audience is meant as a contribution to expanding the professional discourse regarding the place of intercultural dialogue within education to new topics, new approaches and new professional fields.

Toward a brain-friendly approach in intercultural education: The PERMIT project experience

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ABSTRACT

Developing best practices in intercultural education within a strictly defined national curriculum is a challenge, but a challenge that can be won thanks to a better understanding of how the brain functions. In this paper the author introduces some fundamental notions regarding the brain friendly approach in order to clarify how such an approach can contribute to develop best practice in intercultural education. Furthermore, this paper focuses on the work done by Turkish teachers involved in the Permit project, a project co-funded by the EU in the Civil Society dialogue framework. Turkish high school teachers from different disciplines were asked to prepare some on-line educational units in collaboration with their Slovenian and Italian colleagues. This paper chronicles the process of preparing intercultural educational units to be piloted in the classroom and to be included in best practice. The conclusion of the paper states how the PERMIT project has proven to be a good example in attaining effective intercultural teaching best practices using a brain-based approach.

KEY WORDS: intercultural education, intercultural learning, Turkey, brain-friendly approach, teacher training

INTRODUCTION

Brain-based teaching and learning has created a lot of excitement among parents and educators, primarily due to the fact that in the past twenty years, brain imaging has produced so much information about the way the brain functions. This flow of information and ideas also creates many expectations about how this improved knowledge could be used to develop better educational processes. Enthusiasm for the new findings has led to some vague conclusions regarding the implications that such information could have for education. In past decades, for example, one of the successful notions in education has been the distinction between the left and right hemispheres of the brain: it was commonly thought that the right hemisphere was solely responsible for creative and artistic thinking while the left hemisphere was the site of logical reasoning, mathematical analysis and language usage. With this in mind, enthusiastic educators started to develop methodology to reach left-brained or right-brained students. Today we know that this categorization should be considered no more than speculation, as both hemispheres contribute to nearly all cognitive tasks. The main exception to this being language, which seems to be mostly localized in the left hemisphere (Gazzaniga, 1998; Fabbro, 1999). The question remains, does it really matter for a teacher to be informed about brain physiology or is it enough to know about the cognitive processes that are a result of it? Some scholars claim that knowledge of brain physiology is not helping teachers to improve their performance and that what is really helping teachers is the knowledge of the cognitive processes of their students (Willingham & Lloyd, 2007). When we refer to brain-based teaching here, we mean an approach which is based on some basic facts of brain physiology, cognitive processes and the effect of the social environment on learning, all of which will help the Turkish teachers participating in the PERMIT project to improve their classroom practices.

FUNDAMENTALS IN THE BRAIN BASED APPROACH (Caine & Caine, 1994)

Let us start this brief review of brain-based learning with one of the features popular among all the educators who embrace this approach; Caine & Caine (1994) used a set of twelve principles to summarize the ways in which brain, mind and body participate in the learning process:

I. All learning engages physiology

The brain is connected holistically with the whole body; students learn better when they experience learning using both their senses and their bodies.

II. The brain is a social brain

The social nature of the human being is grounded in biology. Social interactions and relationships enhance the capacity of learning.

III. The search for meaning is innate

The brain learns better when it can make sense of what it is learning and why it is learning. Learning is boosted when students can actively participate in the learning.

IV. The search for meaning occurs through patterning

When the brain encounters a new idea, it searches for prior knowledge and experiences similar to the new concept. It makes sense of a new experience by creating new patterns to associate with it.

V. Emotions are critical to patterning

Emotions are a precious part of any learning experience. The brain comprehends more effectively when the appropriate emotions are elicited.

VI. The brain processes parts and wholes simultaneously

As previously mentioned, the left and right brain contribute simultaneously to almost all learning. Inter-disciplinary approaches embrace the multifaceted aspects of the brain and recognize the interaction of both hemispheres in meaningful learning.

VII. Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception

Information is stored not only when focused attention is involved, but also when peripheral perception is involved as well (Della Salla & Beschin, 2006). The learning process has to be supported by stimuli which account for every level of perception.

VIII. Learning is both conscious and unconscious

This is the 'iceberg principle' of learning; like an iceberg, the emerging part (what we explicitly know that we know) is just a small part of what has been learned, while much of what is learned lies beneath the surface. Most learning comes out after classroom activities, when students digest what they have learned, connect it to life experiences or apply the knowledge to life events.

IX. There are at least two approaches to memory

Caine and Caine (1994) refer to the neuropsychology of memory systems

described by O'Keefe and Nadel (1978) as taxon/locale and spatial/autobiographical. Taxon/locale memory, motivated by rewards and punishments, recalls seemingly unrelated information. Spatial/autobiographical memory recalls experiences instantly, such as what you ate for breakfast (Caine & Caine, 1994). As we will discuss a little further on, theories of memories have changed but the principal one is still vital, since information must be stored using all possible neural pathways.

X. Learning is developmental

Brain possibilities are biological driven; you can predict, to a certain extent, the development of every human being. We say 'to a certain extent' because learning something new actually helps the brain to grow by building new neural pathways and connections.

XI. Complex learning is enhanced by challenges and inhibited by threats associated with helplessness and/or fatigue

Stimuli have to be appropriate to the level of individual students and the whole class. Students must feel challenged but not threatened by proposed activities. The learning climate in the classroom is more effective when individual as well as class needs are taken into account.

XII. Each brain is unique

We all share the same biology, yet every brain has its own blueprint, as unique as our fingerprints or retinal prints. Life and learning shape our brains in totally unique ways.

Retention of knowledge

Many different psychological models of memory have been produced through the contribution of neuroscience. It is generally agreed that memory progresses from rote memory to short-term memory, creating connections to relational memory and ultimately to long-term memory, which is different from procedural or implicit memory as well as from declarative or explicit memory (Paradis, 1994). Rote memory defines the kind of memory that is often required in traditional learning. It is the kind of skill that is used to memorize long lists of words, multiplication tables etc., without providing context or relationship with other knowledge. It is the kind of learning that we have all experienced; quickly learned and soon forgotten. The short-term memory retains information for about 20 minutes. The challenge for our students is to connect this memory to long-term memory. We also know that rest, and especially sleep, plays a special role in pas-

sing memories from short-term to long-term storage. There are different pathways which connect an event to memory; we create olfactory, tactile, visual, auditory and emotional memories. All these memories seem to be stored in different circuits that can be connected together (Della Sala & Beschin, 2006). An emotion can recall the memory of an odour and, likewise, an odour can recall the emotions related to it. Making learning a full sensorial-emotional experience will help the process of creating connections between working and long-term memory. The more regions of the brain which store data about a subject, the more interconnections there are. When a student can cross-reference to stored data it means that she or he has learned, not merely memorized.

When we obtain information, let's say about horses, our brain immediately creates connections concerning the multiple categories that relate to the context with which this word is related: if we see a horse, the image goes to the visual cortex, if we learn to spell it, it links to language area, when we learn that it is a mammal, we link the information to other mammals that we know about. We can associate memories about how a horse scared us, for example, or how pleasant it is to ride. Because the word 'horse' is stored in multiple brain areas, when we think of the word 'horse' we immediately activate all the areas, and connecting neural networks sprout among these areas. Because of this, our knowledge of 'horse' is easily and efficiently accessed. This is the reason why it is optimal to teach relevant topics using multiple learning pathways, i.e., through several senses as well as across the curriculum.

Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligence Theory

As previously mentioned, our brains elaborate upon information at many levels and layers simultaneously. According to Ekwall & Shaker (in Ginnis, 2002, 24), one remembers 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they hear and do at the same time, 70% of what they say and 90% of what they say and do at the same time. Many studies have been done on how to maximize retention, but everybody agrees on the need for approaching each student according to their preferred modality for learning, commonly called learning styles. There are different classifications of learning styles. We may briefly cite the Kolb Model (1984) based on Experiential Learning Theory which outlines two ways of acquiring experience: *concrete experience* and *abstract conceptualization*, and two related approaches in elaborate experience: *reflective observation* and *active experimentation*. According to Kolb's model, for learning to be effective all four of these modes should be engaged. Even though individuals try to elaborate learning through the four modes, they usually have a favoured approach, and learning styles are nothing other than

the combination of an individual's preferred approaches. Another interesting model of learning styles is that of Gregorc. This model measures learning styles according to the preferences given to perceptions and the way information is elaborated. According to this model, there are two perceptual qualities (*concrete* and *abstract*) and two ordering abilities (*random* and *sequential*). *Concrete perception* refers to registering information through the five senses, while *abstract perception* refers to the understanding of abstract ideas and concepts. Ordering abilities are described as sequential (information is processed in a linear logical way), or random (information is organized in chunks without a specific order). These four qualities are present in every individual, but in different combinations. Individuals with different combinations learn in different ways. Having given a brief description of what we mean by learning styles, we have to mention how the theoretical framework used in the PERMIT project relates to Gardner's multiple intelligences theory (Gardner, 1983, 1993). Gardner distinguishes eight kinds of intelligence (and he is working on the ninth) (Gardner, 1999) among which every person has a set of strengths and weaknesses. Starting from the description of intelligences given by Gardner, in the Permit project it was decided to focus on learners according to the type of their intelligence, grouping them in five different groups:

I. Auditory and musical learners

Auditory learners learn better through listening and talking about ideas. These kinds of learners usually benefit from recording the lessons and repeating them aloud.

II. Interpersonal and intrapersonal learners

Interpersonal learners are social learners. They relate to others to construct meanings, they are good at group work and in conflict resolution tasks. Intrapersonal learners prefer to work alone. They know strengths and weaknesses. They are good also at group work as they reflect and analyse themselves in order to understand their role in a group or situation.

III. Logical mathematical learners

Logical learners organize information in systems. Logical learners like to classify and categorize information. They are good at tasks such as problem-solving and mathematical reasoning.

IV. Physical and kinaesthetic learners

Kinaesthetic learners learn by doing. They require activity to enhance their

learning. They need to move, explore and touch so sitting still for long periods is difficult for them. They learn by interacting with the environment.

V. Verbal and linguistic learners

Verbal learners learn through speech and writing. They may need to repeat information aloud to themselves or to take notes and write summaries.

VI. Visual and spatial learner

The visual-spatial learner learns better by seeing (i.e., through pictures, videos and illustrated information). Visual learners not only need visual clues but also to sit next to the teacher to be able to visually follow the lesson and keep track of the unconscious messages given by the teacher.

The role of the classroom environment

The way in which humans are able to understand unconscious messages about body language is still not fully understood; one of the most popular theories is the theory of mirror neurons. Iacoboni et al. (2005) discovered a pre-motor cortex in primates containing so-called mirror neurons which fire at the moment a primate either performs an action such as grasping, tearing or manipulating something or when they observe someone performing such a behaviour. Following this discovery, it was proposed that this class of neuron could also account for the same behaviour in humans (Rizzolatti et al., 2001). Even though the presence of a mirror neuronal circuit in the human pre-motor cortex is still controversial (Eagle et al., 2009), it can not be denied that our brains are hard-wired to send and receive unconscious messages and that those messages are mostly transmitted through motor function, as we tend to imitate the gestures of others. Furthermore, teachers transmit more than simple knowledge; they are also responsible for much of the unconscious learning that occurs as students unconsciously respond to and imitate their teachers' mental processes.

We have already underlined the role of the teacher in the classroom and how his/her behaviour, both conscious and unconscious, is a powerful source of learning for students. We must now say a few words about how student learning can be enhanced through lesson design. Sousa, in his book "How the Brain Learns" (2005) said that the brain learns best at the beginning and at the end of a learning episode. This should make teachers reflect on classroom practice, as all students remember most at the start of the class with a second peak towards the end of the class. Thus, during a 40-minutes lesson, student attention is at its best for the first 20 minutes, then the brain needs a diffusion time of about 10 minutes, and during the final 10 minutes the brain is at its best again. Sousa's theory of pulse

learning is in line with what is affirmed by Jensen (2007), i.e., that the brain needs to make sense of what it learns; so the initial period in a lesson should be used to present information, the diffusion section to recall this information in an informal way, with the final focus section used to provide students with sensations that would help their brains to create connections to long-term memory.

A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Far from being able to state the final word on the definition of the expression 'intercultural education' (Byram & Čebron, 2006), we must refer to some of the fundamental theories which led the PERMIT project with regards to the meaning of intercultural education as well as with respect to how culture permeates and shapes the way lessons are planned, the way learners learn, and the way teaching approaches used in one culture are favoured within another.

Bennett (1993) proposes six stages of cultural awareness (Bennett & Bennett, 2004); those degrees go from an ethnocentric to an ethno-relative level.

At the very bottom of the scale, there are the *ethnocentric values* that evolve from:

I. *Denial of differences*, i.e., the individual is not able to distinguish or better endorse the differences of others. At this stage, individuals nurture stereotypes and try to avoid contact with other cultures.

II. *Defence*, i.e., the individual is able to recognize differences but feels threatened. Comparison is made to their own culture which is perceived as right.

III. *Minimization*: at this stage individuals are able to see cultural differences but they try to minimize and reduce them and relate them back to their own culture.

When an individual rises to the *ethnorelativistic level*, we find the following stages:

I. *Acceptance*: at this stage, individuals are able to accept and acknowledge differences in cultures as a way of organizing human life.

I. *Adaptation*: at this stage, individuals develop the necessary empathy to put themselves in the place of others, learning to communicate across cultural boundaries.

III. *Integration*: at this stage, individuals have created an adaptive personality able to integrate into other cultures and see themselves as a developing personality.

Čok (2008) proposes three different descriptors to evaluate the intercultural levels of teachers. These descriptors were then used in the PERMIT project portfolio elaborated by the Slovenian research group.

Level 1: Disposition to cultural diversity (at a cognitive level, creating new knowledge and reflecting on one's own culture. At an intercultural understanding level, adding knowledge about the otherness, developing curiosity towards other cultures).

Level 2: Discovery of diversity (at an emotional level, learning respect for other cultural models and gaining the ability to communicate with other cultures).

Level 3: Dynamic intercultural actions (at a developmental level, dealing with the ability to respond dynamically to experiences and modifying one's own beliefs).

The PERMIT project intercultural theoretical framework is to be understood in a universalistic perspective, aiming to recognize what is similar between cultures and the shared characteristics of people, to develop positive feelings and empathy toward otherness, and eventually, to develop a different attitude toward the culture of the other (Kağitçibaşi, 2007).

THE TEACHING APPROACH IN THE PERMIT PROJECT

Every culture is a dynamic, developing entity. Teaching and learning are at the very base of the way a culture can be elaborated to shape new citizens able to deal with differences (Margiotta, 2008). Education must reflect on that set of values, opinions and attitudes which are defined as a social representation (Elamé, 2008; Raffaghelli, 2009), shaped by culture, natural setting, social environment, etc. Educators have to refine approaches which help students to discover and reflect upon their own and 'others' social representation. Minello (2008) suggests that the teacher must abandon the teacher-focused approach to embrace an approach aiming to involve students in active learning processes. Thanks to a student-focused approach which takes advantage of tools such as simulation, role playing and active investigations, learning is no longer only a process of acquiring new

knowledge but also acquiring new behaviours and new skills in order to help students penetrate the globalized and therefore very complex world (Malčič & Zudič, 2007; Čebron, 2008).

Whether culture influences learning styles or not is still a controversial issue (Barmayer, 2004), but we can assume that every culture favours a particular learning style over others. In the case of Turkey, for example, it is clear that the schooling system is based on favouring logical mathematical learners over other types; society also values this kind of learning more. As the focus of this paper is the work done with Turkish teachers, it is worth explaining the root of the word "eğitim" that means "education" in Turkish. "Eğitim" comes from the verb "eğmek" that means "to bow". Education is then "to make the student bow", thus a student must bow to a teacher that is the bearer of superior knowledge. In contrast, the word "education", which has Latin roots, derives from the verb "educere", to bring to light a knowledge that is already buried inside the student, in line with Socratic tradition. The teacher-focused approach in Turkey is, therefore, endorsed and supported by the very root of the word used to mean education.

In the PERMIT project, Turkish teachers reflected on many aspects of their own culture and the role that education plays within it in order to give meaning to the process of integrated, intercultural education in their classroom practices. They re-thought their way of teaching, making a dramatic choice in terms of classroom practice, namely, whether they are bearers of knowledge or learning enhancers and facilitators. In the implementation of this process, Turkish teachers had to overcome not only psychological obstacles, but also physical ones such as overcrowded classrooms.

HOW CAN BRAIN-BASED TEACHING HELP INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

In the previous section it was explained that in intercultural education, the teacher is above all the person who promotes learning as a process of thinking and re-thinking knowledge, negotiating it with others, creating a threat-free environment which promotes empathy and understanding.

Intercultural education states the importance of an education that goes beyond an approach made of objective, performance-indicator posing and evaluation. It claims a formative approach to education which takes into account the whole of the human being with a moral, as well a spiritual dimension, with the possibility of asking questions and criticizing. Only with such an approach can the person acquire the ability of entering more deeply into other cultures.

Teachers are the key to unlocking far more knowledge than the mere subject of their expertise. Teachers share values and behaviours with students. We know

from the mirror neurons theory that the brain carries out a lot of unconscious learning from the behaviour of others in the classroom environment so that teachers informed of the brain-based approach know that they deliver information beyond the subject they teach.

During the PERMIT project, teachers were asked to prepare an intercultural teaching unit. Turkish teachers prepared and shared most of the work online. At the very beginning, they were asked to prepare a step-by-step lesson plan. Initially, independently of the subject taught, all Turkish teachers displayed the following common points:

Lessons were prepared that placed the teacher at the focus of the class. Students were supposed to listen to the lesson and intervene from time to time.

I. The teacher was a knowledge bearer. The subject of the lesson was the strict focus of the class, there was little or no space for sharing values. Intercultural hints, if presented, were delivered as a sort of folkloric or stereotyped data. Teachers did not seem to be aware of their role as bearers of values and behaviours.

II. Lesson time was not organized in a way that would optimize the retention of knowledge. Times of focusing and diffusion were not respected.

III. Students were not encouraged to construct meaning by working together. Teachers were perplexed as to how learning tasks could be performed independently or in groups of students.

IV. Given the main point underlined before, Turkish teachers were encouraged first of all to create a "brain" and "interculturally" friendly environment, that is, they were asked to include multiple stimuli both in the classroom and in the lesson. Teachers reflected on how to improve the environment to enhance learning.

Teachers were also encouraged to reflect on how a lesson topic could become a meaningful learning experience for their students. Very quickly, teachers understood that the best way to enhance knowledge retention was to create pathways from subject of the lesson to the personal life of their students. This was done especially by having students explore the city where they live, investigate people's attitudes toward a certain subject outside the classroom, and sharing the information gathered on the project's online platform with other student peers.

Thus, Turkish PERMIT teachers moved from topic, classroom-focused teaching to meaningful and personal experience-focused learning.

The classroom environment was enriched through posters and other visual stimuli prepared by students themselves and representing and summarizing the work done for the project. This "exhibition" of students' work was not only a source of motivation and self-promotion but also a way to enhance unconscious learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The brain-based approach to education cannot be considered a method or a tool in itself. It is an approach, an informed way to reach the student as a human being *in toto*, holistically. In this respect, it is very similar to intercultural education, where the ultimate aim is to reach a holistic acceptance of otherness. The PERMIT project proved to be a successful attempt in attaining effective intercultural teaching practices using the brain-based approach. A better understanding of how the brain functions empowered Turkish teachers from different backgrounds and with different expertise, by experimenting with new ideas and focusing their teaching on students' needs as individuals. Empowered teachers proved to be better educators, connecting their classes to the world the students live in, creating a path for durable and meaningful learning.

Given the restricted nature of the sampling and observations here, we do not want to make a claim that has universal validity, but simply to share an experience that may be useful and supportive for those who are involved in the field of intercultural education.

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A comprehensive analysis of the views of Turkish teachers on the process of the PERMIT project

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse views of 10 teachers at selected private and national high schools in Turkey regarding an international project to develop intercultural sensitivity. Throughout the project, seminars and workshops by academic experts were prepared for the teachers concerning; intercultural awareness, culture and education, student-centred learning methods, learning styles, multiple intelligence theory, empathy, and teacher research. With the guidance of academics, teachers developed lesson plans, applied these to their classes, presented the results at national and international meetings and wrote articles about the process. While teachers were initially anxious about working with people from different countries and applying new methods, they appreciated the results. Moreover, they have stated that intercultural awareness should be incorporated into all classes. They emphasized, however, that, to be successful in such projects, teachers need fluency in English and a willingness to try new methods.

KEY WORDS: intercultural education, lesson plans, teacher views

INTRODUCTION

In our changing world, the production of knowledge is growing due to a growing global population. This reduces distances between countries and cultures, brings people closer and makes cultures more easily shared. In the current era of so-called globalization, knowing other cultures, knowing each other and being able to communicate in a multicultural world is vital for prosperity and peace. In this context, intercultural studies gain importance since individuals must be well prepared for a multicultural world. From this point of view, both in the business and educational world, there is an increasing importance attached to the intercultural identity of individuals. According to Bhawuk and Brislin (1992), interacting with other cultures is necessary if one is to be effective in a different culture; one must be sensitive so as to understand those from other cultures, and be ready to modify one's behaviour out of respect for those cultures and for the people of those cultures. The most appropriate concept that summarizes these ideas is 'intercultural sensitivity'. According to Hammer (2003), intercultural sensitivity is the skill of experience and awareness of cultural differences. Chen and Starosta (1996) define intercultural sensitivity as possessing self-awareness, open-mindedness, and social convenience. According to literature, these four characteristics enable individuals to show the required sensitivity in accepting cultural differences during intercultural interaction and respecting these differences. According to Fantini (1995), an individual possessing cultural sensitivity is able to both enhance his understanding of his own culture and of other cultures and to develop empathy in his/her own context. In order to successfully keep up with the world, an individual should develop sensitivity to different cultures as well as to his/her own culture. Parekh (2002) states that individuals who possess intercultural sensitivity have a multiple perspective by noting other cultures besides their own culture.

As UNESCO (2006) states, learning about different cultures, respecting them, and getting across meanings by developing tolerance and empathy are among the goals of intercultural education. According to Bennett (1995), multicultural education is an approach to learning and teaching which is built on democratic values fostering plurality. According to Banks and Banks (2010), there are at least three dimensions of multicultural education; it is an idea, a movement, and a process. In the idea, it is defended that all students have equal rights at school regardless of gender, social class, ethnicity or cultural characteristics. The movement is reformist which anticipates the change of educational institutions in order to enable all students to have equal rights in learning. Because of the fact that goals can never be achieved by all means, multicultural education is a process. Educational institutions are responsible for developing

individuals in this way; helping individuals to harmonize with social and economic development by bringing them knowledge and values for new changes and developments (Erden, 2008).

As with many other countries, the current educational objectives of Turkey include developing respect and sensitivity toward different cultures (MEB, 2006). However, for individuals to share this objective, the concept of intercultural sensitivity must be integrated into teaching designs. Above all, the teacher who implements such an aim should possess adequate knowledge about the subject. According to Byram (1997), the following items must be considered in order to integrate intercultural sensitivity into education:

- **attitudes**: developing interest, openness and curiosity towards other cultures;
- **knowledge**: general learning about the social and individual practice and outputs about the home and the target countries;
- **interpreting and relating skills**: displaying the ability to comment on a text or event from another culture, and relating these with one's own culture;
- **discovery and interaction skills**: displaying the ability to acquire knowledge about a new culture, to simultaneously communicate in line with cultural practices, and to apply these attitudes, skills, and knowledge within the border of interaction;
- **critical cultural awareness/political education**: being aware of critical thinking, practices and outputs in the home and the target countries and cultures.

Recently there have been numerous studies on developing the intercultural awareness of individuals in education. "Promote Education and Reciprocal Understanding through Multicultural Integrated Teaching, (PERMIT)" is among these, as a project, which aims to develop civil society dialogue between the European Union and Turkey. The PERMIT project was developed with the coordination of Yıldız Technical University, in partnership with the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) and Italian and Slovene Universities. The focus group of the project consists of subject teachers and their students in secondary schools. The main aims of the project were to:

1. define intercultural communication competence;
2. investigate evaluation systems;
3. investigate teaching approaches based on multiple intelligence theory;
4. help teachers develop their skills by supporting them in their bid to be innovative;

5. enhance the quality of education within the existing framework of programmes;
6. raise teacher awareness regarding specific subjects that can be added to the existing programme, such as the history of interactions among civilizations, freedom of speech, human rights, gender equality, ethical attitudes, and environmental protection.

In the project, using Bennett's (1993) "Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)" as the basis, teachers were given training on "concepts about subjects", "student-centred teaching methods and techniques", and "process evaluation" via online and workshop techniques. The teachers were able to prepare and apply lesson plans with the assistance of researchers, by means of both face-to-face and online communication.

Over the course of the study, the views of the teachers from Turkey about the project process were investigated by considering various factors. The aim was that the results of the study will guide teachers and educational institutions in developing intercultural sensitivity via education.

Method

this is a case study, and thus, a qualitative study. The case study seeks to understand the reactions of the individual student, the classroom or the institutional system within the framework of its natural environment (Jaeger, 1988). In this case study, the "cases" are activities carried out during the PERMIT project. According to Jaeger (1988), unlike with quantitative studies, in qualitative studies the researcher is not only an exterior observer using specific methods, collecting data, and analysing them, but also someone who spends some time interviewing participants, and showing empathy for their experiences, forming a viewpoint that is used in analysing the data.

Study group

the study group of the research was comprised of 10 teachers of various subjects at high schools in Istanbul, during the 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 academic years. Information about the teachers is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study group

	School Type	Gender	Subject	Teaching Experience
Ece	Private	Female	Biology	5 years
Özlem	National	Female	History	10 years
Meral	National	Female	English	6 years
Gamze	National	Female	English	5 years
Gülcan	Private	Female	English	3 years
Dilek	National	Female	Biology	8 years
Hülya	National	Female	Drawing	25 years
Murat	National	Male	Physics	10 years
Fikret	National	Male	Physics	24 years
Mustafa	National	Male	Literature	5 years

PROJECT PROCESS

During the project, teachers were trained in two phases; face-to-face and online.

Face-to-face training

During this process, teachers were trained in both national and international meetings. The content of the meetings is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Information about the national and international meetings

National Meetings *(One-day training sessions)*	**International Meetings** *(Three-day training sessions)*
Place: Istanbul Date: 25.09.2008 * Presentation of the project * Presentation of training platform on empathy and multiple intelligence theory * Presentation of the platform	Place: Istanbul Date: 12-13-14.02.2009 * Conference on the concept "empathy" * Conference on the application of "multiple intelligence theory" on education * Presentation of teacher portfolios and how to fill them * Training and workshop on learning plans

National Meetings *(One-day training sessions)*	**International Meetings** *(Three-day training sessions)*
Place: Istanbul Date: 08.03.2009 * Evaluation of the first international meeting * Training on constructive teaching method * Seminar on culture and education	Place: Koper Date: 9-10-11.04.2009 * Presentation of studies on intercultural learning * Presentation of the results of teacher and student questionnaires * Presentation of lesson plans which were developed by teachers * Presentation of the online learning environment for students
Place: Istanbul Date: 09.05.2009 * Feedback of teachers on the application of lesson plans in classes * Presentation of non-governmental organizations: ACEV and TGEV	Place: Venice Date: 4-5-6.06.2009 * Presentation of teachers on the results of application of lesson plans in classes * Seminar on the application of intercultural studies on education * Informing teachers about the criteria of the articles that they were to develop
Place: Istanbul Date: 20.06.2009 * Presentation of a non-governmental organization: KDEV * Teacher feedback on the project	

Online training

An online platform was developed to enable researchers, teachers and students to contact each other throughout the process. Articles on interculturality and related topics were sent to the teachers through this platform, with time periods allowed for reading and evaluating these articles; subsequently, feedback was provided by the researchers. The teachers also received support in order to develop lesson plans through this platform. Furthermore, in this online environment teachers helped each other by sharing with their colleagues and researchers their classroom experiences from the application process. The most important function of the online platform was to enable teachers who were from the same subject area, but of different countries of origin to communicate with each other and develop new lesson plans. In short, the online environment appeared to be

the place where teachers could develop themselves, share their experiences and get rapid feedback.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES/PRODUCTS FROM TEACHERS

The teachers were expected to develop three lesson plans. Before the preparation of these plans, they were given various theoretical and practical training. In this context workshops at national and international meetings on the topics "What is intercultural sensitivity?" and "How can it be adapted to educational process?" were arranged. Later, student centred instruction method and techniques were shown to teachers and sample lesson plans were presented to them for discussion. Meanwhile, "individual differences in learning" which are important for development of intercultural sensitivity were considered to some extent. Online articles on these topics were sent to teachers with a request for comments on the relevant application in their own courses along with feedback. Teachers from the same discipline worked together on the tasks. While communication was facilitated by computer, telephone, and in person, technology and group studies were taken into account in many parts of the process. Afterwards, teachers applied these lesson plans in their classes and presented the outcomes at national and international conferences. Finally, every teacher wrote a personal article about the results of the application of lesson plans, and the academics chose the ones that they liked the most to be published in the project booklet.

Collection and analysis of data

The data were collected using the focus group method, which is a qualitative method that aims to obtain information about the psychological and sociocultural properties of the groups and sub-groups (who are only half-conscious or not conscious at all of these properties) and to learn about the behaviours and motivations behind them (Akşit, 1992, 2). The focus group in this study was comprised of 10 teachers from Turkey, who were asked open-ended questions about the project process. The thematic analysis technique was used for the analysis of the data. The data were divided into thematic sub-sets, and the teacher views that reflect these sub-sets were chosen from the whole data (Yildırım & Şimşek, 2006).

RESULTS

The first problem of the study came with the question; "What are the basic aims of teachers in participating in the project?" In this context, teachers' views were grouped under three headings, using the thematic analysis method; "achie-

ving familiarity with different cultures and people", "obtaining project experience", and "developing professional and language skills". The views of teachers are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Views of teachers on their basic aims in participating to the project

Titles	*Quotations from teacher views*
Getting to Know Different Cultures and People	• *I wanted to learn about the cultural characteristics of different countries, and how these cultural differences are reflected in education.* • *Getting to know different people and cultures has always been among my interests.* • *I wanted to work with colleagues from different cultures who teach the same courses.*
Getting Project Experience	• *I haven't had a project study before and I wanted to have an experience like the ones (European Projects) I have heard about.* • *I want to write on my CV that I have worked on a European project.*
Getting Professional Development	• *I believed that this kind of a project would enable me to become more complete in my profession.* • *I knew that learning new educational concepts and applications would advance my professional skills.* • *I knew that getting extensive training from experts would make a positive contribution to my professional development.*

The second problem came with the question; "What were the concerns of teachers in the project process?", where the teacher views were grouped under six headings by thematic analysis: "students", "language", "curriculum", "online communication", "time management", and "lesson planning". The views of teachers are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Views of teachers on their worries throughout the project process

Titles	*Quotations from teacher views*
Students	• *Students had difficulty in application because of inexperience.* • *English became a problem for students in research and communication with the students from other countries.* • *Lack of motivation at the beginning of the project.*
Language	• *Level of English for communication.* • *Resources being in English.* • *I believe that I cannot express myself in other languages.*
Curriculum	• *The topics we chose did not have a perfect match with the national curriculum.* • *Difference between the methods offered in the project and the ones we had before led to problems in application.*
Online Communication	• *Many of the students did not have a computer at home.* • *Level of English did not allow us to have sufficient communication with others.*
Time Management	• *Applying the developed learning units and the national curriculum caused problems related to timing.* • *We were required to follow the same subjects with other classes in the same discipline in order to use shared exams.* • *Student centred methods required more time than the traditional ones.*

The third problem of the study was: "What contributed most to teacher success in the project?", where the views were grouped under four headings: "time management skills", "material development skills", "English-speaking skills", and "social skills". The views of teachers are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Views of teachers on their personal skills at the project

Titles	*Quotations from teacher views*
Time Management Skills	• *I was good at time management given that while we had our own duties, we had to work for the project at the same time.* • *Contrary to my former beliefs, I realized that I was very good at time management.*
Material Development Skills	• *Developing materials in different areas enriched my learning environment.* • *Materials that I used in the classroom attracted the attention of students and gave them encouragement in their studies.* • *I developed creative and original materials.*
English Speaking Skills	• *My ability to speak English helped me a lot both in intercultural meetings and online environment.* • *I believe that the first requirement for being successful in the project is speaking English. You can contact with people easily and advance rapidly.*
Social Skills	• *Due to my social skills, I was able to contact with people easily in all meetings, especially in national and international meetings.*

The fourth problem was; "What are the benefits to teachers from the project?", where the views were grouped under six headings; "observed positive behaviours of students", "foreign-language skills", "method and technique skills", "intercultural awareness", "willingness to learn", and "evaluation method". The teacher views are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Views of teachers on the personal benefits from the project

Titles	*Quotations from teacher views*
Observed Positive Behaviours of Students	• *Students who were timid in traditional methods became active when different techniques were used in the class.* • *Students started to use computer more for learning purposes.* • *Student motivation for the courses increased.* • *Student prejudice regarding people in other countries decreased.* • *Students expressed desire to learn different cultures increased.* • *Students started to work much more sincerely and collectively in the group activities.* • *Students can more readily see the importance of language proficiency now.*
Foreign Language Skills	• *I believe that my English writing and speaking skills have improved.* • *Even though I am an English language teacher, I was timid to speak English, but my willingness to speak English increased with this project.* • *I was not able to understand anything in English at the beginning of the project, but in the last meeting, I was able to understand the talks and ask questions.*
Method and Technique Skills	• *Before the project, I thought that student centred methods were hard to apply, but I realized that it was not the case. In my classes, I will use the new methods that I learned.* • *Different methods and techniques seemed abstract to me before, but when I used these methods and saw the outcomes, I realized that they were so concrete (i.e. collaborative learning).*
Intercultural Awareness	• *I started to look at people's lives in different cultures with more tolerance.* • *I am able to look at other cultures with empathy and without prejudice.*

Titles	*Quotations from teacher views*
Willing to Learn	• *My desire to learn a foreign language increased and I will make a move towards doing just that.* • *I want to learn more about cultures and I will follow related projects to do that.* • *Particularly, I will seek out different methods and techniques which are applicable in classrooms.* • *I want to enrol in graduate programs on intercultural studies.*
Evaluation Method	• *I learned the importance of observation and process evaluation in evaluating student skills.* • *I saw the effect of getting students to reflect on new knowledge. I will use it in my classes.*

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The results at the end of the study can be listed as:

- The main aims of teachers in their contributions to the project were: learning about different cultures and people, gaining experience, developing vocational skills, and improving foreign language skills.
- The main concern of teachers throughout the project were: the level of students' knowledge, difficulty in using English (for teachers in public schools except the English-language teachers), disunity of intercultural sensitivity subject to their curricula, problems in online communication, time management, formation of lesson plans.
- The main strengths of teachers in the project in their opinions were: time management, material development, using English (for teachers in private schools and the English-language teachers in public schools), and their own social skills.
- Positive results of the project from the teachers' perspective were; behaviour of students, ability to speak English, knowledge of different teaching method and techniques, sensitivity to different cultures, a desire to learn, and knowledge of alternative measurement and assessment methods in education.

The results obtained from the study can be interpreted within the framework of the study questions as follows: The aims of the teachers participating in the project were: getting to know new cultures and people, acquiring project experience and professional development. Teachers who work at private or state schools want to participate in such projects thanks to the administrative support of their schools and due to the prestige of participating. In addition, normally it

is difficult for Turkish teachers to go abroad because of financial and bureaucratic problems. Bureaucratic problems include difficulties in obtaining permission for leave from work and obtaining a visa. European projects provide teachers with the opportunity to see different places and meet different people. Besides, participating in these projects is a privilege for teachers who want to transfer to the educational institutions involved, where the probability of development increases with the level of professional knowledge and skills. Teachers stated that one of their aims in participating was professional development. Since 2005 in Turkey, educational programmes of all courses have been modified by the National Ministry of Education so that teacher-centred programmes are replaced with student-centred ones. In light of this change, textbooks and workbooks are prepared and active learning methods are applied in classrooms instead of using the traditional ones. However, teachers are not given proper in-service training about the application process. In the European projects concerning teacher training, teachers are given adequate training, which enables them to further develop. When the objectives and strategies of the PERMIT project are examined, it can be easily seen that teachers prefer it because of its basic characteristics developing their competencies.

The concerns and anxieties of teachers about the project process were; lack of student skills, language problems (for teachers in public schools except the English-language teachers), adaptation problems between the project and the school curriculum, difficulties in online communication, a perceived inability to deal with the expectations of the school, and having to prepare a new instructional unit. These concerns are to be expected from teachers participating in such a project for the first time. Their primary anxiety involved the language problem. Since all the materials used in the international meetings and online environment were in English, this is normal. In other words, the official language of the project was English. That is why teachers were required to know English in order to express themselves well and understand the activities. Thus, the concerns of teachers whose English proficiency was low was expected. Language, which has the power to affect learning positively, is a means of effective communication (Vygotsky, 1978).

The teachers stated that their strong points throughout the project were: time management, material development, speaking English (for teachers in private schools and the English-language teachers in public schools), and social skills. While teachers were engaged in the studies in the PERMIT project, they fulfilled their responsibilities at their own schools. Thus, they needed to have good time management to fulfil the requirements of both the project and their work. On the other hand, they were required to pay attention to the individual differ-

ences of students while preparing lesson plans. With this aim, they had to use different methods and techniques, and develop materials for student learning. It was observed that the teachers who had competency in material development were faster and more successful in preparing lesson plans and at implementation. Teachers who were good at social interaction were better at communication and getting help both in the online environment and at the international meetings. In the study conducted by Fretheim (2007) on the variables that affect the level of intercultural sensitivity, where the subjects were teachers and managers of an American school in South Africa, it was revealed that points of participants who knew at least one foreign language were higher than those of other participants.

The teachers stated that by the end of the project, students had developed their skills for empathy and getting to know different cultures, which is a result of working in an international communication-based project. Fantini (1995) notes that communicating with people from different cultures and working with them generates skills on getting to know ourselves and also having empathy for the other cultures. In the study done by Demir and Demir (2009), where they question the perception of Erasmus exchange programmes on students' cultural change, it was revealed that foreign experiences lead to an increase in tolerance toward different cultures and respect for universal values. In the study of Westrick and Yuen (2007), where they investigated intercultural sensitivity of teachers in a high school in Hong Kong, it was found that there was a positive correlation between the educational level and a period of living in different cultures with intercultural sensitivity. Similar results were also attained by Fretheim (2007). On the other hand the opinions of teachers and students regarding intercultural topics can be correlated with Bennett's "Acceptance of Cultural Differences" step in his Intercultural Sensitivity Model. According to Bennett, individuals at this step see individuals from other cultures with a high level of cognition and without considering intercultural differences. Positive attitudes on the part of teachers help to create the generation of positive student attitudes (Philippou, 1988, from Leung, 2001). The training and sharing in the PERMIT project enabled teachers to have an empathetic point of view towards other cultures which also leads to a positive effect on their students.

According to another result obtained from the study, the teachers stated that their English-speaking skills improved over the course of the project. The opportunity to listen to conversations, reading in the online environment, and face-to-face interactions (including body language) may have contributed positively to their English skills. Also, the atmosphere motivated some timid teachers to do their best in speaking English. Responses to their talks may have also affected their motivation positively and contributed to their self-confidence. Dewey (1956) notes that social experience develops communication in society, enhances cognitive skills, brings a sense of responsibility to engage in correct behaviour, and thus, regenerates language and conceptions.

The teachers stated that student motivation increased during the work done on the project. In the teaching environments where intercultural aspects were integrated, students were able to study and actively participate in group discussions, as well as being asked to present the fruits of their labours to their friends. The opportunity for self-expression in such an environment might have a positive effect on student motivation regarding courses. Kim, Fisher, and Fraser (1999) note that student motivation increases as they learn in a cooperative environment, share their experiences with teachers and friends, and have discussions in the classroom. Another study from Caprio (from Hanley, 1994) reveals that students who learn by student-centred designs join the classes willingly, take more responsibility regarding their education and have more self-confidence. Mahoney and Schamber (2004) investigated the effect of teaching program based on Bennett's Intercultural Sensitivity Development Model on their intercultural sensitivity level where lectures were integrated with intercultural sensitivity. Results show that programs that aim to develop intercultural sensitivity should involve teaching methods at the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels in order to reach goals.

The teachers stated that they learned different methods and techniques applicable in classrooms and saw that students became more active in practice through the project. This finding is important in terms of the PERMIT project. On the other hand, the teachers pointed out that they learned a new type of evaluation method in the PERMIT project. They also said that in the applications they saw the importance of students reflecting on their own development during evaluation, which is another important finding of the project. According to Byram (1997), instead of tests and traditional examinations, evaluations in which intercultural aspects are integrated should be done by the portfolio approach which shows the development process of students. In other words, process evaluation is more important than product evaluation.

Lastly, at the end of the PERMIT project, teachers stated that they were willing to learn new methods and techniques, getting to know about different cultures, learning foreign languages and studying intercultural subjects as graduate students. This desire to learn and develop can be considered one of the project's positive contributions to the teachers.

The results obtained from this study can be used in a holistic manner, as follows: teachers should know how to integrate the concept of intercultural sensi-

tivity into their lesson plans. Thus, the schools they graduated from should offer some courses which address this concept. Also, teachers must be given a chance to try the applied designs, and to apply the in-service training on the subject given to them. We believe the findings of the study can contribute to the development of the empathy skills of students, respect for differences, cooperation, processing new information, and motivation in courses where interculturality is integrated with the programme. Thus, instructional plans should be revised and developed based on the findings of the study.

The suggestions for future studies developed from the results of this research study can be summarized as follows: Instructional designs with which intercultural viewpoints are integrated can be applied to different courses and to different groups, and then, opinions of teachers and students concerning the applications can be investigated, compared and analysed. Moreover, new projects could be extended to a broader range, so as to include more than four countries with different cultural characteristics.

This project, which has generated positive outcomes for both teachers and students in the cultural and pedagogical sense by integrating intercultural aspects into the instructional design, is implemented on the secondary school level. However, this does not mean it cannot be applied to other educational levels. On the contrary, students will be able to learn how to construct new knowledge as early as such teaching methods are applied, and thus, they will be able to learn to manage mental activities, and effectively convert them into habits in the future.

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Applications of metaphor in teaching science in the context of an intercultural education: Examples from the PERMIT project

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ABSTRACT

The main subject of this paper is the application of metaphor activities by Turkish science teachers in their lessons during the pilot phase of the PERMIT project, which aims to improve the civil society dialogue between the EU and Turkey.
In the context of cognitive sciences, language is dealt with as a phenomenon emerging from the interaction of thought and culture, from the framework of a metaphorical language system.
Metaphor is described as a fundamental process and a method of learning, classification, conceptualization, evaluation and an interpretation of the environment.
After a brief reference to the history of metaphor, examples of its uses are presented. The group of science teachers prepared and carried out their individual unit plans designed with the aim of raising *environmental awareness*, which they had jointly identified in accordance with the intercultural education precepts adopted by the PERMIT project.
The methodologies pursued by teachers who opted to use metaphor as the teaching technique in their studies and evaluations are cited, along with the outputs of some students. The results and suggestions related to the usage of metaphor as an aspect of intercultural education are given with an analysis of study samples.

KEY WORDS: metaphor, intercultural education, PERMIT, secondary education, science education

INTRODUCTION

The PERMIT project aims to promote civil society dialogue between the European Union and Turkey, with a specific focus on ensuring a better knowledge and understanding of Turkey within the European Union.

At the beginning, this goal was reformulated by the Scientific Committee into the more significant and representative one of a process of mutual learning from practices that over time will lead to involving the cultures.

Hence, the working hypothesis was designed as follows:

- intercultural awareness among researchers, teachers and students involved in the project is supposed to be low;
- the innovations in teaching methodologies and materials are expected to enhance the awareness of researchers, teachers and students regarding cultural diversity and understanding.

The main objectives of the PERMIT project are to:

- improve social dialogue through the processes of increasing quality of education;
- develop and promote teaching strategies favouring the valorisation of different mindsets (multiple intelligences), critical thinking, student participation in class activities, debate, and personal responsibility thus favouring the growth of civil society at a grass roots level;
- develop materials on the project's thematic areas;
- develop specific examples of strategies that can be applied to reach the expected objectives;
- pilot experimentation of the exemplary teaching materials produced by cooperation between the trainee and experienced teachers in secondary schools (PERMIT, 2008).

The PERMIT project focuses on high school teachers and students, who play a central role in nurturing new approaches and debating how intercultural education can become a part of everyday teaching. The project's activities are expected to enable teachers (with the support of a wider teachers community set up by a first research group) to develop their own teaching material on crucial themes such as sustainable development, languages and multilingualism as part of cultural identity, critical thinking and ethical behaviour, thus favouring a deeper understanding of Turkish, Slovenian and Italian realities (PERMIT, 2008).

The new methodology and the innovative teaching materials are expected to "enhance student understanding and awareness of cultural diversity" (Čebron, 2009). After piloting the innovative teaching materials, the teachers were able to

register increased knowledge, understanding and cognition of their students. Students are better informed on cultural variety, they can understand various beliefs and values and accept otherness, they accept differences among cultures, they can decentre, and view their own attitudes towards intercultural reality. The project activities and research findings contribute to building bridges among nations (in Italy, Turkey and Slovenia) and promote awareness of the intercultural reality (Čok, 2008a, Malčič & Zudič Antonič, 2007).

THE CONCEPT OF METAPHOR AND ITS USE IN EDUCATION

Theorizing about metaphor dates back more than two thousand years, to Aristotle and Plato. In this golden age of metaphor, it is handled within the framework of the rhetorical and the poetic. The effects that metaphor has on listeners and readers in either written or spoken language were known when Aristotle created his notion of rhetoric (Babkin, 1970, 22).

Despite the fact that metaphor has always been a major subject for philosophers, poets, writers, speakers and literature critics, few systematic studies had been done until recent times.

The first experimental studies date back to 1908 with the analyses of German linguist Karl Bühler. In the 1950s, theories of metaphor were challenged by a group of Gestalt psychologists. Thus, a leading study involving the relationship between notion and language was started (Danesi, 2003, 46). "Metaphors in education have traditionally been viewed as occasionally heuristically useful but essentially ornamental, and sometimes as downright pernicious" (Petrie & Oshlag, 1993). In 1977, Pollio et al., with their work in this domain, showed how the metaphorical elements of oral communication are far from being an ornament and that metaphorical thinking is an important factor in human communicative behaviour (Danesi, 2003, 37). Also, there have been some arguments that figurative language and metaphor fill the gaps in language vocabulary (Cuozzo, 2003, 15).

Having done some studies in the area of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (2004) assert that metaphor is not just a figure in language but, above all, it is a form of thinking and a cognitive tool allowing classification of the experience. According to the authors, metaphors first take shape in thoughts, then in behaviours and language. A conceptual process cannot be thought to be accomplished without metaphor. Metaphor allows "knowing" as a tool for humans to understand their environment and nature, to explain objective reality, to give meaning to their life and experiences. Also, Reyna (1986) refers pedagogical metaphors to a type of functional metaphor used to introduce novel concepts by relating them to familiar concepts.

Some authors, including Morgan and Smircich, have emphasized the importance of metaphors in the processes of comprehension of the world via the formation of scientific knowledge and interpretation. As a result of the research studies of scientists like Piaget, Čukovski, Gardner and Wojcik, it has emerged that metaphor is an important and indispensable tool in children's acquisition of a language and that it has an influential function in their formation of reality. It has been emphasized that metaphor is "a language form that is applied to a different content in order to state a specific similarity of a concept or term", and that it has become an effective and potent communication tool because it allows the telling of a complex story using an image (Yildirim & Simsek, 2005, 208).

In the 20th century, metaphor is considered an essential and very important component of language, while science and scientific knowledge are handled in new dimensions. Based on the views about the nature of metaphor: "metaphor emerges in the power of the deep features of human thought and becomes a tool for recognizing the world" (Gak, 1988, 11).

Cognitivism has largely accepted that formation of metaphor is a basic intellectual process and a method for learning, categorization, and conceptualization, evaluating and explaining the environment. Some reasons for the cognitive approach in studying metaphor are its intellectual character (ontological aspect) and potential in learning (epistemological aspect). Authors who draw attention to the metaphorical nature of thinking include Vico, Nietzsche, Ricards and Blek (Budayev, 2007).

A cognitive approach to metaphor is used by J. Lakoff and M. Jonhnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). The authors developed a theorem bringing a systemic approach to defining metaphor as a cognitive mechanism. They state that metaphor is not limited to the domain of language, and that the thinking processes of humans are metaphorical. As a phenomenon of consciousness, metaphor is seen not only in language but also in thinking and behaviour. Such an approach has taken metaphor out of the frame of the language system and provided its consideration as a phenomenon resulting from the interaction of thought and culture (Budayev, 2007). Petrie and Oshlag (1993) claim that the anecdotal data of teachers supports Petrie's and their view of the efficacy of metaphor in creating structural changes. They also suggest that "*student* production of metaphors can result in important changes in the cognitive structures and affective responses of students".

Today, research on the cognitive potential of metaphor in the attainment of scientific knowledge has widened. The effects of cognitive metaphor in the development of scientific thought is being studied in philosophy, biochemistry, mathematics, education, political sciences, psychology, genetics, economics and many other scientific domains (Budayev, 2007).

Budayev and Čudinov (2007) have analysed the worldwide studies done today related to the use of metaphor in the field of education. Bozlk (2002) researched how a group of American freshman college students used metaphors to describe themselves as subjects of the education process. Many of these metaphor uses have highlighted the passive roles of the students. Few metaphors reflecting students as independent have been recorded.

Inbar (1996) collected thousands of metaphors used by teachers and students to describe education and prepared a comprehensive study. He analysed the metaphors that teachers and students used to express their opinions about education and concluded that many educational inconsistencies are based on the metaphorical figures that teachers and students have.

Besides studies treating education as a whole, metaphor usage as a tool in the comprehension of concepts has been increasingly used in the classroom. If the conjecture that metaphor is one of the basic thinking mechanisms is considered, then the effects of metaphor in the process of education, in any subject, should be clear. Metaphor lies at the basis of understanding a thought, even in mathematics, which is a field considered to be far away from and irrelevant to metaphor. The studies of Lakoff, who developed the conceptual metaphor theory, and those of Nunez support this idea (Budayev, 2007).

It has been argued that metaphor enables one to transfer learning and understanding from what is well known to what is less well known in a vivid and memorable way, thus enhancing learning. This claim is essentially a psychological one, asserting a connection between vividness, or more precisely, imageability, and learning (e.g., Davidson, 1976; Ortony, 1975; Paivio, 1971; Reynolds & Schwartz, 1983). It is an extremely important result that metaphorical teaching strategies often lead to better and more memorable learning than do explicit strategies (Petrie & Oshlag, 1993).

As stated above, the studies made on the pragmatic aspects involve not only the analysis of cognitive schemata but also the search of concrete solutions to many educational problems.

With metaphor usage, students notice and think about some sides of their own activities which they have not thought of before. Another facet of research on metaphor in education is that the rational forms of comprehension of reality are based on less efficient mechanical memorizing. Whereas the use of metaphor models helps to perceive and comprehend the essence of the facts handled. Especially the importance of metaphor usage in the expression of abstract concepts is enormous. The studies indicate that metaphor usage in expressing abstract concepts has better results than the use of plain narration (Flynn et al., 1995). And those better results are vital to younger students (Castillo, 1994).

Minini (1986) urges educators to utilize metaphors in language instruction. Two experiments support this position. The results of the first experiment reveal that students learn lexical items more efficiently if presented in metaphors. The results of the second experiment indicate the usefulness of metaphors in developing critical thinking in students. Sunstein and Anderson taught college freshmen to use metaphors to write about unfamiliar science topics. In representing a connection between their personal experiences and a scientific model, these students learned writing skills and acquired scientific knowledge (Petrie & Oshlag, 1993).

THE METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED IN THE TEACHER STUDIES

Within the PERMIT project, three groups were formed among the teachers from Turkey, Italy and Slovenia during the First Residential Seminar held on 11–14 February 2009 in Istanbul. Those were: the Sciences Teachers Community, Humanities and Social Sciences Teachers Community, and Languages and Literature Teachers Community. In the Sciences Group, the common topic to be processed was "Environmental Awareness". In the implementation period it was decided to add the socio-cultural aspect of the environment topic to the aspects covered by its curriculum. The unit plans for the pilot studies that would be conducted were prepared, discussed and revised with additions by teachers in the Second Residential Seminar held in Koper, Slovenia on 9–11 April 2009. Following this meeting, the teachers piloted the new teaching materials at their schools and presented their findings and results during the third Residential Seminar held in Venice, Italy, 4–6 June 2009. They then wrote articles in which they expressed the implications of what they had done and identified those activities which they considered to be the 'best'.

Intercultural education perceptions

The Turkish teachers did not have any previous experience in international projects. In the conventional Turkish education system, especially in public schools, lessons are taught in a more teacher-based/centred way. From this point of view, participation in this project and the information learned by the Turkish teachers within the framework of this project have provided new methods of teaching and opened up new horizons for them. They received assistance from foreign colleagues during the three international meetings and local gatherings and over the online internet platform. Čok (2008b), Margiotta (2008), Minello (2008), Byram and Čebron (2006), Malčič and Zudič (2007) and Raffaghelli (2009) made important contributions, especially through their publications, studies and guidance on intercultural education.

The defined objectives

Within the PERMIT project, the common objectives defined in the Sciences Group for the students were: to develop abilities of self-confidence, critical thinking, establish empathy, self-reflection and problem-solving, to obtain intercultural communication skills using those abilities and to obtain environmental awareness.

In the unit and lesson plans they prepared, the Turkish science teachers defined general objectives towards gaining intercultural competence which were compatible with intercultural education, in addition to the objectives compatible with the curriculum defined by the National Ministry of Education. The defined objectives are given in Table 1, in which it can be seen that empathy, critical thinking and environmental awareness are prominent among the objectives defined by the four teachers.

Table 1: General objectives defined within the project

Teacher	*General objectives defined within the project*
E. Avci	To develop: communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity, empathy, tolerance and sensitivity towards people who are different and the environment.
D. Çakir	To develop abilities in the areas of: familiarization with one's own cultural facts, self-awareness, getting to know European culture in the process, establishing empathy, making comparisons, noticing similarities and differences, obtaining inferences, and critical thinking.
F. Çiller	To grasp the importance of scientific thinking and intercultural communication, to develop explanations of cause and effect, to encourage assertiveness, to promote scientific research, to develop environmental awareness.
M. Dalgiç	Awareness of one's own and different cultures, to develop empathy and tolerance.

Metaphor implications/applications

The metaphor activities applied by the Turkish teachers in the pilot stage attracted attention in the presentations concerning implications at the Third Residential Seminar and in the articles the teachers wrote. Table 2 shows the teachers who applied metaphor activities, the schools where those activities were conducted, and the classes, dates and attendance. As can be seen in Table 2, two biology and two physics teachers conducted metaphor activities within the project. The metaphor activities conducted and the effects of those activities on the students based on the evaluations of the teachers are discussed below.

Table 2: The classes in which metaphor activities were conducted

Teacher	*School (İstanbul)*	*Lesson*	*Class*	*Date*	*Attendance*
E. Y. Avci	V. Koç Foundation, Koç Private Elementary and High School	Biology	Class 9-G (ages 14–15)	04/05/2009	24 students
D. Çakir	Sultangazi Cumhuriyet High School	Biology	Science section, 3rd grade	05/05/2009	24 students
F. Çiller	Bahçeşehir Atatürk High School	Physics	Class 9–K	04/05/2009	24 students
M. Dalgiç	Küçükköy Vocational High School for Girls	Physics	11–A, Technical Class	19/03/2009	24 female students

The implementation of the metaphor activities

In order to achieve the objectives defined within the project, the teachers used student-oriented methods, techniques and materials during the teaching process. The unit and the topic in which the metaphor activities were applied, and the methods of application are given in Table 3. In the metaphor activities applied in the topics outlined in Table 3, the students did individual and group work and produced various material.

Table 3: The implementation of the metaphor activities

Teacher	*Unit/Topic*	*The Topic of the Metaphor Activity*
E. Avci	The Respiratory and Circulatory Systems	The students were asked to think of themselves as the heart of an individual living in Rome or Istanbul and to present their metaphor story with a poster, caricature or to compose a song.
D. Çakir	Respiratory Systems/ Respiratory System in Humans	In this activity called *The Journey of Oxygen,* the students were asked to think of themselves as an oxygen molecule and to contemplate a journey starting in the atmosphere and going into human cells. A worksheet including vocabulary words was given. Students were told that they could travel freely in the atmosphere, go to any country and enter any cell they wanted.
F. Çiller	Heat and temperature/ Heat exchange.	At the start of the class, the teacher informed students that there were four glasses of water on his table, each with a different temperature. After writing the topic of the lesson and the four group names on the board, he explained: "As you know, when matter with different temperatures mixes together, heat exchange takes place. The cold matter takes on heat, the hot gives out heat. In today's lesson you will observe heat exchange. During the observation everyone will write down what he/she feels after picking one of the four groups written on the board and thinking of himself as one of those groups."
M. Dalgiç	*Electricity/ Electric Current and Resistance*	After the resistance topic was explained, students were asked to think of themselves as electrons. "Let's imagine that each one of us is an electron. We are in a medium, and we need to change it. To do this, we have to pick one of the bridges next to each other and go across it. But here is the problem: not all of the bridges want us to get across. So it is possible for us to experience obstacles and have casualties."

Student outputs

The work that students produced in the metaphor activities process is given in Table 4. As can be seen in this table, students in Avci's class produced written stories, posters and compositions appropriate to their abilities. The students in Cakir's and Ciller's classes produced essays, while the students in Dalgic's class gave oral presentations.

Table 4: Student outputs

Teacher	*Work style of the students*	*Product / Presentations*
E. Avci	Individual, group work in song composition	The students did their projects and made their presentations after choosing an appropriate tool in line with their abilities. Different learning styles were seen in the projects. While the composing group used their musical-rhythmic intelligence, the caricature and poster group used their visual intelligence. Presentation of the projects in the classroom created a medium where every student used his/her physical-kinaesthetic and social-interpersonal intelligence.
D. Çakir	Individual	Written essays. The students who volunteered read their essays to the class.
F. Çiller	Individual	Written essays. The students who volunteered read their essays to the class.
M. Dalgiç	Individual, conversation	Oral presentations were used as triggers for conversations/discussions in the class.

Evaluation of the metaphor activities

In the evaluation process, the teachers evaluated the work produced by the students and the process in general by using both observation and rubrics. Teacher evaluations were made in regard to student behaviour and attitude, classroom atmosphere and the general objectives defined by them within the framework of the project in the unit plans.

Avci based her evaluation on the stories, posters and compositions produced by the students, as well as rubrics and her observations; Cakir and Ciller based their evaluations on the written essays, oral answers and ideas, and their own observations; and Dalgic based his on the oral presentations and views of his students, their answers to questions and also his own observations.

Table 5 shows the teachers' opinions on the classroom atmosphere, student behaviour and attitude before and after the application of metaphor activities as results of their evaluations. We can summarize Table 5 as follows: in Avci's class, the application of metaphor activities increased student attention, self confidence and excitement; in Cakir's class, it made learning easier and the class more fun and enjoyable, it increased student motivation and eagerness to express their thoughts and made them trust in themselves more; in Ciller's class, it increased self-confidence, motivation and satisfaction and helped students to express themselves more easily and the class to be more productive; in Dalgic's class, it increased interest in the subject, improved understanding and increased the productivity of the class.

Table 5: Teacher opinions regarding the metaphor activities

Teacher	*Before the application of metaphor activities*	*After the application of metaphor activities*
E. Avci		A student, hesitant to talk in other classes, proved his self-confidence to his classmates by playing his own composition on a piano. Applying techniques that make interdisciplinary bonds in education attracted student attention more than usual. The willingness of students who had been to Rome to share their observations and the excitement during their presentations motivated the other students.
D. Çakir	Metaphor is one of the new methods used in the classroom. Initially, students found it to be childish, a waste of time and an additional burden.	The process was quite fun for students. The activities which made them more active in the classroom rendered the lesson more enjoyable and the subject easier for them to comprehend. Expressing their own thoughts in Biology where everything is absolute and clear was rather appealing and motivating. It was observed that they did good work. They were satisfied with the unique and fun class. Self-confidence increased and hesitation to talk decreased.

Teacher	*Before the application of metaphor activities*	*After the application of metaphor activities*
F. Çiller	In classical education, the Physics class is teacher-oriented.	As seen in writing samples, students put serious efforts into the activities. Metaphor usage in Physics class was effective. It caused the class to be more successful than expected. The technique gave self-confidence to students and also helped them to express themselves more easily. The students stated after the class that they were extremely happy with the class and asked for this technique to be used in other classes as well.
M. Dalgiç	In my experience, Electric Current and Resistance is a subject disliked by most of the students. Besides, attention levels wane for many students near the end of the Physics class, which lasts three hours. Therefore, the metaphor technique was used in the last hour to see how it would affect decreasing efficiency and attention.	Compared to two previous classes, attention increased to a maximum. I had expected the increase in attention but not to that degree. Understanding the subject was raised to 100%, just like the level of attention. And the percentage of right answers from students reached 97%. Lastly, I can comfortably say that this class was a lot more effective than the usual technique used in previous years.

The statements of the teachers about whether the general objectives defined within the project were reached at the end of the metaphor activities are as follows. Avci stated that a serious infrastructure was achieved for developing empathy, awareness of common values, human rights, responsibility, the environment, personal rights and freedoms, heart health and diversity of lifestyles. Cakir stated that students presented critical ideas and solutions to problems of the environment; that environmental awareness improved and some selectivity in perception occurred; that prejudice against people who are different decreased and respect increased; self-criticism, critical thinking and problem-solving abilities and curiosity to learn improved.

Samples from student work

Among the work produced by the students during the four metaphor activities mentioned above, some of the student writings on metaphors in Ciller's Physics class (given in Table 6) have drawn particular attention.

Table 6: Sample student writings

Group	*Student*	*Heat exchange Metaphor*
Group 1: Ice at -20°C	Mert Fırat	"I was a cube of *ice*. I used to think that everyone was cold. One day they took me out of the refrigerator and I started to warm up. I was afraid because I was heating up every minute. Then I melted and saw that it was not that bad... While thinking that everyone was cold and the best state of the matter was solid... I learned to warm up. I saw that this state is beautiful as well... I hope my other cold friends experience this pleasure."
	Can Şentürk	"I used to be so cold. I melted after establishing relationships with strangers. My appearance changed. My feelings for different nations changed, too. I felt better this way. I got angry with myself after asking why I hadn't thought this way before. I felt happier with my new state. I saw that answers to universal problems would be looked for when we interact with foreigners..."
Group 2: Ice at 0°C	Büşra Filiz	"I am a cube of ice melting and turning into water in a bowl. I don't want to transform into water and lose my personality. At the moment I want somebody to take me to the freezer. I am ice at 0°C and I am so afraid to be water at 0°C. Let me tell some of my specialties. In fact... I'm not so solid. I'm a bit timid and I can't trust my surroundings. Not a bit, I'm too timid. I'm very curious about what people think of ice at 0°C. So... I'm pretty curious. Even too much. Let me tell my story. A child took me and put me over his swelling forehead. I thought I helped him. Yes, in my view I'm charitable. Anyway, part of me had melted. Then he added some water onto me and put me back into the freezer. I was going to integrate with water. I didn't want that. But after spending some time with water, I liked it. Besides it was in the mood to unite. In a while I will get colder and be at -20°C. I don't want that either. Nonetheless, it isn't certain what we are going to be in the future..."

Group	*Student*	*Heat exchange Metaphor*
Group 3: water at 0°C	Sema Mamal	"I was unable to heat myself up. But after I met my friend I started to heat up. With the energy I took from my friends, with the heat they gave me, I started to look like them. We got accustomed to each other easily. Everyone shared its energy within with each other..."
Group 4: water at 90°C	Oktay Kalem	"I am water at 90°C. I'm almost ready to boil. People boil me every day in the kettle. They make tea. They meet their everyday needs. As the weather gets colder, my temperature gets lower as well. One day a human put me in a glass. Then he lost himself talking on the phone and forgot me. My temperature dropped to 40°C. He blamed me and poured me into the sink. A new life was starting. As moments passed my temperature was dropping. Gliding through the pipes, I reached the sea. There I met with lots of new friends. I had both salty and fresh friends... I am in a new adventure..."
	Emircan Güneş	"I tried to bring every group to the same degree. I provide equality in between but I spend energy for that. Thus only one community and unity exists instead of four different communities. In fact, each group is the same in substance. Nonetheless, I unite groups with different properties and eliminate their differences. Thus, we can create only one common group. And this makes us happy."

When the student writings in Table 6 are analysed, it can be seen that students appropriated the *heat* concept using their own situations, and the *heat exchange* concept with a processes of recognizing people different from themselves, communicating with them, being open to sharing. The students demonstrated their abilities for self-identification and identifying others. It can be asserted that new and positive thoughts and feelings have taken the place of the previous negative thoughts and feelings.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn after evaluating the metaphor activities applied by the four Turkish teachers in the Sciences Group within the PERMIT project.

With regards to the selection of method and technique, metaphor is beneficial in the field of sciences for intercultural education. It could be thought that concepts such as intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence and empathy are not easily applicable to science classes, but, in the case of these metaphor activities, it was seen that the concept of empathy could be handled in an effective and efficient way.

Metaphor activities could be used to increase student participation, interest and motivation and as a means of allowing them to express and reflect on their feelings and thoughts easily. They could also be used to improve the atmosphere in the class, avoid monotony, increase student learning and facilitate comprehension of difficult concepts in the sciences.

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Intercultural education within the curricula

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ABSTRACT

In education of contact areas, as Slovenia and Italy are, and comparative areas elsewhere, it is important to examine the implications of culture, not just for foreign language teaching/learning, but also in disciplines such as the curriculum at all levels of instruction (humanities, sciences, arts), as well as within the assessment of records. The outcome of such examination speaks in favour of development of principles of a more appropriate evaluation of outcomes, development of new curricula and of broadening of didactics into different disciplines. If the appropriate vision can be adopted by the teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and assessment experts, school programmes have a unique opportunity to contribute to students' development of their intercultural sensitivity.

The desire to improve the current situation, a systematic modification of the educational approach within individual school subjects, the support of a substantiated empirical practice presented to teachers, a modified teaching process and determination of the effects of altered actions, active cooperation of practitioners in research, as well as communication between researchers and practitioners were the innovating work within the PERMIT project. The project partners Turkey, Italy and Slovenia have chosen to use the alternative/interpretative research paradigm. This has involved conducting, monitoring, describing and explaining the existing educational processes within different disciplines according to an innovative didactic model proposed by the researchers. The procedures of educational research enriched by qualitative data analysis and interpretation of the results thereof were complemented with communication and cooperation between researchers and innovators/practitioners. The development of teaching units and the aims of intercultural didactics in the courses of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and languages were the results of two years' research work.

KEY WORDS: intercultural education, curricula design, empirical practice, interpretative research paradigm, study program innovation

Humanities is about knowing humankind, understanding human beings as they are today, as well as exploring their past. Retelling the history of man by exploring ancient ways of living, and interpreting these from a modern point of view, and applying ancient beliefs to modern ideas – this is the way to improve mutual understanding. Communication and exchange of information are the key to understanding various economic, social and cultural areas, which, in turn, form the most important platform for the development of shared strategies of those countries which have decided to follow a common route.

For common issues, common instruments are needed. The balance between the rights and duties of every person is crucial, thus it requires an international legal instrument. Economic, social and especially cultural rights are not just individual, but are the collective rights of groups and nations, and have therefore been codified into international law. Cultural, as well as economic and social rights derive directly from international human rights law which assures their protection. The most representative and authoritative document concerning these rights in international law is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.[1] Its fundamental contribution is the legal obligation of governments to guarantee each individual's basic rights. This legal charter is based on the *United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Cultural rights include both individual and collective rights. In this context, education means also increasing awareness, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial, ethnic or religious groups. Cultural rights are also made up of one's ability to participate in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, and to use one's own language.

The European Union is facing the challenge of a rapidly changing and increasingly heterogeneous society. For this reason, the capacity for effective communication between people and the awareness of cultural differences are becoming key elements for dialogue within a civil society. In the context of the EU policy of promoting 'civil society dialogue' among members and beyond, strengthening contacts and mutual exchange of experiences in widely extended political contexts, and multilingualism and intercultural dialogue among states are priorities of vital importance. The three main aims behind the development of knowledge and understanding and promotion of multilingualism are: to encourage language learning and promote linguistic diversity in society, to promote a healthy multilingual economy, and to give citizens the tools for understanding multiculturalism. The international PERMIT (Promotion of the Civil Society Dialogue Between the EU and Turkey) project is part of this strategic framework.

1 Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

As a dimension of social policy, this endeavour should maintain and increased social cohesion and management of relations with other societies. The economic aspect is also involved with regards to language acquisition. Language can also be treated as human capital, enabling an individual to acquire financial means and improve their standard of living. In such cases, the desire for the accumulation of knowledge represents a pure linguistic motivation, the aim of which is not just to learn a second language to improve one's communication with neighbours, nor just to get to know their culture and history, or to help one get along with others. It also means that one is learning languages and exploring cultures as an investment in one's knowledge. For an individual, the knowledge of languages and understanding different cultures is basically an accumulation of intellectual capital (Grenier & Vaillancourt, 1983).

What we are dealing with is intercultural language communication (Čok, 2006), which, together with language competence and skills, is the best means of communication from the point of view of anthropology. Yet the point at issue is not only communicating culture at a given moment, but also articulating its contents and meanings, as well as the relations between the speakers manifested through the encounter of the speakers' cultures and languages. Language communication also involves the confrontation of various realities that surround us. 'Empathic competence' – i.e. the power of identifying oneself mentally with (and so, fully comprehending) all these realities – opens a passage to a tolerant understanding of the 'Other'. During the process of growing up, when an individual develops his/her personality, two types of socialization can be distinguished: primary (taking place within the family) and secondary (in society). Both can be upgraded with tertiary socialization, which is much harder to achieve – if it is achieved at all. The process involves the development of the competence to assess and compare one's own experiences and values with those of other/foreign people, the turn from ethnocentrism and narrow identifications to ethnorelativism, common values and the acceptance of differences existing between various groups.

On the one hand, intercultural awareness is related to the understanding of culture as an artefact of the mind (academic culture), and on the other hand, culture is associated with the formation of habits, relations, rules and interaction in society (anthropological component of culture). Language learning/teaching includes both. Syllabuses of higher education courses (university study programmes) often include the discussion of concepts of 'high' culture (Skela, 1999, 68), placed in an ethnic or wider context. In philological programmes, the academic subject is often called 'cultural studies' (in other languages: *civilisation, landeskunde, civiltà*); whereas in compulsory education, foreign language curricula emphasizes the 'behavioural' components of culture and their role in communication, i.e. on culturally dependent beliefs/standpoints and influences that are received and transmitted through language. Intercultural communication and intercultural understanding/acceptance should become the general objectives of raising cultural awareness within the framework of teaching (first, second, foreign) languages, humanities in general, the arts, and indeed all disciplines. Yet when cultural concepts are discussed in class, the target culture should be made neutral. A favourable or hostile attitude towards a foreign culture and the resulting acceptance/denial of this culture are the consequence of the positive/negative experience or education which an individual encountered at school, at home or in his/her living environment.

Traditional teaching approaches place considerable emphasis on the artefacts of culture (in literature, fine arts, history), whereas the modern communicative approach to language teaching focuses on the selection of linguistic tools in various communicative situations and the manner of their use. Since intercultural communication can be perceived as a further stage of the communicative approach, current teaching of 'culture' also includes chapters on 'behaviour culture' (cf. Tomalin & Stempelski, 1993). This new perception of culture has made both the differences and similarities between individual cultural environments much clearer. In order to raise our cultural awareness, we should not only observe and be familiar with differences between the given cultural environments, but also search for a means of mediation that will help us to gain insight into such environments and to establish relations between them. Language communication is the most perfect and the easiest accessible means of transmitting culture. The knowledge of the cultural norms which are valid in other social and ethnic environments is considered a prerequisite for comparisons which eventually enable us to create our own system of values.

The comparison of different cultures should be carried out in a positive way and with emotional distance. A positively oriented consideration of cultural differences and similarities implies that the individual is no longer the centre of attention and tries to avoid prejudices which would affect his/her judgement in advance (Kramsch, 1996)[2]. Intercultural language communication involves not only the knowledge of rules of linguistic communication, but also the awareness of the cultural component of these rules. The ability to distance oneself can be developed by learning the forms, approaches, behaviours and effects of interaction in various cultural environments. It must be stressed, however, that the pro-

2 'Not just discover how things are and have been, but how they could have been or how else they could be. Neither history nor ethnography provide this imaginative leap that will enable learners to imagine cultures different from their own' (Kramsch, 1996 in Morlicchio, 2002, 92).

cess does not involve the alteration of differences by force, or the search for general criteria and rules that would eventually lead to universal, general behaviour. On the contrary, differences should be re-valued in a way that enables each individual to retain his/her idiosyncrasies and those characteristics which define him/her as a cultural and social being (Kramsch, 1996)[3].

RAISING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN EDUCATION

When discussing cultural experience, one should pay attention to the multiplicity of accepted values and functions that an individual or social group has acquired through time. Yet it is the case that individuals who wish to retain their accepted values are far from being static when performing activities aimed at preserving these values. The dynamics of their memory use is complemented by the use of their will, with which they strive to transform the world. In the process, they make use of mediational means of higher mental functions related to cultural behaviour and practices (perception and active use of intercultural language communication, the formation of active and empathic relations and positions between participants in the communicative situation, the use of safeguards and incentives during participation in communication, etc.) and develop the mediational means as a means of communication and behaviour related to the formation of cultural memory (Cole, 1996, 113). Cultural memory is developed through the elaboration of more complex 'tools of remembering' which help create a new, deeper cultural experience, which serves as the basis for the further development of relations between individuals and groups. One of the mediational means of mental functions is language, which is linked to culture in several ways:

- language is a manifestation of culture at a given moment and an expression of the manner through which an individual exhibits his/her cultural awareness;
- certain cultural content is materialized through the use of language tools and verbalization;
- language forms abstract systems of values and identities, the implicit elements of which are cultural values and cultural identity.

In education, it is important to examine the implications of an emphasis on culture, not just in foreign language teaching/learning, but also in disciplines comprising the curriculum of any level of instruction (humanities, sciences, arts) and within the assessment of records. The outcome of such examination speaks in favour of a development of principles in a more appropriate evaluation of out-

3 'We are irreducibly unique and different and that I could have been you, you could have been me, given different circumstances – in other words, that stranger... is in us' (Kramsch, 1996 in Morlicchio, 2002, 92).

comes, a development of new curricula and broadening of didactics in different disciplines. If the appropriate vision can be developed among teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and assessment specialists, school programmes have a unique opportunity to contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity in students. The lack of stated goals and outcomes, the absence of curricular innovation, a lack of sufficient assessment tools and unfocused learning strategies are some of the major reasons why a 'culture learning' approach has not been successfully included in learning/teaching. In order to overcome these deficiencies, culture learning must be placed in a context where appropriate planning can take place.

There are a few fundamental frameworks for culture-centred learning: Egan (1979) for general education development, Bennett (1993) for the development of intercultural sensitivity, and Byram and Morgan (1994) and Kramsch (1993) for the inclusion of culture in the language classroom. The first two are based on the precepts of continuity, progression, and expansion of competence; they are dynamic and interact with the maturation levels of learners.

Bennett's work (1993), especially, provides us with a conceptualization of cultural sensitivity. His model helps us better understand how to integrate culture in the language classroom and provides appropriate guidance for our decisions. The development of sensitivity is outlined in a set of six stages which lead the learner from the 'ethnocentric' to the 'ethnorelative' perspective. The six stages are classified under two levels. Thus, on the ethnocentric level: denial, defence, and the minimization of differences; and on the ethnocentric level: acceptance, adaptation, and integration.

The definition of intercultural awareness, which can be considered as a mental representation, covers emotional, cognitive and dynamic areas. Within the research work of the University of Primorska (LABICUM, 2005–07) the added self-assessment schedule has been piloted (Čok, 2006). It covers the *cognitive area* (referring to an individual's thoughts, concepts, judgement and assessment activities)[4], the *emotional* area (dealing with emotions and values that the individual assigns to his/her nation and national attributes)[5], and the *dynamic area* (representing his/her aspirations to actively participate in the dynamics of occurrences related to nationality)[6].

Researchers from the University Ca' Foscari Venice, Italy, who participated in the PERMIT project, elaborated a slightly different methodology (see Table 1).

4 Bennett's model includes denial and defence of differences; Byram's methodology: *Savoir savoir.*
5 Bennett's model: minimization and acceptance of differences; Byram's methodology: *Savoir faire.*
6 Bennett's model: adaptation and integration into intercultural context; Byram's methodology: *Savoir être.*

Table 1: PERMIT elaborated models in parallel

Bennett	***CoE – Byram***	***UP – LABICUM***	***UNI Venice***
Ethnocentric stages: *Denial of differences*	Savoirs	*Emotional: attitude, disposition to cultural diversity*	Socio-emotional
Defence			
Minimization of differences	Savoir faire	*Cognitive: discovery of diversity and modulation of inputs*	Cognitive
Ethnorelative stages: *Acceptance of differences*			
Adaptation to Differences	Savoir être	*Dynamic: transfer of intercultural awareness to life*	metacognitive
Integration			

As the researchers in Venice have done, one could consider three dimensions (socio-emotional, cognitive, and metacognitive), which in time can be transformed to dynamic, cognitive and emotional (Čok, 2006).

Student response to other languages and cultures could be related to reflection about language/culture, but also to the implementation of new teaching methodologies and reflecting on the subject taught.

The method for raising student self-awareness in the processes of learning languages and specific subject discourse and through them, acquiring cultural awareness.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT

There are many procedures which allow researchers to learn about the world first-hand, to take part in it, either observing or changing it. The educational environment has a specific structure. Organization and implementation of educational material do not always permit one a free choice of the research type and methods. Some dimensions of education cannot be measured and determined. The data which teachers, headmasters and others involved in education arrive at present a picture of school life, which cannot always be associated with a particular educational or sociological theory.

The traditional empirical-analytical research calls for the objectivity of the researcher towards the research topic. This objectivity is most easily ensured by a researcher who does not take part in the process of framing the research content. A scientific approach requires generalizations and laws independent of time, place and circumstances. Hypotheses are generated in advance and confirmed or rejected through research procedures. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) call this the positivist model of researching the social world (causal or *positivist research paradigm*). These authors find, as do Fraenkel and Wallen (1990), that the study of relations, activities, situations or materials from the perspective of participants is often indispensable in researching the educational social environment. This research model – based on understanding the diversity and comprehensiveness of reality, and on accentuating understanding of the importance of the social world from the perspective of its creators – they call the alternative or *interpretative research paradigm*. The positivist model of research is associated to a greater extent with the quantitative methodology, whereas the alternative one is related more to the qualitative research methodology. Put another way, the former can be classified into quantitative and the latter into qualitative research.

Guba and Lincoln (1988) talk about the conventional and alternative paradigms. They also refer to the former paradigm as 'positivist' and 'scientific' and to the latter as 'naturalistic'. They also present the basic differences between them:

The conventional paradigm is based on the premise that reality is objective, homogeneous and divisible. Its parts can be examined separately from the whole. According to the alternative paradigm, reality is subjective, diverse and must be investigated as a whole.

- The conventional paradigm involves an independent relationship between the researcher and the research subject. According to the alternative paradigm, however, there are at least three levels of this mutual relationship: reaction of the research subject (*respondent*), disturbance (*intervention*) and interaction.
- Within the conventional paradigm, the theories are chosen and the hypotheses are set in advance. Their examination follows the deductive path. Within the alternative paradigm, the influence of time and context is decisive. Therefore researchers can expect a series of working hypotheses; data analysis starts and is already taking place during its collection and the path to theories and hypotheses is inductive.
- According to the conventional paradigm, phenomena contain relationships of cause and effect. According to the alternative paradigm, there is a constant mutual action and influence between all elements of the research context.
- According to the conventional paradigm, research is neutral, independent of values. In contrast, according to the alternative paradigm, research cannot bypass the values and their effect on research results.

In the case of the international PERMIT project, project partners chose to use the *alternative/interpretative research paradigm*. This involves conducting, monitoring, describing and explaining the existing educational processes within different disciplines according to an innovative didactic model proposed by the researchers. When innovation translates into *traditional experimental work* and the procedures of monitoring the effects are measured, researchers supplement it by applying quantitative procedures of data collection and analysis. Creative participation of teachers/practitioners in research work, their part in balancing and changing the case study, introduction of changes based on findings uncovered by teachers/practitioners through empirical practice, their motivation to continue the research and to implement innovations into the teaching practice – all these confirm the orientation of the case study towards the innovation process which directly incorporates empirical research. The procedures of educational research enriched by qualitative data analysis and interpretation of the results thereof are then complemented by communication and cooperation between researchers and innovators/practitioners. In this way individual *case studies* (of Slovenian, Italian and Turkish educational practices) are brought closer to *action research*.

Similar to action research, the starting point of our research is the dissatisfaction of teachers and experts with the education model. The desire to improve the situation, a systematic modification of the educational approach within individual school subjects, the support of a substantiated empirical practice presented to teachers, a modified teaching process and determination of the effects of altered actions, active cooperation of practitioners in research, as well as communication between researchers and practitioners – are all characteristics of our innovating work within the PERMIT project. The initiative for changes emerged from experts (hence, 'from the outside'): it implemented changes into the teaching process and helped practitioners understand the causes and effects of their actions. Consequently, practitioners developed innovations, yet nevertheless expected guidance and coordination. Their proposals often helped improve the research method. Such 'enlightened' action must, however, be solid enough to help researchers and teachers/practitioners to arouse the will among their fellow teachers, headmasters and decision-makers within the education system to systematically modify the process of teaching and intercultural education.

What was the PERMIT project dealing with in the 'action research' of case studies? The pattern of teachers and students in Turkey, Italy and Slovenia have followed the research path in several activities: in-service development, definition and exploring of intercultural communication content, taking part in pilot and action research, preparing specific teaching activities, being active at seminars and on online forums in adjusting project activities.

In the meantime, researchers and teachers aimed at the following overall and specific goals:

1. Overall objectives:
   - strengthen civil society dialogue through improved quality in education;
   - strengthen contacts and mutual exchange of experiences between partner universities on cultural values influencing teaching in partner countries;
   - develop knowledge and understanding for secondary school teachers about the EU and Turkish identity, mutual history, and culture and interactions between the two civilizations;
   - promote knowledge of EU policies and institutions and of environmental, social, gender and human rights issues in secondary school teachers and pupils;
   - develop and promote teaching strategies favouring the valorisation of different mindsets, critical thinking, and student participation in class activities, debate, ethical behaviour and personal responsibility thus favouring the growth of civil society at the grassroots level.

2. Specific objectives are to establish long-term cooperation among partner universities by:
   - involving them in 'inventing' innovative education material and piloting it in classes,
   - promoting reflection on teaching strategies and approaches and their consequences on student development as active citizens,
   - creating an online community reciprocal exchange and support for teachers,
   - providing online services and opportunities of exchange to the secondary school pupils involved in pilot projects for teachers.

The theoretical input was given at seminars and workshops, organized by project researchers. The questions to be answered were: What is intercultural? Do the teachers know enough about interculturalism? Can they incorporate their intercultural awareness into their teaching practices (ethnocentric or ethnorelative behaviours)?

Within the frame of the empirical work, the teachers were dealing with the problem of how to integrate intercultural content as:

- a goal (activity, approach and evaluation criteria of results that lead to new knowledge, making a more fulfilling and empathetic teaching process),
- a theme (cross-disciplinary, to be used at the international level in an enlarged cultural environment, but comprehensive of their own cultural context: country, community, school and class), and

- a tool (schedules and materials to be provided to the students, planned within the syllabus as innovative, attractive content) within the student learning process.

The development of teaching units and the aims of intercultural didactics in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and languages have followed the main and specific goals. Permanent support to teachers was given by researchers in the interactive approach through live and virtual communication tools (a forum on the web, e-mail, Skype). Both prior to and during the application of the intercultural units, the group of researchers and the members of the Scientific Committee were exploring and adjusting the research path.

Assessing the level achieved in project activities, and especially the information on how the teachers planned, prepared and implemented the intercultural units was possible by analysing teacher data and student questionnaires. The self assessment tool – the intercultural teacher portfolio – made it possible to determine whether the practice in piloting units was truly innovative and whether the intercultural awareness of teachers had been raised and how the interactivities of the project succeeded.

Teachers' self assessment tool – the intercultural teaching portfolio

The PERMIT researchers arranged for teachers involved in the project, and for candidates in the wider implementation following the project, to work on an *intercultural teacher portfolio.* Keeping a portfolio was placed into the frame of reference of the field being developed by the project. In the process of raising intercultural awareness in students, conceptualizations of individuals, viewpoints and convictions are formed regarding social reality and the consensus on what is most valuable to them within society, how the field of intercultural education is understood, what the role of the teachers in this process is, and what it is that they will strive to achieve after completing their training.

In working with the portfolio, the teachers also evaluated student competence, viewpoints and values and drew up a plan on how to continue the work on the project: they defined the fields in which they wished to deepen student knowledge, the areas where they wish to improve and enhance in their classes, and their strong points which could be used to support their future work in the wider implementation phase. This frame of reference provided the teachers with an instrument for self-assessment and self-analysis. The portfolio has been used to gather evidence on investments made into their own professional development and also into the quality of their classes. They conducted interviews with students on their progress based on self-assessment of their own accomplishments and

comparing their own accomplishments with the set objectives and quality criteria, thus defining the gaps in the project procedure.

The portfolio has also been used to collect reflections on teacher expectations, feelings, satisfaction with the results and the level of success in accomplishing project goals, and on whether or not the set goals were attainable. Through different tasks, questionnaires and the process of recording the project developments, teachers have examined the quality of decisions made and the success of the cooperation with students, analysing the process of arriving at the end of the project. Since the process of raising cultural awareness was of essential importance, not only for the project but also for the development of intercultural awareness within the educational environment, the exchange of experiences and selection of the most successful approaches were most valuable. The majority of teachers learned through the positive examples set by others and through their own successes and failures.

Although the portfolio was intended primarily for individuals to record their own development, the dialogue with a critical partner allows the portfolio potential to be reached. In such opportunities, partners in dialogue present to each other their own development efforts and, using the portfolio, discuss each other's efforts, mistakes, accomplishments and progress.

In order to successfully use the portfolio, we should focus on what is most important there and take the time to ask ourselves appropriate questions to deepen our insight into our own work. It is not enough to say, 'I succeeded in this'; for this calls for immediate substantiation and proof. The key question the portfolio compels us to ask is, 'How can you tell you succeeded?' It is through this question that we also seek answers to the other questions that are crucial in an individual's development:

- What do I wish to accomplish? What are my expectations?
- What is my plan?
- How will I know whether or not I have reached the set goals? How will I know my lessons were well prepared and have fulfilled my expectations and the participants' expectations?
- What have I learned from this process? What have we realized?
- How will this affect my further professional development and work?

Portfolio self-assessment criteria for teaching records were discussed:

- from the point of view of intercultural issues and discipline (descriptors);
- from the point of view of teaching practices and methods (our own pedagogical background, professional networking, project networking);
- from the point of view of assessment of the diverse learning styles of students.

The final picture obtained through the use of the portfolio is a rich and flexible representation of the 'travelled path', so that the result also reflects the experience of teaching/learning for all project participants: students, teachers, researchers and project evaluators.

Through the insight into the work of project groups (students, teachers, and researchers) gained by the evaluation tools (questionnaires for students and teachers, evaluation schedule of teaching units), after having shared experiences, the evaluation of the project goals can be completed. The project findings and materials, presented within the PERMIT final report will be implemented, but the project innovation will continue to serve as a basis for a critical friendship and exchange of experiences in the future.

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Annex 1: Elements of intercultural teaching and applied methodology in the PERMIT project

Student goals	*Approaches*	*Methods, techniques*	*Teachers' role*
Level 1: Attitude, disposition to cultural diversity			
Acquiring new knowledge of one's own culture.	Raising student self-awareness (supporting friendliness and cooperation, avoiding cultural contrasts).	Study of video and audio materials, action-research, texts.	Implementation of new teaching methodologies.
Acquiring new knowledge and awareness of the target culture and, consequently, encouraging reflection about one's own.	Building representations, opinions, values (gather appropriate cultural information – arts, music, heroes, referential data).	Panel discussion, multimedia material, drama, story-telling.	Reflections on how their own subject is taught; the role of the subject within the curriculum.
Knowledge of otherness, heuristic approaches to languages and cultures, awareness of the socio-cultural context.	Raising ability to recognize differences (manage attention to existing distinctions, mediation of conflict in team building).	Action research, shared information in-group and beyond the group.	Reflection about their own intercultural learning achievements.
Level 2: *Discovery of diversity and modulation of inputs*	*Approaches*	*Methods, techniques*	*Teachers' role*
Intercultural knowledge encouraging reflections on one's own identity.	Response to other languages and cultures (share needs and goals, understand cultural phenomena within context).	Listening, acquiring general knowledge, expansion of curiosity in group to group work.	Evaluate learning impact after introducing innovations in teaching.
Interaction between cultures (source and target) and, consequently, learning to respect and promote tolerance of new cultural contexts.	Perceive others with accuracy, maintenance of neutral posture.	Panel discussion, multimedia material, action research.	Understand intercultural learning achievements.
Development of the ability to challenge and question one's own conceptual models, tolerance for ambiguity.	Handle cultural relativity, tolerance of ambiguity.	Essays, written and spoken feedback.	Evaluate their own intercultural teaching achievements.
Level 3: Transfer of intercultural awareness to life	*Approaches*	*Methods, techniques*	*Teachers' influencing schooling System*
Response to on one's own anthropological/cultural experiences.	Self-evaluation of cultural awareness, consideration of humour, cultural deviance, cultural contrasts.	Case studies, action research.	Evaluate learning impact after introducing innovations in teaching aimed to improve cultural / intercultural awareness (internal evaluation).
Showing positive attitudes and standpoints towards target cultures.	Creating an adaptable identity, evaluate situation from multiple perspectives.	Solving problems, behaviour models.	Introduce ICC contents, approaches and techniques within curricula, prepare ICC targeted materials.
Displaying cross-cultural referencing and ability to modify one's own beliefs (intercultural flexibility).	Adaptation strategies (take risks, social adaptability, and adjust communication and interaction).	Multicultural behaviour, cross-cultural reality within life context.	Transfer ICC approaches into life, record the effect of ICC education within society (external evaluation).

Literary education in intercultural perspective

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ABSTRACT

Literature seen from the intercultural viewpoint allows us to approach cultures other than our own in a different manner: a novel creates a 'large' listening space and time that is particularly privileged and which is often absent when meeting these cultures in our towns (bilingual inscriptions, a building in Gothic Venetian style, the presence of schools with Italian as the language of instruction). A novel carries us across unknown cultural grounds which only in literature can be explored fearlessly; it promotes the awareness that each individual, culture and nation has the right to their own stories and that there is an infinite variety of stories, none of which is either superior or inferior. A novel promotes identification (with characters, events) and changes in viewpoint, and it may generate new stories that the reader may tell to himself and to other people.

KEY WORDS: literary didactics, literature and inter-culture, literary texts and Italian language

TEACHING STRATEGIES: TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL DIDACTICS

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to enter properly into a relation with a variety of cultural contexts. It demands a knowledge that is sensible to culture, as well as a motivated mentality and a set of abilities. The first step in the development of intercultural competence is to help our students discover the numerous ways to observe the world around us. In this way they will gain the ability to live fully in a community that is becoming more global every day.

Intercultural education aims at the development of competence in a certain culture; that is, at the acquisition of familiarity with the world view and behavioural models typical of that specific culture. As such, intercultural competence develops along with learning the language of that culture. Basically, the two learning areas share the idea of competence as learning objective. In language learning, the mere knowledge of grammar and vocabulary does not equal competence, and likewise the knowledge of objective aspects of a culture does not suffice for the development of intercultural competence. The development of a competence implies knowledge acquisition which produces appropriate behaviour naturally and spontaneously.

Culturally general studies of intercultural development do not focus on a particular culture, but rather they depend on *universal categories* which allow for comparative work. Culturally general studies discuss the level of cognitive contents required for cultural analysis; how to overcome ethnocentricity; the development of the appreciation and respect for our own culture as well as for cultural diversity; how to understand and acquire ability in the process of cultural adaptation, and to manage identity questions that arise from intercultural contact and mobility. For example, these questions are common to all aspects discussed in culture learning within literary language education. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes the meaning of culture as a context in which "cultural awareness must be seen as a means of improving linguistic competence and as a result of a reflection on linguistic competence". Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984) assert that "a study of culture as a set of facts is a study of its features, while a study of culture as a process is a study of its essence". Many Lafayette findings refer to culturally general aspects. He suggests that students should be able "to appreciate various peoples and various societies; to evaluate the validity of statements on culture; to develop the abilities essential to the identification and organization of information on culture" (Lafayette, 1997).

Thus the key strategy in language/culture instruction is a gradual development of an intercultural competence combined with specific teaching/learning objectives. These are the development of the appreciation of all cultures and the production of behaviours which are appropriate in a specific culture as well as in

a variety of different cultures (Zorman & Zudič Antonič, 2006). Important factors that are to be taken into account throughout the entire process of developing intercultural competence in language instruction is the level of sensitivity to intercultural questions on the part of the students, as well as the teacher's readiness and enthusiasm to tackle them. We are confident that teachers who have received proper training[7] are open to differences in class and are able to develop a group dynamic that leads students to the observation of differences without the negative responses referred to by Bennett (1999) as *ethnocentric*. The development of intercultural competence is a natural task in language instruction, and it is probably one of the most important contributions to a more peaceful and liveable future.

A DIFFERENT WORLD VIEW AND PERCEPTION

The majority of language teachers and experts on intercultural issues have personal experience of how the language used promotes certain world perceptions and how it inhibits others (Bennett, 1999). During total immersion in another language or culture, we enter into conflict with our own world view. If we are unready to accept a different reality or differences in general we tend to consider these as improper. Such a world view is actually fairly limited. As Paige (1993) explains, an unprepared person tends to defend his/her world view and to remain closed inside his/her reality because of the "emotional reaction involving disorientation that occurs when a person is immersed in a culture s/he is unfamiliar with." Fortunately, evidence from intercultural studies shows this kind of attitude is merely a (brief) initial stage in intercultural development that can be overcome following adequate and targeted strategies. There are different models that describe various stages of intercultural development, however, they all show more or less the same progress: initial negative reaction, acceptance and integration. Milton Bennett's theoretical notions elaborated in the "development model of intercultural sensitivity" (DMIS)[8] have been verified empirically as well. This

7 A study on language learning in intercultural contexts, carried out by our university in the school year 2005/2006, which included all language teachers and students attending elementary school on the Slovene Littoral, showed that teachers need further training in literature in areas of contact/border and intercultural education. Teacher training programmes in the past lacked contents related to the development of intercultural themes. Furthermore, younger generations of teachers have poor knowledge of the cultural life of the Italian community in Istria, a subject which had been discussed in depth up until the early 1990s. After the declaration of independence from the former Yugoslavia, however, such topics were abandoned in Slovenia. As a result, in today's (language) instruction, the presence of the Italian community in our area is hardly ever mentioned at all. Our local authors are rarely, if ever, mentioned (Zudič Antonič, 2007).

8 The 'development model of intercultural sensitivity' is based on two types of research. On the one hand, a systematic observation of actual behaviours – how people behave when facing cultural diversity; on the other, empiric verification of a coherent theoretical model designed for accounting for these behaviours. From the observations made, it becomes clear that students progress through six clearly identifiable stages that are explainable by constructivism principles. The constructivism theory that links cognitive psy-

model uses observable behaviour (verbal statements) as indicators of a condition beneath (world view) which in turn determines the manner in which people experience different cultures. The more sophisticated their world views on cultural diversity, the more these persons become sensible and competent in intercultural matters. By acquiring a more sophisticated experience in cultural diversity people develop an 'open' world view that applies to each phenomenon inside the *culture* category; in other words, abilities acquired at each stage may be generalized to any type of cultural diversity. Furthermore, it seems that world views are relatively stable; people maintain the same general orientation towards cultural diversity, independent of the specific culture they compare. In an ethnically mixed area such as ours, Bennett's model can certainly be used to overcome negative attitudes towards one culture or the other. It guides students gradually (year by year, starting with compulsory education) to an open world view that is transferable to their own reality as well, even if this means accepting the cultural diversity of others as well as learning to appreciate cultural diversity in order to outgrow the limitations in their world view.[9]

THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY (M. J. BENNETT'S PERSPECTIVE)

Bennett's perspective is a conceptual elaboration of the development of intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural sensitivity development is identifiable by six stages leading from the ethnocentric perspective to the ethnorelative one. The six stages are divided in two groups, as follows:

Ethnocentric stages

1. negation
2. defence
3. minimization

Ethnorelative stages

4. acceptance
5. adaptation
6. integration

chology and post-positivism philosophy claims that our experience of reality occurs essentially through *constructs*, namely complex categories, whose totality constitutes our world (Watzlawick, 1984). In other words, our notions of what is real are produced by categories used to describe it, and these categories are the means of our experiencing. The constructivism thus facilitates comprehension of the ways in which persons develop their abilities to analyse, perceive, and consequently live, cultural diversity.

9 Various studies have been carried out in Slovenia in the past few years studying people's behaviour facing cultural diversity. In particular, the University of Primorska extensively investigated cultural and linguistic diversity in the two bilingual areas in Slovenia (Čebron, Čok, Mikolič, Zudič Antonič). In the design of our proposal we made mostly use of data that had emerged from these investigations because they deal with our own socio-linguistic reality in particular.

In the following paragraphs Bennett's model stages are briefly outlined.

Negation of diversity refers to one's inability to recognize cultural diversity because his cognitive repertory lacks the categories this diversity refers to. Consequently, diversity is rejected. Bennett et al. stress the importance of support here, confidence, a friendly spirit and class cooperation when students begin developing their ability to recognize diversity, and to acquire cultural information and explore various aspects of beliefs as well as of culturally diverse behaviours. Classroom topics should include elements of objective or formal culture (art, music, literature, theatre and dance), heroes, national holidays, selected beliefs and behaviours. Cultural contrast is to be avoided at this stage.

Defence against diversity begins when a person notices diversity and generally judges it (negatively) through evident stereotypes. A typical example from our territory might be the use of the pejorative term *s'ciavo*[10] used by Italians when referring to Slovenes, or the Slovene use of *makaronarji* or *lahi* or even *fascists* to refer to Italians. At this stage of intercultural sensitivity development, instruction should primarily aim at the development of attitudes based on patience and tolerance. Diversity is dealt with by drawing student attention to cultural similarities and by a presentation of a particular group or culture diversity. Conflict mediation is present, team spirit is built through activities that promote cooperation and needs and objectives shared by the group are discussed. Some cultural contrast may be useful at this stage.

At the *difference minimization* stage, a person is able to perceive superficial cultural diversity but he minimizes it. Intercultural abilities to cultivate in this stage include listening, general knowledge about culture, knowledge about one's own culture, an accurate perception of others and the preservation of a non-judgmental attitude. These abilities reinforce (through the contact with cultural informants, through opportunities to observe diversity, through emphasis of one's own cultural awareness and finally through curiosity) expansion in the direction from one's own view towards the views of others. Excessive use of cultural contrast is to be avoided.

The *acceptance* stage is the first of ethnorelative stages, people appreciate cultural difference and realize that other cultures offer alternative solutions to the problems of human existence. At this stage people become able to comprehend and elaborate phenomena occurring in their living contexts. Furthermore, stu-

10 *S'ciavo* is a term used by Italians living in neighbouring areas to define Slovenes as a barbaric, culturally less developed people (although etymologically it is simply the Venetian dialect for 'Slavic'). On the other hand, Slovenes refer pejoratively to Italians as *makaronarji* or *lahi*, as well as (less frequently) the term fascist. (Examples of pejorative terms for other peoples of ex-Yugoslavia are also frequently used in our territory, though beyond the scope of this paper.)

dents refine their own categories of cultural contrasts by cultural diversity oriented learning. They tackle cultural relativism questions and are able to distinguish these from questions of ethic or moral relativism. Abilities used by students in this stage, besides specific cultural knowledge, are the knowledge and sensitivity to cultural context, respect for other people's values and beliefs as well as tolerance of ambiguity.

At the *adaptation to variety* stage, individuals have developed the capacity to look at the world through the eyes of 'the Other' and acquire communicative abilities to communicate with them. In the adaptation stage a person learns to take upon himself eventual risks, to solve problems, to be flexible, to adapt socially and to follow different communicative models. Learning strategies required to acquire these behaviours include the use of observers, case studies and research strategy acquisition. Topics to discuss are humour, cultural deviance and more sophisticated examples of diversity.

At the final stage, of *diversity integration*, individuals find themselves inside a process of developing an adaptable identity that is not based on a single culture. It allows them to evaluate situations on the basis of various perspectives as well as to communicate constructively with the Other. This stage is difficult to achieve in class. At this stage, learners conduct intensive introspective activity by asking themselves: 'Am I able to interact culturally with others? Do I know how to behave culturally? Am I able to act flexibly? Am I able to adapt to specific roles in a diverse culture although remaining true to my cultural values?' The content used to stimulate these questions is a theoretical perspective on ethical and cultural behaviours which occur when students shift from one culture to another (Bennett, 1999).

An essential quality distinguishing this model from the others lies in highlighting the importance of the constant challenge of balancing and offering support when students grapple with contents and processes related to cultural learning. The content involves what is to be learned (cultural models such as friendship, respect, heroes, holidays, etc.). Processes are what is done with contents in class (stimulate curiosity, identify abilities to manage diversity, promote cooperative activity, enable students to work autonomously by using research strategies). A less challenging process involves memorization of facts and information that students easily access. A more challenging process is based on the use of research techniques ahead of the student's (complete) awareness. However, a less challenging process involves content that students are already familiar with. They are unfamiliar with highly challenging information. A key to achieving efficacy is an adequate combination of support and challenge. If both content and process are less challenging students 'relax', as Bennett puts it. When presented with a highly

challenging level of both content and process students 'turn away' frightened by the difficulty of the task. Only a combination of a more challenging content and a less challenging process or vice versa leads to the development of students' abilities and knowledge.

The value of Bennett's model in education lies in the specification and the description of intercultural sensitivity development which helps teachers observe what happens in the classroom, plan class work and evaluate students in terms of reference to individual stages of the intercultural sensitivity development process.

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The development model of intercultural sensitivity is highly useful to language teachers because of its division into stages as well as the general applicability of its principles to language and culture learning. The model suggests that the essence of cultural learning resides not in acquiring certain knowledge but rather in the ability to alternate between different cultural perspectives. Thus, there is a series of advantages in the application of the development model of intercultural sensitivity. The paramount advantage is undoubtedly its value in developing an intercultural mind in our students – a mind that is able to comprehend inside and outside our own culture as well as others. In this definition, cultural learning relates to communicative competence and to theoretical concepts about success in language learning.

Adopting a culturally general approach to intercultural competence, the model allows for *culture* instruction even when teaching a specific culture is felt to be inappropriate. Also, when a specific culture is targeted, the model suggests a larger and a more general context that allows for a cultural instruction that develops intercultural abilities that allow for generalization.

Another key feature of the model is its emphasis on the necessity of having one's own cultural awareness at the very beginning of the process, a notion consistent with the idea of a deep interrelation between the acquisition of one's first and second language. This model also ascribes great importance to the way one relates to cultural similarity and diversity, considering cultural diversity as crucial for the development of intercultural awareness. A tension between similarity and diversity is present in language as well; teachers decide when to disregard similarity and emphasize diversity. A time schedule is fundamental; the model supplies its users with information on material presentation which aims at progress.

Although success in language learning is not a specific goal of Bennett's development model of intercultural sensitivity, the model represents a useful support to the philosophy of language learning. As such, the proposal of Bennett et al.

(1999) is open to expansion with results arising from our field research.[11] On the basis of research data we were able to associate beginning learners with the first stage in intercultural competence. Their progress to subsequent stages must be gradual and well judged (although students might occasionally experience a lack of progress) up to the highest levels of advanced communicative competence when students have absorbed the principle of change in cultural perspectives, on the condition they were given an adequate study programme. Based on these content expansions, we recommend dividing up language instruction as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Intercultural sensitivity development

Linguistic level	***Level of intercultural sensitivity***	***Activity***
Beginner	*Stage I: Negation and Defence*	• *exploring and recognizing cultural diversity and similarity* • *cooperative learning in class*
Intermediate	Stage II: Minimization and Acceptance	• *role playing games* • *exploring perceptions about one's own culture and other cultures* • *field learning* • *simulation and activities on intercultural awareness (empathy)*
Advanced	Stage III: Adaptation and Integration	• *activities on culture shock and humour among cultures* • *using autobiography, fiction and film* • *experimental teaching* • *cultural contrasts* • *value systems* • *case studies*

Table 1 shows that we chose to divide Bennett's development model of intercultural sensitivity into three stages, combining negation and defence in Stage I (Beginner); minimization and acceptance in Stage II (Intermediate); adaptation and integration in Stage III (Advanced).

11 Data on the Slovene Littoral have emerged from a study carried out by the University of Primorska: *Lingua come ponte per una comunicazione e apprendimento interculturale: Moduli per l'insegnamento, (Language as a Bridge for Intercultural Communication and Learning: Teaching Modules) LABICUM* (2003–2007), UP ZRS and the British Council (project coordinator Lucija Čok).

The model is supposed to be used in the design of a study programme that would integrate culture in language study programmes in order to develop intercultural competence alongside language efficiency. We are confident that by evaluating student progress in both linguistic and cultural efficiency, cultural complexity levels as well as linguistic efficiency will increase.

In designing an intercultural sensitivity development programme, it is, however, necessary to pay attention to the educational process itself, by using teaching methods proper to tension reduction (Balboni, 1999; Čok, 2006). In general, students consider higher-rate-risk activities as the most demanding. For example, a number of college students in Slovenia find it difficult to tackle role playing games in front of their peers,[12] and the same situation has been observed in adults in other countries as well (Balboni, 1999; Bennett, 1999; Zudič Antonič, 2007).

LITERATURE AND CULTURE

In the past, knowledge regarding culture used to enter schools almost exclusively through literary instruction, which was thus considered as a culture bearer and a strong motivational tool for language learning. Such an approach can no longer be accepted because it is utterly inappropriate to the continuous and rapid change in the society that in turn causes constant change in the needs of students as well. Today it is crucially important to introduce culture instruction in linguistic curricula, where culture is understood as a routine of everyday life. Also, knowledge about cultures makes language instruction more interesting and motivating.

Students who have reached a high level of knowledge are usually more aware of the world around them. To them, literature is an excellent tool for the promotion of intercultural didactics because they are able to enter worlds that are spatially and temporally different and/or distant, to reflect on difference (of males or females; of the young or the adults; of Slovenes, Italians or foreigners; of someone living in the North or South, etc.) and consequently to reconsider their responsibilities. Literature instruction also enables teachers to show students how to establish a dialogue with the text, its author, schoolmates and the teacher giving rise to emotions which can be shared by everyone. These are the aspects of literature learning that make it more than a plain formative process, but rather a strong motivation particularly important to intercultural discourse.

12 Usually, this phenomenon occurs because Slovene students are not accustomed to this type of activity in language classes (which is mostly ex-cathedra teaching). Due to large numbers of students per class there is also little space for discussion. Certainly, these work forms are not appropriate to the development of delicate topics that relate to cultural vision and are very intimate and personal.

Kramsch (1993) designed a theoretical approach to the cultural analysis of literary texts based on the *critical dialogue* concept, that is, on the need of students to interact with a particular language and its context. These are defined extensively as the following:

- the culture of a text including its form: oral or written;
- the reactions of other students to the text; and
- culture and relations between students and the teacher during instruction.

In such a dialectics, language learning does not aim only at reading, writing or speaking acquisition, but rather at discovering the various interrelations that occur between the speaker and the listener, between the writer and the reader, and the *text* or cultural context at the centre of the dialectics. In this way, Kramsch integrates language and culture.

This dialectics is based on the important concept of subjectiveness understood as intersubjective, intertextual and intercultural. Intersubjective relations in the classroom, including the teacher, lead to the awareness of a multiplicity of voices, experiential diversity, ethnic, racial and gender traits, as well as the rest of identity sources involved in the discussion. As a result, numerous levels of meaning which contribute to the discussion are created. Particularly in literature instruction, readers' voices do not always coincide with the voice of the text. An intertextual approach to literature allows readers to interact with the author's voice. When readers exchange meanings with text, this dialogue allows for a variety of interpretation, perception and experience. As a consequence, the student's world opens up to a set of attitudes and values that make literature and culture inseparable (Kramsch, 1993).

The conception of the *intercultural* recognizes the subjective nature of each culture. An individual's experience and perception can easily overcome stereotypes originating in information exchange. In such a context, culture and language are taught and learned through interpersonal processes, examination of differences and an interdisciplinary approach to language and culture analysis. In literary discussion, emphasis is on the individual, on the interrelation of literature and social sciences and on the examination of differences between languages and cultures; Giroux (1992) refers to these as 'crossing borders' (a very important factor, particularly for the comprehension of our cultural reality). This pedagogical approach is based on the meeting of conditions which allow students to write, speak and listen in a language whose meaning becomes manifold and 'resists permanent rejection' (Giroux, 1992). Traditional pedagogy envisages the teacher as the head of a subject and distributor of knowledge. However, by allowing students to concentrate on the perspectives, experiences

and products of others, they will express their own perspectives willingly. They will thus cross the border between information exchange and personal participation. Once this border is crossed, students themselves are seen as authors of their own learning.

The result is learning openness to variety and multiplicity of voices, as well as the negotiation of meaning in a variety of texts and contexts in which learning takes place (Kramsch, 1993).

In language programmes, overcoming borderlines connects language and culture inextricably. Furthermore, it represents a basis for a personal insight into culture that cannot occur through the mere exchange of information.

The peculiarity of our reality requires the use of literary texts through which students acquire cultural contents about their home milieu. These texts reawaken the empathy essential to a change of view. The use of literary texts is also considered essential to intercultural didactics because it reassures students who are initially hesitant to participate actively in a topic and agree to participate as observers. Students themselves decide when and how much to get involved in the topic discussed.

Discussing literature from an intercultural standpoint allows us to approach cultures different from our own: a novel creates a 'long' listening space and time that is particularly privileged and is far too often absent when meeting cultures in our towns (bilingual inscriptions, a building in Gothic Venetian style, the presence of schools with Italian as the language of instruction). A novel carries us across an unknown cultural ground that can easily be accepted to explore without anxiety. A novel promotes the awareness that each individual, culture and nation has the right to their own stories and that there is an infinite variety of stories, none of which is either superior or inferior. A novel promotes identification (with characters, with events) and changes in points of view, it often generates new stories that the reader himself may tell to himself and to other people.

RELATIONS BETWEEN A LITERARY TEXT AND THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS

Literary education should aim at developing students' reading awareness and stimulating them to approach literary texts with interest, curiosity and a desire to broaden their cultural experience. The achievement of these aims is crucial to the achievement of intercultural education objectives. In order to succeed, literary didactics ought to privilege student-text interaction by promoting a series of operations that open a direct dialogue between students and a literary text at various levels of complexity: from a basic global comprehension to a more detailed textual analysis, interpretation and transposition.

The meaning of texts will emerge from a co-constructive work as a result of everyone's active participation in discussions of such an 'interpretative community'. The teacher's task is to stimulate the adequate didactic approach, to promote discussion among students and to encourage text interpretation. On the one hand, students must realize that a free interpretation is not always appropriate because the cultural horizons of a piece of literature must be respected. On the other hand, teachers must not suggest a rigid conventional interpretation, since it is the literary work itself that reserves a range of unpredictability and divergence that represents a precious didactic resource. This is why we consider essential the quality of perceptive teachers able to combine prearranged outlines and improvisation, rationally structured work with openness to classroom cues even when these are unpredictable (Armellini, 1987).

When appropriate and feasible, students ought to be *prepared* to read literary texts through questions or activities that reawaken the desire to explore the text. Here, advisable types of tasks are based on topics which emerge from the texts and stimulate further engagement in the exploration of topic representation by the author. Particular care in planning and presentation of these activities is required when a literary text is tackled in the classroom with the idea of developing intercultural objectives as well.

A very important difference between literary and non-fiction texts lies in the representation of material. Frequently, in a literary text the author uses a form and language which allows readers to establish an organic relationship between the content and the way it is expressed. Form and style often contribute to stress or emphasize the message itself. The use of modern texts (poetic or narrative, song lyrics) which are close to the young is very suitable for this type of approach. However, it does not exclude the use of canonical (Italian) literary texts or the discussion on how these create particular metaphorical or musical effects. In text analysis, a close relation between language and experience soon becomes clear. A student without personal experience is unaware of the reality or the situation discussed and is therefore unable to grasp the feeling conveyed by the text. As such, a text may have a verbal impact on a student, rather than a prompt impact on the memory of his experience.

A student's experience may be used in class by 'revealing' the text topic through activities (or questions) which relate the text to appropriate areas of his experience and comprehension, remaining however only a starting point in a process that aims at 'activating' experience and creating the necessary connection between 'text content' and 'what this literary element means to me'. Unless we are able to activate student experience, a great many literary texts remain inaccessible to students and therefore hardly a basis for the development of an appropriate intercultural discourse.

Another important factor in developing a suitable intercultural didactics through literature is historical analysis and the actualization of texts. Mattei (1988) states that according to receptive aesthetics 'a written literary text remains inactive [...] unless a reader is able to enter a literary character and thus give the text life and sense'. A literary work is brought to life if there is permanent comprehension and transposition activity which considers characters and texts from different ages as protagonists, in constant dialogue between the present and the past.

A good teacher is able to actualize a text by highlighting values, feelings and emotions which constitute a continuity with the past, and at the same time by stimulating a hermeneutic approach which distinguishes clearly the expectation horizons of his/her students from the cultural horizons of the text. On the one hand, this allows texts to avoid anchorage to a historically limited age, and on the other, to prevent perspective deformation caused by an overly contemporary interpretation. A crucial task in intercultural didactics through literary texts lies in the students' work on unknown texts in order to learn to ask new questions, to surprise their own judgement in order to assume momentarily the author's judgement and that of the era of the text, and finally to transpose it and detach from it. As a result, students learn to relativise and comprehend 'the Other' and 'the different'.

Activities which promote relativism are based on an active exploration of a literary universe; on a direct 'immersion' into texts in order to stimulate the curiosity of students and favour their direct involvement in the analysis and the interpretation of the texts and cultures discussed.

In such a didactic approach, modular planning is favourable because it facilitates the students' efforts in grappling with the complexity of literary phenomenon. Modular planning allows a gradual focusing on a particular literary-cultural topic and it favours a pluralism of perspectives. Moreover, in language and culture curriculum planning, the importance of a set of possibilities within a continuum must be reaffirmed.

Various limits may occur in instruction, for example texts prescribed by a teaching curriculum, administrative conditions, a large class size, ideological and cultural models which affect the nature of teaching methodology, text choice and the students themselves. At any rate, in literary didactics with intercultural content a continuum is preferred to rigid regulations and, despite limitations, teaching should always strive for a negotiation of literature and a practical realization of the culture curriculum in class. In our opinion, teachers will thus continue asking themselves what to teach, how to do it and why.

A particularly important aim in culture instruction is to offer students the opportunity to enter many different types of interaction with members of other

cultures. Supported by teachers to avoid the perpetuity of stereotypes, students will draw informed conclusions and develop sensitivity towards the perspectives of others, experiences and products. In intercultural perspective oriented curriculum, literature will hardly be approached by teachers who do not feel adequately prepared in cultural contents, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and in experiential acquisitions. To achieve better knowledge, teachers must become lifelong learners themselves and at the same time they must be confident that what is important is not having the right answers but rather knowing how to explore various possibilities with students, how to observe cultures, analyse them and how to suspend judgement until hypotheses may be verified.

DEVELOPING ITALIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE INTERCULTURAL CURRICULA

From the discussion so far, we can conclude that language instruction must be related to culture. Such an orientation development among teachers, researchers and teacher trainers is a unique possibility to contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity among students. The intercultural sensitivity applies to cultures present in student environment (for example, Slovene, Italian and Croat in Slovene Istria) as well as to cultures of other languages studied. It ought to be offered in second-language instruction up to the secondary-level education as well as in teacher training.

In order to achieve intercultural sensitivity, language and culture instruction must take into consideration the principles of competence continuity, progression and expansion. Advisable perspectives are dynamic and able to interact with students at various levels of maturity. They should also supply teachers with guidelines for the evaluation of student development and consequently for curriculum planning.

Language and intercultural sensitivity oriented learning puts students in contact with a large variety of human dimensions as well as their multiple expressive modalities. Neither culture nor language is a static entity; the same is true of our interactions with other people. Linguistic and cultural sensitivity allows us to go beyond language structures, and the use of cultural facts considered in isolation; it allows us to learn about ourselves and to comprehend, accept, respect and develop empathy. Language and culture development thus implies a rise in the responsibility of students as well as teachers by relating to others and promoting a process of awareness expansion which results in a greater perspicacity of different language and culture worlds. Such ethical considerations make diversity questions central to language and culture curricula and fundamental to the exploration, comprehension and interaction with multiculturalism in our homeland and abroad.

As it has been stressed before, these principles may only be achieved through a mutual respect between students and teachers which develops in class. Such respect allows students and teachers to realize that they all learn in classroom by working together though they are not equal (Balboni, 1994; Ceserani, 1999). The responsibility for learning success is shared; students discover what to learn, teachers investigate how others learn once they have discovered what is to be acquired. They all learn, but in different ways. They respect each other and learn from one another. Reciprocal respect is a prerequisite for both teachers and students involved in language and culture learning.

In culture oriented language learning curriculum planning is related to connective, practical and emancipating[13] perspectives. By developing these perspectives in curriculum planning, students will acquire the ability to convey personal meanings, to comprehend their relations to a larger cultural context and to express themselves and act for the purpose of improving the human condition.

Cultural learning processes are thus supported by language use, and language is constantly used to express culture. Teachers prepare students for coping with linguistic difficulties before these occur spontaneously: students learn vocabulary, discover communicative strategies by talking to people, interviewing them and by documenting their studies. The aim of language acquisition is thus well defined: to discover one's own as well as other people's culture. Such an approach to language and culture learning aims at discovering and developing one's own awareness of others.

CONCLUSION

This paper is intended to contribute to the ongoing debate about the application of intercultural sensitivity development in language instruction. Based on the need for knowledge of the referential theoretical perspectives which direct learning, our contribution offers guidelines for classroom use.

There are a variety of reasons why people seldom know the behavioural patterns typical of other cultures. These patterns cannot be dealt with only within language education, because they are closely related to the family, the society in general and specific historic circumstances, etc. In individuals there is often some kind of exaggerated nationalism that makes them consider their culture as better than the new, the different. Such negative attitudes towards cultural diversity are unlikely to disappear as long as a person is not ready to receive, to comprehend

13 In emancipating learning, culture is the central topic. Here, language learning aims are highly individual, and students' range of choices is optimal. In this type of learning, students asks questions like "Why is culture important?" and "How can I use language to affect cultural knowledge?" (Lange, 2003).

and to deepen their acquaintance with diversity. By introducing intercultural education in the early years of language instruction, we shall contribute largely to the inclusion of each individual into the society around him.

The task of teachers should thus be to guide students and support them in the discovery of new patterns, open new horizons and bring them to new experience, rather than merely to supply students with well-defined models. Both teachers and students will thus become aware of the need for a permanent development of both linguistic and intercultural competences.

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Intercultural awareness across the curriculum: Approaches to promoting intercultural communicative competence within the PERMIT project

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses various approaches to acquiring intercultural communicative competence which forms the theoretical framework for activities within the PERMIT project.

Firstly, the basic concepts and strategies proposed by the cross-cultural approach and the intercultural approach are introduced, so as to prove their relevance for achieving the main goals of the project.

Secondly, some tools and devices developed for the purpose of the PERMIT project are briefly presented along with the facets of intercultural education which they were meant to enhance. A special section is devised to commenting on the data gathered via student questionnaires from Slovene secondary students which were based on the above theoretical insights and, therefore, informed various activities within teacher training workshops.

Finally, the main outcomes of the project, namely, a set of cross-curricular teaching materials developing intercultural awareness, are commented upon, giving an overall assessment of the PERMIT project's achievements.

KEY WORDS: intercultural communicative competence, intercultural citizenship, cross-cultural approach, intercultural approach

INTRODUCTION

The importance of intercultural dialogue among all those forming or aspiring to enter the European Union underpins all the activities of the PERMIT project. On the one hand, the aim of the project is to promote the best practices in raising intercultural awareness that have so far been developed in the participating tertiary institutions and, on the other hand, the goal is to give an opportunity to teachers and students in the three countries (Turkey, Italy and Slovenia) to establish new international ties that would prompt mutual interest into respective cultures and facilitate gaining first hand experience, knowledge and understanding of these diverse cultural environments.

A brief examination of the goals set in the project proposal yields a clear set of core objectives which are geared towards developing intercultural communicative competence in all participants. The main goals are:

- strengthening contacts and exchanging intercultural insights on cultural values between partner universities, thus influencing teaching practices in partner countries;
- developing knowledge and understanding among secondary school teachers about the EU and Turkish cultural identities, about mutual history and past interactions between the two civilizations.

Furthermore, the PERMIT project proposes to "strengthen the dialogue within civil society" by bringing elements of citizenship education into the classroom, such as human rights, ethical behaviour, personal responsibility, critical thinking and environmental issues, so as to favour the growth of a civil society at the grassroots level.

In order to achieve its objectives, the goals of the project are to expand intercultural and citizenship considerations to subjects who would traditionally shun these issues, thus proposing a radical rethinking of established teaching practices, based on the conviction that in a closely knit multicultural society intercultural sensitivity must permeate subjects across the curriculum.

To bring about a change of attitudes and teaching practices envisaged by the PERMIT project, a series of national and international workshops were planned for teachers. However, we also considered it important to assess the overall stance towards intercultural and citizenship topics of teachers and students prior to launching the project, as well as to provide teachers with a simple tool for assessing student progress in this area.

This paper, therefore, first examines the theory underlying the approaches adopted in promoting intercultural awareness and sensitivity, continues by addressing a few focal points in assessing intercultural communicative competence in students and comments on the salient issues that transpired from the analysis

of the questionnaires. In conclusion, a few brief observations are made on teaching materials produced by Slovene teachers within the PERMIT project which can be considered examples of a successful implementation of the intercultural approach and education to democratic citizenship.

CROSS-CULTURAL VERSUS INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

Intercultural awareness and competence is at the centre of many aspects of life in a globalized world. Amidst constant technological advancement daily contacts, real or virtual, with culturally and linguistically diverse groups have become a normal event for pupils from an early age. It is therefore important for teachers and promoters of intercultural communicative competence to ask these questions: *How do pupils read and interpret the information and signs transmitted in these contacts with other cultures? What do they notice and why? What assumptions are triggered and why? How does the multicultural environment influence pupils' attitudes and values, their worldview in general?*

Furthermore, we must consider *which teaching approach can best help them to cope with the challenges presented by multicultural environments* and *how to integrate it into our teaching practices*. A brief examination of theoretical trends dealing with the development of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence which underpin some of the approaches used within the Permit project will help us grapple with these aspects of education.

In the field of research of communication between people from different cultural backgrounds two quite distinct approaches have been adopted to raising awareness and sensitivity of otherness, namely, the cross-cultural approach and the intercultural approach. They both share common tenets and principles. Indeed, although they even intersect in many aspects, they tackle the common field of research from different angles. The cross-cultural approach originates from the USA and draws mainly on anthropological research principles. In fact, in American universities courses on cross-cultural communication are normally offered within the departments of anthropology and communication studies. The intercultural approach, on the other hand, derives its methods from the teaching of languages and has developed within European universities mostly within departments of applied linguistics.

Cross-cultural approach

The cross-cultural approach to analysing communication in multicultural settings draws on insights offered by anthropological, culturological, psychological and communication research. Its development began in response to the needs of diplomats and businessmen for a better understanding of foreign cultural envi-

ronments and it therefore tries to compare cultures and identify their distinctive features.

An early attempt to map the *distinctive features of cultures* can be found in the work of E. T. Hall (1959, 190–192), who introduced concepts such as *high context* and *low context cultures* (Hall, 1977, 35–52), as well as cultures functioning within *monochronic* and *polychronic time systems* (Hall, 1966, 25–32). According to this theory, communication in a *high context culture* is highly ritualised and encodes little explicit information in a message, requiring thus a deeper understanding of behavioural patterns; whereas in a *low context culture* messages are rather explicit and straightforward. In terms of the embeddedness of culture in a time system, Hall suggests that people from various societies have different ways of managing time requirements. The *monochronic time system* is characteristic of cultures which expect people to compartmentalize and plan their activities one at a time, while the *polychromic time system* describes cultures in which people tend to engage in several activities at the same time.

Further tools for a cross-cultural analysis were provided by Hofstede's (1980) *five dimensions of culture*, namely, *power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity* and *long versus short term orientation*, which condition our behaviour, norms, values and beliefs, forming the *software of the mind* of individuals from each cultural background and thus defining a person's expectations or responses inculcated by the cultural environment. While Hofstede's analysis instruments are based on a large-scale investigation and his approach has had a large following in business circles, it has also been criticised in terms of promoting an oversimplified view of behavioural patterns and can, therefore, lead to stereotyping.

The above approach can also be criticised for neglecting the role of language as a salient and informing element of each culture, for overlooking the centrality of language for anthropological research, a facet of culture defined by Whorf in the first half of the previous century with the claim that "*the linguistic relativity principle* which means /.../ that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world." (Carroll, 1956, 221).

The gap has been amply filled by Anna Wierzbicka's impressive body of work into cross-cultural linguistics. Within the domain of contrastive semantics her research analyses the semantic components (*conceptual primitives*) of core vocabulary of numerous languages and concludes that there are only about fifty *universal concepts* and just one absolute *semantic universal*: the meaning of the personal

pronoun *"I"* (Wierzbicka, 1996, 36–37). Within the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, her analysis of speech acts across a wide range of languages further illustrates the implications of cultural and linguistic conditioning on cross-cultural interactions (Wierzbicka, 2003).

The theory of cross-cultural communication attempts to intertwine cultural and linguistic insights also in the approach developed by Els Oksaar (1997). Talking about *code-switching behaviour* in multicultural and multilingual environments, she analyses *communicative acts* in terms of *culturemes*, defined as communicative behaviour patterns, and *behaviouremes*, which comprise verbal, paralinguistic, nonverbal and extraverbal elements. As a result, her *cultureme theory* not only expands the field of research to include semiotics, but can also be viewed as a bridge between the cross-cultural and intercultural communication approaches, contrasting and comparing cultures in a holistic manner as well as raising awareness of the processes enhancing intercultural communication.

Another attempt to integrate both the cross-cultural and the intercultural approach to communicating across cultural boundaries is given in M. J. Bennett's (1993) *integrative approach to global and domestic diversity*. Postulating *radical constructivism* (Kelly, 1963) as the basis for ethnocentrism, the authors devised a model of gradual increase of intercultural sensitivity that leads from the initial *ethnocentric stages* (denial of cultural difference, defence against such difference, minimisation of its importance) to more advanced *ethnorelative stages* (acceptance of cultural difference, adaptation to such difference, a final cultural integration and identification with the adopted culture).

What sets the intercultural approach apart from the cross-cultural approach is that the former seeks to build on the common ground, the similarities and the integrative elements of cultures in contact while developing a deeper understanding of the defining elements of an individual's own cultural conditioning, while the latter compares and contrasts cultures within various parameters in order to discover and understand the differences, thus focusing on unveiling a somewhat simplified system of behavioural features constituting the 'otherness' of unfamiliar cultural environments. Promoting distinctions between cultural circles and analytical oversimplifications can also lead to conclusions predicting the inevitability of a future "clash of cultures" (Huntington, 1997).

Intercultural approach

Drawing on lessons learned from the rich tradition of the language classroom, the intercultural approach focuses on understanding one's own culture, on a critical assessment of the limits and impositions of our own cultural conditioning thus helping us to decentre and empathise with people from other cultural envi-

ronments as we engage them trying to convey our meaning or understand theirs. Just as having a good command of our mother tongue helps us acquire a foreign language while contrasting the two linguistic systems, intercultural awareness helps us to realise the differences and to overcome mishaps thus easing communication flow. Since both the communicative and collaborative language teaching approaches have proved successful, applied linguists have tried to extend these methods to intercultural dialogue, extending intercultural communicative awareness to mean language awareness and cultural sensitivity, because "language /.../ used in the context of communication is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways" (Kramsch, 1988, 3).

Coming from a tradition of strong group identification in terms of ethnicity or religion, originating from the political organisation in nation states (Bauman, 1999), the need for intercultural dialogue, equal rights and mutual respect of culturally diverse groups is stressed in the founding documents of the EU such as its Charter of Fundamental Human Rights, which says in its preamble that "the Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values (freedom, equality and justice) while respecting the diversity of cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as their national identities...". Likewise the Treaty establishing the European Community (Article 3) states the intent of "fully respecting /.../ cultural and linguistic diversity" of member states, thus promoting a new model of cultural integration that requires intercultural communicative competence (ICC) from each individual of the Community.

In order to achieve ICC and, therefore, be ready to actively participate in such a diversified community (in terms of nationalities, cultures and languages), Michael Byram (1997, 2008a) proposes "an integrated framework for language, culture and citizenship education" based on "*five orientations*" that prepare learners for interacting, understanding and empathising with the viewpoints of people with different values and beliefs, and different norms and expectations. Building on respect for otherness and promoting a critical reassessment of student's 'own' cultural environment, this approach emphasizes the 'oneness' of humanity, positing cultural differences as a challenge which can successfully be integrated into our classroom practices, in the same way as learning foreign languages.

The approach is structured so as to foster mutual knowledge of interlocutors in terms of their social backgrounds, history, practices, perceptions, products, institutions, etc., as well as the processes of interaction as part of the *cognitive orientation*. Within the *evaluative orientation* attitudes of curiosity and openness are promoted, as well as a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and to question beliefs about one's own. The *comparative orientation* furthers the skill of interpreting documents, events, tenets, customs, values from another culture by

developing the skills for explaining and relating these facets of culture to events, documents, customs... from one's own culture, thus helping us to identify areas where misunderstandings can occur and promoting empathy as an approach to overcome potential conflict. It is mainly in this dimension of intercultural education that insights and devices developed within the cross-cultural approach can fruitfully be adopted. The *communicative orientation* leads to the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences. The *action orientation* advances skills of discovery and interaction, whereby these skills can be employed under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. Integrating all these elements into our classroom practices leads to achieving the *critical cultural and political orientation*, an ability to evaluate practices, perspectives and products critically in one's own environment as well as in other cultures and, on the basis of explicit criteria, enhance efficient communication with persons from other cultures in a foreign language with the purpose of engaging with and affecting in some way an (international) community.

Intercultural communication thus concentrates on developing skills which can enhance intercultural awareness, a tolerance of ambiguity, openness to diversity by drawing on research in the field of linguistics, ethnography and political science. It promotes intercultural dialogue as an active, engaged attitude of each individual to discovering and dealing with diversity while also critically evaluating one's own cultural identity, thus building a common ground within which communication can take place. It leads present and future members of the EU to aspire to developing intercultural communicative competence as a precondition to adopting an intercultural democratic citizenship which does not postulate cultural otherness as something to observe, copy and adapt to in contacts with foreigners as proposed by the cross-cultural approach. Instead it prepares us for active participation in a multicultural society and a daily engagement with a kaleidoscope of culturally and linguistically tinged behaviour patterns, beliefs, values and world views.

It seems that Byram (2008b, 16) also identifies a close relationship between intercultural communicative competence and the actual interiorisation of language use when he draws a fine line between *multilingualism* and *plurilingualiasm*:

We need to be precise in our use of language and terminology. Another example is the distinction between 'multilingualism' and 'plurilingualism', a distinction which is made in two ways. The first way is to use 'multilingualism' to refer to geographical spaces and 'plurilingualism' to refer to people. Slovenia is a multilingual space in which several languages are present, some of them used in schools as media of instruction, some of them taught as subjects, some of them not recognised in schools. In this multilingual space, there are some people who

use more than one language and are plurilingual but there are others – probably very few, in fact – who use only one language, and are 'monolingual'. This is a sociolinguistic usage.

The second way to use the distinction multi/pluri is when referring to individuals. This is a psychological usage. The CEFR (Common European Framework) says that some people know a number of languages which are kept separate in their minds and experience; this is sometimes referred to as 'co-ordinate' capacity in languages. Other people are considered 'plurilingual' – another term is 'compound' capacity – because they do not keep their languages separate:

Plurilingualism (...) 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 inter-relate and interact in different situations (...) a person can call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communications with a particular interlocutor. (CEFR, 4)

Thus this second definition of integrating various languages into actual communication proposes spontaneous "code switching" between languages as a higher level of interiorisation of cultural awareness and self-awareness. On Bennett's (2008) scale it would probably coincide with the highest level of *ethnorelativism*, namely, *integration*, but an integration that does not overlook or deny cultural and linguistic distinctions and, therefore, does not lead to *acculturation*.

Despite marked differences between the cross-cultural and the intercultural approach in terms of the methods used in analysing communication in multicultural settings and in terms of approaches to overcoming hindrances to communication, the two approaches both contribute to a better understanding of an area of studies that is focal in a globalised world and has been generating increased attention so as to confirm the claim that developing intercultural communicative competence can be defined as the *tertiary socialization* (Byram, 2008a, 106).

Assessment of intercultural awareness and sensitivity

Drawing on the above theoretical insights and in keeping with the specific needs of the PERMIT project, a questionnaire[14] was devised that would help us gather insight into an array of issues concerning student awareness of cross-cultural and intercultural matters, as well as regarding the way they relate to otherness.

14 The questionnaire for students was first devised by Mirjana Benjak and Neva Čebron for a research within the project *Obrazovanje za interkulturalnu kompetenciju*, University of Rijeka, Faculty of Arts in Pula (funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 303-1401173-0983) and then slightly adapted for the purpose of the PERMIT project.

In Slovenia the questionnaires were administered to 139 students attending the second and/or third year (16 or 17 years old students) of secondary school. Six secondary schools were selected in the coastal region (Ginnasio Gian Rinaldo Carli Capodistria - Koper, Srednja gostinska in turistična šola Izola, Gimnazija Piran, Ginnasio Antonio Sema Piran - Pirano), the Notranjska region (Šolski center Postojna, Gimnazija Ilirska Bistrica) and Ljubljana (Gimnazija Bežigrad). In order to have a more representative sample of the answers of students, both Slovene and Italian minority schools were included, as well as a school leading to the international baccalaureate.

While the scope of this paper does not allow for a lengthier report on the data gathered, a short summary of the salient points, regarding perception of intercultural issues and the grasp of core issues of our multicultural society by the Slovene students, can help us trace the path followed in organizing the activities of the PERMIT project.

The present article limits examination of the data gathered with the questionnaire to the following aspects:

- the frequency and type of contacts that students previously had with people from different cultural backgrounds, as well as a brief analysis of the observations triggered by diverse behavioural, belief and value systems,
- student awareness and sensitivity to cultural diversity present in their own environment, their knowledge and understanding of various cultural groups and of the formation of their own cultural identity,
- student attitudes towards core issues of a culturally heterogeneous society,
- the intercultural topics that had been discussed in the classrooms and the teaching methods which students found most suitable in dealing with cultural diversity.

Frequency and nature of intercultural contacts

With respect to frequency and type of contacts with people from other cultural backgrounds students were first asked:

- whether they had had contact with people abroad, either through travelled or via the Internet,
- what was the reason for establishing such contact,
- when travelling, how long they stayed in a foreign county,
- which countries they had visited.

The great majority (97.1%) of students stated that they had travelled abroad mainly for tourism (79.9%) or to visit relatives (46%), but often also within students exchange programmes (21.1%) or school excursions (58.3%). The average trip abroad lasted between one and two weeks (50.7%). As to the places visited,

they listed all the European countries, with the neighbouring countries featuring prominently (Italy and Croatia were mentioned by 84.9% and 84.2% of students respectively, Austria by 66.9% of students), but more distant places were also mentioned (USA by 10% of students, Egypt by 4.3%, Japan, Jordan, Jamaica, Cuba were mentioned once each).

Furthermore, we inquired about student contact with persons from other countries via the Internet, which revealed that most of them (79,1%) kept regular contacts with foreign friends or relatives abroad over longer periods of time (6 months to 5 years).

From the above it can be concluded that the teenagers interviewed had been exposed to numerous and varied contacts with different cultural environments, so that we also wanted to find out how they perceived people from other cultural environments, namely,

- what was their experience with people of other nationalities or from other cultural background;
- what similarities they noticed when mixing with people from other nationalities or other cultural backgrounds.

While the vast majority of students replied that their experience with people of other nationalities or cultural background was mainly positive (completely positive 40%, quite positive 40%, more or less positive 16%, not particularly positive 2%, not at all positive 1%), they also stated that they often did not mix at all with foreigners during their trips abroad (39.6%). This reluctance to engage with foreigners may also explain why they observed little difference between their own culture and the one they had come in contact with (no differences at all 12.2%, no particular difference 10.8%, more or less no difference 33.1%, quite some differences 17.3%, complete difference 12.2%). On the other hand, their responses could also suggest that they have so far only achieved a limited intercultural sensitivity and, therefore, have not stepped over the threshold of the *ethnocentric stage* (Bennett, 2004, 153).

Students' ranking of similarities among cultures seems to confirm the above conclusion. The question regarding similarities among languages would require some additional explanations, as to what criteria they used in ranking all languages they had encountered as similar (completely similar 33.8%, quite similar 23.1%). In all other areas, i.e., body language, habits and customs, behaviour, food, attitude to money, leisure time, work and family, patriotism, religion or faith, they most often decided that the other cultural environments were "more or less similar" or "quite similar" as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Ranking of similarities observed in people from other cultural backgrounds or other nationalities?

	no	*not particularly*	*more or less*	*quite similar*	*completely similar*
a) language	14.5	12.4	16.2	23.1	33.8
b) body language	3.6	17.3	35.3	26.6	13.7
c) habits and customs	5.8	13.7	39.6	23.7	14.4
d) behaviour	5.8	13.7	32.4	33.8	10.8
d) food	7.2	17.3	30.2	25.2	16.5
f) attitude to money	9.5	19.4	28.8	23.7	14.4
g) attitude to leisure time	7.2	17.3	34.5	25.9	10.8
h) attitude to work	5	12.2	38.1	30.2	10.1
i) attitude to family	5	12.2	36	26	16.5
j) patriotism	5.8	20.1	33.1	22.3	11.5
k) religion / faith	6.5	23	35.3	20.9	10.8

Cultural diversity in our immediate environment

In order to elucidate the above points further, the questionnaire also enquired about the multicultural elements in their immediate environment which could have a strong bearing on their perception of differences and similarities of various cultural circles. Therefore, the following data were examined:

- citizenship;
- nationality;
- mother tongue;
- mother tongue of father;
- mother tongue of mother;
- languages spoken in their environment;
- nationalities living in their environment;
- foreign languages that they had studied;
- languages they could speak.

While 71.2% of students declared Slovene citizenship, a further 4.2% claimed a dual citizenship (Slovene and either Croatian, Italian, Serbian, Montenegrin, Canadian; one student declared a dual Italian and Argentinean citizenship), 2.2% declared Croatian citizenship, 0.7% Bosnian citizenship, 0.7% Serbian citizenship, 0.7% Italian citizenship. However, 20% of students simply refused to declare their citizenship status.

In terms of nationality, 75.5% of students regard themselves to be of Slovene nationality, eight (5.8%) of Serb nationality, three (2.1%) of Italian nationality, four (2.9%) of Croat nationality, three (2.1%) of Albanian or Kosovar nationality. Appurtenance to other nationalities, namely German, Spanish and Argentinean, was declared by only one student in each instance. Furthermore, there were a few students who declared themselves to be of a mixed nationality: two students (1.4%) claimed both Slovene and Italian nationality, one student (0.7%) claimed a Slovene and Croat nationality, one (0.7%) a Bosnian Croat nationality, and one (0.7%) a mixed Slovene, Italian and Croatian nationality. Only five students (3.6%) refused to state their nationality.

As to the mother tongue, 71.9% of students consider Slovene their mother tongue, 5% named Serb to be their mother tongue; the same percent regard Croat as their mother tongue, 3.6% Italian, 2.2% Bosnian, 1.4% Albanian. There were also students who deem more than one language as their mother tongue, namely, Italian and Slovene 2.9% of students, Croat and Italian 0.7%, Slovene and Croat 0.7%. A few students listed languages such as Serbo-Croat, German or Spanish under this category.

As shows the Table 2, affiliation with Slovene language drops some when we inquired about the mother tongue of their parents. 67.6% of students declared Slovene as their mother's mother tongue, and 66.9 with respect to their father's mother tongue. However, other languages from our environment increased in proportion, namely, Italian (4.3%, 2.9%), Serb (7.2% in both instances), Croat (7.2%, 9.4%), Bosnian (3.6%, 2.9%), Serbo-Croat (1.4% in both instances). In some individual cases additional languages were introduced as parents' mother tongue: Montenegrin, Spanish, German, Polish and French.

Table 2: Overview of data related to citizenship, nationality and mother tongue

	citizenship	*nationality*	*mother tongue*	*mother's mother tongue*	*father's mother tongue*
Slovene	71.2	75.5	71.9	67.6	66.9
Serb	0.7	5.8	5.7	7.2	7.2
Italian	0.7	2.1	3.6	4.3	2.9
Croat	2.2	2.9	5	7.2	9.4
Bosnian	0.7		2.2	3.6	2.9
Albanian		2.1	1.4	1.4	2.9

	citizenship	*nationality*	*mother tongue*	*mother's mother tongue*	*father's mother tongue*
dual/mixed	4.2	3.5	5		1.4
Macedonian					0.7
Serbo-Croat			0.7	1.4	1.4
Montenegrin				1.4	0.7
Spanish	0.7	0.7	0.7		0.7
German	0.7	0.7	0.7		0.7
Polish				0.7	
French				0.7	
Undeclared	20	3.6	4.3	2.9	2.2

We can conclude that round 30% of participating students experience the multicultural and multilingual dimension within their family, although cultural variety originates mainly in the bilingual, Slovene and Italian coastal region of Slovenia and in the close relationship with the nations from former Yugoslavia. In fact only 31.7% of students declared that they only spoke Slovene in their family, whereas 46.7% claimed that they communicate within the family in Slovene and other languages, such as Italian (5.6%), or in the Istrian dialect (0.7%), or else in many languages including Italian, Croatian, Istrian, Albanian, Serb, Montenegrin, Bosnian, English, Spanish, German, and even Hungarian. 8.4% of students stated that they did not speak in Slovene in their families at all, but in a mixture of other languages, mainly Italian and other languages (3.7%) or Croat and other languages (1.4%), or Serb (1.4%), or else a mixture of English, German, Spanish and French (1.9%). In some cases (14.3%) students preferred not reply to the question regarding the languages used in their homes.

When asked about the languages spoken in their wider environment, 50% of students related that they communicate in other languages beside Slovene, mainly in Italian (24.5%) and English (24.5%), but also in Croat (7.9%), German (4%), Spanish (4%), French (3.4%), Albanian (1.4%), Serb (1.4%), to mention just the more frequently named languages. Students also listed a number of nationalities and minority groups that they had noticed in their environment, most prominently Italians (49.6%), Croats (48.2%), Serbs (39.6%), Bosnians (38.1%), Macedonians (11.5%) and Kosovars (11.5%), but also Montenegrins, Muslims, Hungarians, Austrians, Germans and Roma. It is interesting to notice that very few students mentioned the Roma community (7.9%), in spite of the fact that this group is the seventh largest minority group (STAT, 2009) in Slo-

venia and is often present in media reports. Furthermore, the second and the third largest minority groups in Slovenia, the Muslims and the Hungarians (STAT, 2009), were hardly ever listed (Muslims listed by 2.2% of students, Hungarians only by 2.9% of students). The fact that the Muslims are listed among the ethnic groups, and not as a religious group, can be explained with the established Slovene classification (STAT, 2009), while the Hungarian and Roma communities settle mainly in regions excluded from our research sample.

The great variety of languages used within the family and in the immediate environment can, perhaps, explain the surprising replies in the Table 1 regarding "similarity of languages". According to Byram's definition of plurilingualism, such claims could suggest a high level of intercultural awareness, an interiorisation of diverse cultural influences into oneness, into one's own cultural identity.

Furthermore, when asked to evaluate their stance toward "otherness", students' declared attitude to diversity in terms of nationality and culture in their environment is mostly positive or very positive as shown in the Table 3.

Table 3: Replies to questions regarding student attitudes towards members of other nationality/ies or culture/s in their environment

	no	*not particularly*	*more or less*	*quite*	*completely*
a) I respect their dissimilarity	3,6	5,8	14,4	24,5	48,2
b) I accept their dissimilarity	2,2	7,9	24,5	28,1	34,5
c) I am aware of the richness of cultural diversity	3,6	8,6	23,7	22,3	38,8
d) I try to overcome prejudice and stereotypes	5,8	6,5	20,1	31,7	33,1
e) I feel part of a plural community	9,4	10,8	18,7	27,3	30,2

It is, however, important to notice that the more passive attitude of "respect to dissimilarity" generates more prompt agreement than the more demanding, active engagement suggested by claims, such as "I accept their dissimilarity", "I try to overcome prejudice and stereotypes" or "I feel part of a plural community". On the scale proposed by Bennett (2004) these replies position our student at a relatively low level of the *ethnorelative stage* in the development of their intercultural sensitivity, somewhere within the *stage of acceptance*, and still at a distance from the *stage of integration*.

As to attitudes toward foreign languages, 97.8% students considered it important to speak more than one language, some even affirm that they can speak three (27.3%) or four languages (43.2%). The languages studied most often are English (91.4%), Italian (41%), German (38.8%), Spanish (16.5%), French (17.9%), but a few students also mentioned learning Croat, Serb, Russian, Japanese, Hungarian and Chinese. Slovene is listed among studied foreign languages in 13.6% of answers, probably mainly in Italian minority schools, but in some cases also at the International School Bežigrad.

In view of the above data it can be claimed that our students have had considerable exposure to various aspect of multicultural encounters, that they are aware of the cultural variety in their immediate environment, and what is more, frequently experience cultural and linguistic diversity within their own families. This exposure appears to have generated a keen interest in studying languages and an open-minded attitude in intercultural encounters.

Intercultural issues discussed at school

Slovene high-school programmes already deal with a range of intercultural topics, as can be concluded from answers to the question: which of the topics listed had been discussed in their classes, reported in the Table 4. It appears that respect for other cultural groups, ethnic, religious or linguistic, as well as respectful communication within the peer group is tackled quite frequently.

Table 4: Some intercultural topics discussed in high-school classrooms

	Never	*2*	*3*	*4*	*frequently*
a) a respectful exchange of views between students	23	10,8	21,6	18,7	19,4
b) respect for different ethnic groups	10,1	14,4	18	25,2	27,3
c) respect for other religions	7,2	12,2	23,7	27,3	24,5
d) an open attitude to other cultural and linguistic environments	7,2	12,9	22,3	25,9	25,2
e) other intercultural issues	7,2	0,7	2,9	2,9	9,4

What is more, students seem to feel the need to discover other aspects of various cultural environments and list a number of topics that they would like to know more about such as lifestyles, political systems and events, literature, language, religion, festivals, customs and rituals, history, poverty, multiculturalism

abroad, moral values. They expect to acquire much of their intercultural knowledge at school, but consider the media, their family and each individual »most responsible for their attitude towards persons from other cultures and of other nationalities« as can be concluded from the data compiled in Table 5.

Table 5: Ranking of responsibility for attitudes to other cultures and responsibilities

	no	*not particularly*	*more or less*	*quite*	*Completely*
a) the parliament	10,8	11,5	29,5	30,9	15,1
b) the government	9,4	10,8	36,7	23	17,3
c) schools	4,3	12,9	25,2	36	19,4
d) the media	4,3	10,1	22,3	25,9	34,5
e) the family	9,4	10,8	18	26,6	31,7
f) each individual	2,2	12,9	23,7	25,9	30,9

With regard to teaching approaches which students consider most appropriate for acquisition of intercultural competences, they seem to prefer direct "co-operation with students from other countries" (76%) to learning via various tools offered by the "computer technology" (55.4%), but also to favour it over "project work" (44.6%) or "lab work" (17.3%). Their replies speak in favour of adopting Byram's (1997) framework to enhance ICC, primarily the *action orientation*, which extends learning spaces to field-work and self-study. These data had therefore a direct bearing on approaches developed within the PERMIT project.

Methodological approaches observed in the new teaching materials

In order to achieve the main aim of the PERMIT project, namely, to implement a cross-curricular approach which would enhance intercultural awareness and thus strengthen the dialogue within the civil society by including elements of citizenship education such as human rights, ethical behaviour, personal responsibility, critical thinking, as well as environmental issues, teachers were invited to re-think their classroom practices within a series of national and international workshops[15]. The theoretical insights listed earlier informed a teacher's portfolio with a series of activities meant to help them reconsider the salient issues of ICC and focus on topics that lend themselves best to discussing the role and aims of intercultural communication in a multicultural world. Elements of the portfolio were also designed to help teachers and students monitor their progress[16] in acquiring ICC against a clear set of criteria. The outcome of such teacher training activities was new teaching materials, developed and piloted by teachers in all three countries.

15 Approaches developed within the LABICUM project at UP FHŠ, resulting in textbooks "Close Otherness" (Zudič & Malčič 2007, Čebron 2008) informed largely the activities proposed by the Slovene partners in these events.

The materials produced by the Slovene teachers were designed for a number of secondary-school subjects, namely, English, Italian, literature, history, philosophy, biology and mathematics. The approaches they advance reflect in many ways the needs and preferences expressed by their students in replies to the questionnaires. Firstly, they mostly include a strong element of cooperation with students from Turkey and Italy, whereby information and insights acquired from their international peers inform the activities and discussions in the classrooms. Secondly, these new teaching materials cover a number of topics proposed by students, such as religion, way of life, literature, attitude to multiculturalism, but also introduce new ones, for example, the attitude toward water resources in various cultures, the lottery and how gambling is viewed in different cultural environments. Thirdly, the materials seek to upgrade intercultural awareness by prompting students to think critically of their own behavioural patterns and assumptions, so as to develop empathy and overcome stereotypes or prejudice.

While these topics give an opportunity for cross-cultural comparisons, they also motivate students to reflect on and reassess practices established in their own environment, thus promoting a deeper understanding of the society at large. At the same time these approaches have generated new interest in other cultures, not just for the partner countries but also beyond, and provided students with new methods of gathering information and drawing conclusions from it, helping them to keep an open mind when interacting with peers from various cultural environments.

Future use of the piloted teaching materials will undoubtedly require further refinement but the comments in the teachers' articles accompanying the new materials suggest a high degree of confidence in the new teaching practice, as evident from the following quotes:

"It is hoped that the PERMIT experience related to life science would lead to development of intercultural competence in students and other teachers involved into this process and would contribute to the ongoing academic discourse on intercultural experience in the literature of teacher education." (Dr. Liliana Visintin, Biology teacher)

"Through these discussions we are trying to make students more sensitive and willing to deal with questions that demand reflection and help them investigate

16 The criteria for ICC assessment were adapted from the Inca Project (Leonardo da Vinci Programme 2002–2004) Portfolio of Intercultural Competence.

the foundations of our cultures." (Dr. Marjan Šimenc & Mare Štempihar, Philosophy teachers)

"We are trying to awaken in them some sort of interest and curiosity, I want them to wonder, to perceive and to at least look for a way out of the Plato's cave of shadows of things." (Bojana Milutinović, teacher of Slovene Language and Literature)

"... students learn about the history of these two religions, as well as analyze and contrast the main spiritual messages, principles, morals, legends of various religions. They consider the role that religion plays in Italy, Turkey and Slovenia by posting questions to the international PERMIT students. Thus the teaching materials developed within the PERMIT project can help students develop not only tolerance of otherness, but also a positive attitude to various religious practices in different cultural environments." (Sonja Škrlj Počkaj, History teacher).

Conclusion: what has been achieved and where do we go from here?

This project has had many positive effects. The enthusiasm generated among teachers and students can certainly be listed among the most manifest ones. A great interest and curiosity triggered by contact with people from other cultural circles, as well as a hunger to better understand and engage with this intriguing otherness that has transpired from their activities and results.

It can be concluded that the positive attitudes expressed in student replies to the questionnaires have been enhanced by the teaching materials and the activities proposed in them, thus giving students an opportunity to develop intercultural awareness in a much more structured fashion.

This positive feedback to practices followed in the Permit project can lead us to conclude that cross-cultural and intercultural approaches proposed to teachers and students yielded good results, but we also have to admit that implementation of theoretical approaches into teacher training workshops, into teaching materials and assessing intercultural competence proved a difficult task. The success reported in teachers' comments above is due to a great extent to their competence, professionalism and creativity.

Administering student and teacher questionnaires, or a similar investigation tool, at the end of the experiment could help us more realistically evaluate the progress achieved, as well as aid in further refining the teacher training framework and teaching activities in order to help us determine a successful way of leading students from the *ethnocentric stage* to the *ethnorelative stage* (Bennett, 2004) of intercultural sensitivity, to aid them in the discovery of themselves in others, the others in themselves and, therefore, to acquire skills needed for an *intercultural citizenship* (Byram, 2008a).

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