Cultural Approach to Teaching Communicative English as a Foreign Language in Secondary English Language School

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Abstract: *The communicative approach requires teaching a foreign language through target, national and global culture. As English is the "lingua franca", modern students should use English for international communication, aiming at its relevant application for appropriate socialization and in future occupational/professional practice. The current paper explores a comparative, cross-cultural approach to EFLT in a Bulgarian English Language Secondary classroom. Fifty-two eighth-graders, aged 14 from "V. Karagiozov" English Language School, Yambol participated in the experiment. The study aimed to improve the quality of EFLT teaching and achieve better socialization of children from various ethnicities, thus educating them in respect, tolerance, non-aggressive behaviour, and ethics. Moreover, a way of representing Bulgarian cultural traditions was explored as a means of performance in English the patriotic defence of national dignity.*

Keywords: *English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT) and Learning, Communicative Approach, Culture*

Културен подход към преподаването на комуникативен английски като чужд език в английска езикова гимназия

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Резюме: *Комуникативният подход към преподаването на чужд език изисква обучение в целева, национална и глобална култура. Тъй като английският е международен език, днешните ученици ще го използват за международна комуникация. Целта ни е те да ползват усвоения чужд език за социализация и специализирани цели в бъдещата си професионална практика. Настоящата статия изследва сравнителен, междукултурен подход към преподаването на английски език в българския контекст. В експеримента участваха 52 осмокласници от Английска езикова гимназия „Карагьозов", гр.Ямбол. Проучването имаше за цел да подобри качеството на обучението по английски като чужд език и да постигне по-добра социализация на деца от различни етноси, като ги възпитава в уважение, толерантност, неагресивно поведение и етика. Освен това беше приложен подхода за представяне на българските културни традиции на английски език - извор на патриотичната защита и национално достойнство.*

Ключови думи: *преподаване и учене на английски като чужд език, комуникативен подход, култура*

1. Introduction

The Communicative Approach to foreign language teaching has been at the centre of methodological discussions since the 1960s. This issue can be explained by "the active development of myriad international relations (economic, political, scientific, etc.). Research suggests that the communicative approach of teaching can be ensured through the identification of sociolinguistic factors" (Karapetyan, 2005: 95-98). The communicative strategy to EFL is closely related to teaching culture across the curriculum. The foreign language learner needs to appropriately transfer meaning into the target language to meet the utmost communicative purposes. It involves more than comprehension of the culture and merely command of grammatical, lexical, discourse and phonetical levels. "As the world has grown into a "global village" and people communicate with others from around the globe for occupational, personal or recreational reasons, the command of more than one foreign language is vital for personal success." (Kostova, 2021) Our students are the citizens of the future society who should be prepared to meet the ever-changing market requirements. Teaching language through communication and culture is another approach to EFL teaching that has recently gained momentum and popularity. Cristina De Rossi, a British anthropologist, defined: "culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones and a million other things." (De Rossi, 2020) "Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a part or group of people, encompassing cuisine, social habits, music and arts,… different all over the world" (Pappas and McKelvie, n.d.) Modern English teachers' role as facilitators rather than instructors leads learners to foreign language and culture acquisition. It includes the knack to communicate verbally and non-verbally, deciphering and conveying meaning appropriately for successful socialization. "The role of the teacher/tutor has shifted: the teacher is a mediator, guide, facilitator in learning, not an authority any more. Teachers are given more responsibility as course designers…The teacher is supposed to take into consideration the students' learning styles and tailor the course according to their preferences, interests and emotions they experience as they are strongly related to the learner's performance, progress and expected outcome." (Kostova, 2020: 108).

The current research is a pedagogical experiment conducted in "Vasil Karagiozov' English Language School, Yambol, Bulgaria, with eighth-graders, aged 14. Fifty-two secondary students of various gender, ethnicity and social status took part in the pedagogical experiment. They were divided into a Control Group – textbook taught only and an Experimental Group – cross-culturally, communicatively trained. The researcher applied the cross-cultural method for the experimental group, including Bulgarian, Global and Target English cultural issues. The experiment led to precious results, which she shares with colleagues. Thus, secondary teachers can apply them in their English as foreign language classroom. The results showed that English as a Foreign language should be taught through culture. Education guards against learners' actions or speech interpreted differently by native English speakers or by people from a third different culture who are not native English speakers but daily use English for communication. Knowing

other cultures can aid students in comprehending the novelty and otherness. Learning foreign cultures facilitates the process of students becoming aware of their national culture, appreciating their national virtues and values through pointing out similarities and differences, thus enriching broader insight. Learning culture will also make students get along with others more easily and facilitate foreign language acquisition aimed at proper communication.

2. Cultural and Communicative Approach, Competence and Strategies

Teaching EFL and culture in the Bulgarian context involves achieving international cultural awareness, non-restricted to national or target culture. The learners should get acquainted with some British artistic ways of specific behaviour and present Bulgarian traditions and values to make foreigners explore our Bulgarian practices. Students should learn how to respect others and communicate in peace and tolerance during the English language class. English teachers teach culture as a source of new knowledge. They consider literature, music and art a beneficial component of foreign language learning, which develops creativity and brings a breath of fresh air, enriching the educational environment. They are convinced that socio-cultural knowledge will broaden the learners' horizons and, subsequently, draw attention to developing cultural awareness, relying on teaching with digital technologies that boost imagination and creativity. Teaching EFL "would be more successful if the learning processes is socially oriented and student-centred, taught on the base of the communicative approach, including the application of interactive methods and using the Internet and the ICT (Information Communication Technologies). The educational events should be beneficial for the learner from a multi-pedagogical point of view and should strive after reaching results, related to the application of psychologically positive influences and motivators, subordinated to the educational objectives and the curriculum. The learning contents should address individual issues and moral values, it is expected to be empathy oriented." (Kostova, 2020: 81) In addition to the latter citation, the Bulgarian must never neglect the cultural aspects of FL teaching and learning. "English as a foreign language has been taught in Bulgaria on the functional level since the 1980s, after the change in paradigm. The application of the communicative approach made learning more relevant and "hands-on" turning the direction from teacher-centred to learner-centred studies and cooperation in the classroom vs individualism and personal representation. The teacher's authoritative role was changed into a moderator's, advisor's, facilitator's, putting the responsibility for the success in education into the learner's palms." (Kostova, 2021) "Employing the broadest perspectives, most commentators who have contributed to the Communicative approach debate would probably agree that teaching English communicatively involves using the language for particular purposes in tasks and activities which evoke a strong sense of relevance to the learner's interests" (White, 1980). It has been recognized that the communicative use of language from the earliest stages will facilitate learning and acquisition. Semantic solutions rather than grammatical lead to better results with the teenagers, while grammatical

options are better used with adult learners. EFL requires the initially planned productive skills teaching to guarantee the successful application of the communicative approach. Nevertheless, EFL is fruitful if the communicative situations taught are factual, culturally tinted, well-measured according to the psychological learners' development and appeal to teenage learners' interest. Difficulties can arise from the designers' planning and teachers' performance in class or the strive to use authentic materials in the inauthentic foreign language classroom. Using ICT in FL teaching is vital for raising the educational quality "Educational establishments are trying to invent more ways to improve success in FLL, they improve their teaching, methodologies, learning strategies, try to facilitate learning and make it more attractive, thus to increase student retention. In this relation, digitalization of the education is a must" (Kostova, 2020: 105).

The communicative approach requires the target language to be taught through communicating real meaning, culture and realistic situations. "The individual EFL acquisition involves prioritizing the linguistic system: lexical, phraseological, phonetic, word-forming, grammatical and discourse levels. Acquiring individual communicative speech skills and habits include the ability to speak fluently, knowledge of the variety of verbal and non-verbal behavior. Sustainable habits for reasonable, appropriate, accurate, effective use of different language tools inaccessible communication in various communicative situations should be in compliance with the rules of etiquette and ethical norms - habits for effective, successful transmission. "(Kostova, 2021) English as Foreign language learners use Communicative Competence in English most effectively by applying it in the national, international and target cultural context. The current pedagogical experiment proved that hypothesis after analysing the results from the investigation. Generally, "Communicative Competence is the learners' ability to perform the language skills appropriately acquired. Learners should comprehend what they have heard, understand the other speaker and react to their speech act, choosing the proper ethical behaviour. Teaching communicative skills should meet reasonable goals and reveal the communicative situation properly, comply with the addressee and the required speech style. Communicative speech skills are associated with the practical mastery of language tools to allow optimal speech organization and communication."

There are specific challenges, advantages and disadvantages during the acquisition process. Speaking is a reproductive skill that is difficult to master. Other problems arise from sources like the vast number of students in a class (26 learners) and culture-oriented textbooks. Learners apply their individual, innate language-learning strategies to acquire the foreign language during the English course. Most eighth-graders have time enough to fit English into their daily programme, as they have approximately four classes daily plus homework or an assignment. In the era of ICT, they rely on continuing their English communication further using social networks, the Internet sites, T.V., commercials, games and hands-on activities. Still, they find it hard to store information in their brain, be tested, experience anxiety and stress in achieving the standards. "All cognitive processes are closely related to thinking, perception, observation, memory, learning motivation and sense of competence ….. Parallel to the evolution of thought, the child's speech also develops, expressed in the enrichment of his vocabulary, a proof is the qualitative

improvement of the phonetic, lexical and grammatical speech." (Donaldson, R. S.) Similarly to children's development, a foreign language learner follows the child's steps, develops listening skills, and masters correct reading, speaking and writing, which helps their overall foreign language progress.

Recently in Bulgarian EFL teaching, the cultural aspects of English have been seriously neglected. English teachers tend to teach their students using the material presented only in the textbooks, thus becoming "slaves to textbooks." Textbook writers do not pay enough attention to the cultural aspects of the language. Sometimes, teachers come across culturally inappropriate textbooks. Language and culture are closely intertwined therefore teaching EFL through national, international and target culture is a must. English teachers in Bulgaria are more often than not strongly dependent on textbooks. Most of them do not make an effort to reach beyond what the readers include, using them with little or very little minor enrichment and improvement. Most students' books fail to reveal contextually cultural values. On the other hand, if the topics, the authentic texts in the textbooks encompass enough elements of culture, the educational process makes students aware of the cultural differences and similarities, and the target language learnt, which aids them in becoming communicatively competent faster easier. The teacher should include typically English idioms and phrases; English humour is also specific and differs from what Bulgarians find funny. "As there is a close relation between language (language conveys meaning) and society, the social nature of language is considered important to FLTL (foreign language teaching and learning), basing on the idea that "the human is a social animal" and communicates through language, thus achieving social inclusion. According to H. Brown, the social aspect of language is very important for FLTL, as the second language learner experiences "social transactions" related to "acculturation" with the target culture and language he/she studies. "Transaction reaches beyond the self to others. A variety of transactional variables comes to bear on second language learning: imitation, modelling, identification, empathy, extroversion, aggression, styles of communication and others." (H. Douglas Brown: 1989 as cited by Kostova (Kostova, 2020: 81)).

3. Developing Speaking

Developing Speaking as a reproductive skill is at the core of coping with an effective speech given in public. Similarly, to how students understand their native language from a variety of context clues a few essential words and decipher the rest to interpret the meaning, they can apply the same strategy to English as a foreign language. If encouraged, they soon transfer their 'gist' understanding skills to interpret meaning in English as well. Some learners get frustrated by their inability to express their thoughts in English, and others want to make fast progress in speaking, comparing it to Bulgarian. Teachers can make learners overcome frustration by applying various methods or teaching strategies such as song lyrics, ready-made phrases or counts. Communication also involves non-verbal cues: facial expression, sign language, eye contact or gestures. I consider the gender factor essential, and it needs attention and care. Teenage boys tend

to be either shy or arrogant. Classes in Bulgaria are mixed - that fact deprives boys of equal opportunities, as they may be overshadowed by girls' natural ability to use language. Suppose the teacher strives after boys reach their potential. In that case, they should provide different language experiences to boys, the topics should be following their interests, and their achievements should not be compared with those of girls.

"One of the alluring benefits of technology is that it provides authentic communication in an interactive environment that facilitates the teaching of culture" (Lee, 2009). Depending on the frequency of the exposure to typically English phrases and cultural experience, the eighth-graders in the language school quickly get accustomed to the new educational environment and start composing sentences on the first week of the academic course. Further, through group discussions, they speak their mind and point of view freely. If teachers start correcting errors during the learner's utterance, it may demotivate them. Errors that do not affect meaning can be compensated. Fixing mistakes through examples is a good practice, avoiding triggering imitation and mocking. The teacher should encourage the students to self-correct. Students should be involved in communicative speech situations to solve relevant and current, significant issues. As they develop, observe, listen, and preserve what is perceived they independently base on what they have achieved, gain knowledge and experience. Therefore, supportive interactions are those in which teachers provide opportunities for students to search, explore, choose the most appropriate in problem-solving tasks. EFL teaching is a functioning system, based on friendliness, cooperation and is to gradually change the priorities from reproductive and instructive to innovative research. Students need to feel they are making progress. They need continual encouragement and praise for good performance. Success motivates.

Speaking is one of the four foreign language skills challenging to develop but necessary for success in communication. Communication suggests the interaction of some sort, perhaps in many students' minds between speaker and listener. "As speaking cannot be separated from the four skills, building communicative competence involves their simultaneous acquisition. Speaking is ultimately necessary for constructing and developing individual communicative competency in English. It requires more than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences; in addition, it covers broad areas of linguistics, functions, pragmatics and social interaction. Teachers teach English using methods and strategies aimed at improving the learners' communicative competency, emphasising fluency in speaking rather than accuracy." (Kostova, 2021) Classroom speaking aims at helping students develop the skills they need to speak in real life or public more effectively in various ways, similarly to the practices they employ in their mother tongue. We plan 'pre-speaking", 'while-speaking', and 'post-speaking' stages to enable this. These stages make speaking more communicative and raise learners' cultural awareness and motivation to speak. "The speaking tasks applied could include: Awareness-raising activities, Control-Strategic activities, and Autonomous activities; Compensatory speaking strategies that encourage continued conversation by using synonyms if the learner cannot find the relevant word or make lower students motivated to speak." in English as a Foreign Language (Kostova, 2021).

3.1. Pre-Speaking, While-speaking and Post- Speaking Tasks Assessment

It is obligatory for Speaking to be collaborative. Pre-speaking tasks often aim to raise the EFL learners' knowledge of what they are about to discuss in class, aided by the teacher (their schematic knowledge), as this knowledge will help them express their point of view on the topic. The topics for the eighth-graders usually include their school, nature, the weather, food and beverages, animals, going to the zoo, favourite heroes and villains, ethics, ethnic, national, religious and international holidays, etc. Bulgarian learners often use their empiric knowledge and practical skills to successfully cope with communicative and cultural situations and speak in public. In English as a foreign language, learners need to raise awareness consciously, and collaborative work is practical, thus aiding these communication processes. Teachers distribute learners groups of four, giving them pictures, providing each group with a set of questions. The groups have to work collaboratively to answer the questions and develop solutions. Groups can compare answers when they have finished. Teachers apply various methods, approaches and strategies in the EFL classroom. Not limited to these tasks, some of them are as follows: 1. Tell your partner what you know about the topic; 2. Do a pair quiz to discover what you know on a school subject; 3. Look at some pictures related to the (history/geography) topic and comment on them; 4. Predict the end of the story/ fairy tale using the title/ visuals/ keywords; 5. Read or listen to the end, predicting the beginning.6. Read or listen to the middle, predicting the beginning and the future. 7. Make dialogues in pairs on a picture; 8. Take part in discussing Irish legends/ Use websites/; 9. Comment on a video or a short film on robin Hood, 10. Comment on the film extract" King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table" 11. Analysis of a landscape, 12. Describe the weather on the screen; 13. Describe an animal/ a friend or a relative; 14. Listen to Vivaldi's Four Seasons and describe what you feel, and many more. Using websites is an effective way of promoting communication as students can work on a task in pairs. While-speaking studies lead to post-speaking activities. The post-speaking tasks usually involve drawing a moral and conclusions. Further topics for conversation are outlined and planned. The teacher and peers can point to some errors unobtrusively and carefully to keep the learners motivated to participate in foreign language conversations. Krashen encouraged teachers to use different strategies such as media, and drama and he emphasized that technology is useful in facilitating learning the culture with the language inside the classrooms (Krashen, 1999). The researcher supports that point of view and recommends using websites and other Internet resources in teaching English.

3.2. Assessment

Evaluation of the groups and how they had coped with the solution of the problems is significant, and it should be encouraging. The assessment is two-fold: each group is assessed once by the other groups and the teacher. Jigsaw topics for conversation is an old, favourite and effective method. Creating a class conversation bank encourages students to bring exciting pictures or texts and make the class bank. Each student selects an image or a text-based on their interest and personal learning style, thus supplying valuable information to the teacher and contributing to the bank- learners constantly do so

in real life. Exemplary approaches in accounting the results: 1. They used a class set of the same picture or story to speak on the same topic, accounting for the effects and class discussions. 2. Students comment on different presentations given by their classmates and vote for the best. 3. Exploiting students' oral work during debates: The task involves voting on the most exciting debate and selecting some for a class magazine. Summarise the dialogues/conversation / Review the film/a 'follow-up' speaking task related to the topic.

Teachers should plan the Speaking lessons carefully and predict their expected results by the educational goals and the curriculum. Teenage learners are natural language acquirers, self-motivated to pick up language more quickly than adults. They can imitate pronunciation work out the rules. Adolescent students are more likely to have a better feel for grammar-based language studies and culture. They are self-conscious and responsible. Teachers should be well aware of the features of the age group and their abilities. They should consider the learners' empirical knowledge and life experience before choosing the cultural communicative topics and texts based on their interests and skills. For example, dialogues with scientific lexicology in machine building cannot be a topic for eighth-graders. Scientist like Piaget consider that the difficulties in solving a communicative task arise from the lack of abstractness of the child's thinking, which limits their understanding the content, caused by the misunderstanding of the adult's speech. Unlike young children, the grown-up eighth-graders find it challenging to describe and explain the cognitive actions they perform when working with specific information. Classroom conversations should not cause anxiety or stress but be spoken for pleasure. Educators should bear in mind that eighth-graders can be ashamed of speaking in English in public and consider how to overcome the teenage learners' barriers.

4. Learning Strategies and Context

"Language learning strategies are the techniques and approaches that language learners use to learn the second language. The effective use of strategy leads to higher achievement of language fluency" (Ellis, 1997). Learners who can produce grammatically correct sentences can fail to convey their ideas successfully if they have insufficient knowledge of the target culture. Imagine a Bulgarian newcomer directly translates concepts from Bulgarian into English irrespectively of the cultural meaning. The speaker might practice a one-sided conversation, leading to cultural exclusion. If a neighbour (an elegant middle-aged lady) passes by, the student says: "Hi, Helen! I wanted to know more about you: I wondered how old you are? Are you married? What is your religion? How much is your salary? Are you straight? Are you in a rush? I meant to visit your place now. Where are you going?' The conversation is grammatically and semantically correct, and the listener comprehends its meaning well. However, it is not culturally appropriate; even the utterances are culturally unacceptable because, in native English speakers, it is unpolite to ask for personal data. English ladies never tell their age. In Britain one should avoid asking questions concerning people's age, religion, gender orientation, social status, marital status, salary. It is impertinent to ask someone where she is going. You cannot visit

an Englishman's home unless you are invited in advance. If you call a British home, you must take the hostess a bunch of flowers, a box of chocolates and a bottle of wine. Bulgarian culture is neither unusual nor insulting to ask the latter questions. The last example illustrates a wrongly interpreted grammatically and semantically correct sentence. It finally led to misunderstanding due to inappropriate cultural context. Educators should teach learners to apply inseparability of language and culture, to make them use English for proper communication both orally and in writing. It is an example of contradictory cultural context and differences between two otherwise similar European cultures. Teachers should introduce the target/international culture to the learners and make them aware of the cultural similarities and differences, thus aiding them in achieving communicative competence. They should either use cross-cultural studies in the textbook or apply their own if the readers fail to offer enough appropriate resources. "The problem of communicative competence has been given much attention in scientific literature. English as a foreign language education in the Bulgarian context significantly influences the development of the personality, a process that starts from primary school and continues throughout life. English language courses teach students proper behaviour, moral values, save for grammar, vocabulary. The expected results from the education are social interaction and inclusion, mastering verbal and non-verbal communication that would allow learners to succeed in life and pick up a matching career." (Kostova, 2021) However, communication in English as a foreign language involves learners in a speech situation requiring realistic strategies to employ their mother tongue. Then they need dextrously to transfer them to the target language, improving the foreign language, thus making progress. Everyday situations which involve meaningful communication are the basis for such a successful transfer from native to the target language. They can be triggered by various tasks distributed among the groups in class– commenting on pictures, narrating stories, myths, legends, fairy tales, seeing short films, power-point presentations, which require participation in conversations as aftermath.

5. Methodology

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of incorporating communicative cross-cultural learning in the English-language classroom. In a Bulgarian English language school, we studied the learners' language progress, cultural knowledge acquisition and communicative competence development. We used two instruments for that quantitative study progress tests (cumulative) applied a questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data. The analysis method is a statistical analysis where the SPSS version 22.0 was employed. The in-classroom communicative approach emphasises skills rather than systems; lessons are more learner-centred, and the use of authentic materials is encouraged.

5.1. Participants

The current paper encompasses fourteen-year-olds from the state English Language School "Karagiozov", Yambol, Bulgaria during the academic 2020-2021. The

population is of diverse ethnicities, low and middle income and consists of fifty-two students, randomly distributed into a Communicative-Culture-taught Group (CCG) and Textbook and Grammar-taught group (TGG). The gender ratio was 32 girls vs 20 boys. The indexes of communicative-cultural speech competence during the English as a foreign language class was measured through tests on Speaking and students' ability to present a topic in public, using a poster or a PowerPoint presentation on cross-cultural issues. The pedagogical experiment lasted one academic year. As a result, the CCG achieved better results in speaking and, finally, better communicative competence skills than the TGG.

5.2. Instruments

The tests were standard and cumulative and registered the learners' EFL progress. The PowerPoint presentations, debates, discussions gave us feedback on the learners' speaking and communicative abilities. The researcher emailed the questionnaire to the participants. They expressed their attitudes toward the effects of learning international, target and national culture during the English course in the eighth grade. The questionnaire was designed with a 5- point Likert's scale (strongly agree/agree/neutral/disagree/strongly disagree). Initially, it allowed collecting data about the demographic factors, gender and ethnicity concerning the learners' profiles. The second section included ten statements related to the purpose of the study: How essential integrating culture into EFL teaching - National culture; Target culture, International Culture is. The examined indexes included relevance and validity. Relevance reflects the degree to which an evaluation procedure gives consistent results. The researcher established the relevance of cross-cultural communicative competence by using Cronbach's alpha to measure the consistency coefficient. The Cronbach's alpha of all the questionnaire's dimensions was 0,678. The validity of the questionnaire was well-planned for measuring what it was designed for using an expert's decision.

5.3. Results and Discussion

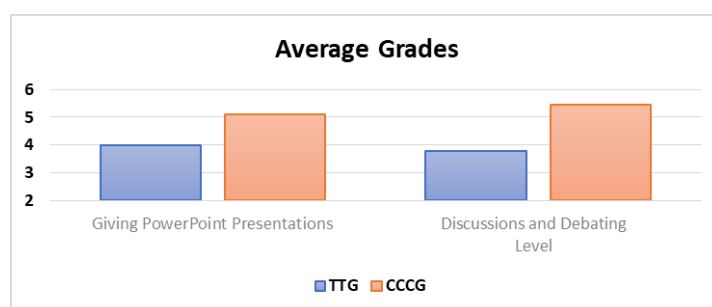The comparison of the results between the two groups is shown in the graph below.

Figure 1. English as a Foreign Language Progress: CCCG (cross-culturally communicatively taught group) and TTG (textbook-taught group)

The figure shows that the CCCG (cross-culturally communicatively-taught group) performed much better than the TTG (textbook-taught group) showing better foreign language progress results.

Assessment	Giving PowerPoint Presentations	Discussions and Debating Level
TTG	4	3.78
CCCG	5.12	5.45

Table 1. Assessment of Communicative competence and Speaking Skills. Comparing the CCCG (cross-culturally communicatively taught group) and TTG (textbook-taught group)

Kind of Group	Likert's scale	Frequency
TTG (textbook-taught group)	Neutral	8
	Disagree	10
	Agree	5
	Strongly agree	3
CCCG (cross-culturally communicatively-taught group)	Neutral	4
	Disagree	2
	Agree	10
	Strongly agree	10

Table 2. Learners Prefer Acquisition of Communicative Competence as Related to the Study of Target English Culture, National and International Culture While Learning English

The table shows most of the respondents from the CCCG preferred to learn English while acquiring cross-cultural knowledge and communicative competence. It further illustrates that 42.2% agree; 42.2% strongly agree, while only 5.2% disagree and 10.4% are neutral. It presents that most students who filled in the questionnaire realized the importance and necessity of learning culture and developing communicative competence to achieve English foreign language acquisition and proficiency. Consequently, by teaching international culture, English teachers help teenagers from being too much influenced by the target culture and losing their identity. By integrating the culture with the language, learners avoid difficulties, cope with challenges that accompany EFL acquisition and become members of the "global village" as they constantly practice English in their daily lives using the social nets and the internet to communicate with peers from all over the world. Teaching culture is an integral part of the EFL educational process. Also, visual media and the internet proved beneficial in cross-cultural learning.

Question	I strongly agree	I agree	I disagree	Neutral
18.When I accidentally meet my Bulgarian neighbour I ask her where she is going.				
19.When I accidentally meet my English neighbour I ask her where she is going.				
20. I ask English questions about their age, marital status, salary				
21. I ask English questions about their age, marital status, salary				
22. When I visit a Bulgarian home, I never call in advance				

Question	I strongly agree	I agree	I disagree	Neutral
23. When I visit a British home, I make an appointment				
24. When I visit a British home, I bring a bouquet of flowers, chocolates, a bottle of wine.				
26. English nod to say " Yes"				
27. Bulgarians shake their head in agreement				
28. In Bulgaria, people listen to "chalga"				
29. In Great Britain rock, metal, pop are popular.				
30. The royal family never have tattoos.				
31. British schoolchildren wear uniform.				
32.In Bulgaria, students can get away with it if they play truant.				
33.In GB, students cannot get away with it if they play truant.				
34. In Bulgaria you can catch fish or ducks everywhere				
35. In GB you cannot catch fish or ducks everywhere				
36. In Bulgaria it is not a crime to cheat in class				
37. Cheating in class in the UK is a crime				
38. Yomen/ Beefeaters guard "the Queen and the Crown"				
39. Boys in Bulgaria often whistle at the girls they do not know to express affection				
40. Boys in GB never whistle at the girls they do not know to express affection				
41. I celebrate Trifon Zarezan				
42. I celebrate Halloween				
43. In Bulgaria we celebrate Mother's Day				
44. In the UK they celebrate Father's Day				
45. In Bulgaria we celebrate the Day of the Bulgarian literacy, culture and Cyrillic script				
46. In the UK they celebrate Bank holiday				
47. In Britain I cannot hunt hare on the road.				
48. In Britain there is Anti-Hatred Act and I beware of insulting people.				
49. I am interested in Bulgarian cultural traditions and recommend them to friends from abroad				
50. I compare the different meanings of the symbols between the British and the Bulgarian culture				
51. I pay attention to cultural connotation while reading English books in the original				
52.My English teacher introduces related culture background to us before the study of a text.				
53. My English teacher explains the words' cultural meaning to us when teaching vocabulary				
54.My English teacher explains the words' cultural meaning to us comparing British and Bulgarian culture.				

Table 3. Part of the Questionnaire on Culture and communicative Competence

Regarding the effect of learning culture on English language competence and acquisition, the results show that learning culture is necessary for success in foreign language proficiency. Culture and language are intricately interwoven, and Bulgarian eighth-graders- the respondents, find them significantly non-separable. English as a Foreign language students should learn English through national, international and target cultural competence to acquire cultural background knowledge necessary for proper international communication in the future "global village. This study confirms that motivation, confidence, enjoyment, and efficiency in EFL are integrative factors that accompany the learning process for Bulgarian learners. There is a strong dependence between progress making, foreign language acquisition, culture learning and developing communicative competence.

Media and Information Communication Technologies are vital factors in the English language communicative cultural teaching and learning. The following pedagogical conclusions were drawn: Learners from the CCCG developed better awareness of the other cultures and their native ones than the TTG. They developed better communicative competence, felt at ease when speaking in English in public and had more excellent representation skills, showing better command of the non-verbal clues of communication knacks. Moreover, they felt more confident than the TTG. The students find that teachers who taught CCCG coped better as they did not rely only on culture and communication in textbooks. They taught typically English phrases, idioms, superstitions, proverbs and humour, reflecting the culture behind the language. They involved British history, economics, geography, art, literature, and multifaceted aspects of social life.

6. Conclusion

The current pedagogical experiment compared the TTG and the CCCG; the CCCG students participated in class devotedly and contributed to the discussions. They were willing to state their point of view and fully integrate speaking into other skills work. They are more communicative both during classroom practice and in real life. They acquired better cultural knowledge. Developing cultural communicative competence is based on communicative, culture-oriented skills rather than linguistic skills. It involves proper socialization, knowledge of English phrases and idioms, proverbs, superstitions, social features and way of life. In the learning process, the pupil gains self-confidence and acquires knowledge of the foreign language, target, and national and international culture, leading to better socialization, mastering the language, developing personal attitude, and cultural awareness.

The author shares some good practices to add to Bulgaria's English lessons as she finds it very important to teach English through culture, recommending to other English teachers specific ways to integrate and incorporate Bulgarian culture into their English classes. That way, they would boost national awareness and teach children how to represent Bulgarian cultural heritage and traditions to foreigners. Some cultural features interpreted in the author's English classes included virtual and genuine visits to museums, and monuments, such as Aleksandar Nevski Cathedral, ancient civilization tombs and

sights. They introduce Bulgarian history, cultural traditions, and way of life backwards to Thracian times. Most places are symbolic and attract visitors: the Madara Horseman, Tsarevets and Trapezitsa, Beglik Tash, Twida Fortress, Kabele, and the Thracian tombs near Kazanlak. Museums encompass Thracian temples, golden treasures, artefacts, dishes, and statues. However, students learn about ancient rites and rituals and how old Bulgars have left traces of their heritage in statehood, early architecture, music and dances. Students learn to represent in public holidays such as the Tryphon Zarezan, Nestinari, Kukeri, Martenitsa, and Eniyov Day Herb-Picking rituals indispensable for modern Bulgarian culture. They learnt how to introduce in English to foreigners Bulgarian sacred holidays as 24. May- the day of the Cyrillic alphabet, explaining, giving evidence to the world about the Cyrillic script, invented by the Saints Cyril and Methodius, which originated in two schools in the tenth Century. And further, more recent Bulgarian contributions to humanity, such as John Atanasoff's invention of the digital computer. (19th Century). Students made presentations on several honoured opera singers such as Nikolai Ghiuaurov, Boris Christoff, Raina Kabaivanska, folk dancing troupe "Bulgari", and artists like Vladimir Dimitrov, popularizing Bulgarian culture abroad. "Motivation is what actually lays the basis of the students' drive to study EFL, which is not only just a part of the curriculum in Secondary and Higher Education, it is much more – an educational experience that starts in Bulgaria since childhood and is likely to continue throughout life It is influenced by the national, cultural and linguistic uniqueness of our country, has specific features and originality in applying methods, typical and unique for Bulgarian learners. It is related to the national, cultural and linguistic features of the countries where it is spoken but most of all with the features of character, the emotions, motivation-drivers of the people who populate our country and its specific educational tradition." (Kostova, 2020: 108) Cultural education and communication competence are lifelong processes, dependent on the social variables, market requirements and changes the world sets. Therefore, teaching cultural aspects makes learners better sophisticated and socially skilled in the ever-changing commercial world. English is unique for international communication; thus, educating universally shared and local values and beliefs in English classes in Bulgaria is highly recommendable, even required.

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KIN Journal, 2022, Volume 08, Issue 1

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Institute of Mathematics and Informatics	Институт по математика и
at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,	информатика при Българска академия на
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