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Using Music and Poetry to Highlight Socio-Cultural Context in ELT

Bachelor Thesis

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Supervisor: Written by:

Mgr. Jaroslav Suchý   **Markéta Hrabcová**

Declaration

I declare that I worked on this bachelor thesis independently and used only the sources listed in bibliography.

Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury.

Brno, 30.3.2017 _____

Markéta Hrabcová

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to emphasize the importance of highlighting socio-cultural context in English language teaching (ELT) and to propose practical solutions and ideas that can aid teachers in addressing socio-cultural issues in language lessons.

The theoretical part focuses on various ways in which language learning and social context influence one another, explores the connection between language, society and culture, and introduces music and poetry as effective tools in dealing with socio-cultural issues.

The practical part presents four lesson plans addressing different socio-cultural topics. All of them were based on selected poems and songs and realized with the author's students. Each of the lessons is followed by the author's reflection and evaluation of students' feedback. All lesson plans and additional materials that were created for the practical part can be adapted and used in different settings.

1 Theoretical Part

1.1 Learning foreign languages

Why do we choose to learn foreign languages? When asked this question, we provide different answers that usually share a common sentiment – we learn languages to understand and be understood. We learn languages to acquire new information, opportunities, and knowledge about people around us. We learn languages to expand our cultural and social horizons. Asking this fundamental question carries with it the potential of providing valuable information to all language students and teachers – although listing a definite number of answers seems impossible, considering the most common ones may lead to better understanding of the language learning process and serve as an aid in lesson planning. Thus, acknowledging the connection between learners' reasons to take up a new language and some of the external factors that influence the learning process seemed like the most apt starting point to the research of this thesis.

The individual factors that spark our interest to start learning a new language can differ dramatically – applying for a highly paid position can be as much of a driving force as wishing to understand British TV series, or trying to adapt in a foreign country. However, as emphasized by Harmer (1998, p. 8), high level of motivation is essential in maintaining our interest in learning and achieving the results we desire. Although being a very complex topic that cannot be dealt with in a single paragraph or chapter, motivation presents us with many answers to the aforementioned question. It can be forged through our goals or obligations, and further divided into different types. American linguist John Schumann argues that *integrative motivation* – motivation to learn a language in order to get to know, to be with, to interact with and become like the speakers of the target language (as cited in Razavi, 2014) – does not have to be more powerful or in any way superior to *instrumental motivation*. In the case of instrumental motivation, learning a new language in itself does not equal the goal; it serves as a means to reach another target, for example academic credit (Merritt, 2013). Contradictory to Schumann, integrative motivation is often considered more effective in language learning (Harmer, 1998, p. 8). Nevertheless, according to his definition, not even this kind of motivation appears to be centred on the target language itself, but rather on its speakers. This implies that pure language in itself hardly functions as a motivator, which is not surprising – in the author's experience, even university students list predominantly external conditions that lead them to study a particular language. Lavery (2001, p. 24) mentions the status of English, past learning experience, success

and reward, the content of the lesson, self-confidence, a sense of difficulty and challenge among the major factors that influence learner motivation in ELT. As Candlin and Mercer (2001) summarize, language learning is never just about the processes – it always involves learners. Consequently, asking questions about who they are, what motivates them, and what characteristics and factors affect learning, is central for language teachers (p. 2-3).

In addition, not only learners' characteristics and goals help them stay focused and motivated, and achieve the desired results – the impact of surroundings, community and socialization during the learning process is undisputable. For that reason, examining language in its social context and placing emphasis on it appears to be crucial.

1.1.1 Language learning in its social context

As Spolsky (1988, p. 384-385) states, any kind of learning takes place in social context. His 'general theory of second language learning' proposes an ambitious model of learning, which takes into account individual learner differences, opportunities and outcomes, and presents contextual factors as the first and foremost group of conditions. This notion becomes central for this thesis. According to Spolsky's model, conditions connected to social context influence learning in two ways – firstly, they lead to learner's attitudes, which then help develop motivation on the part of the learner; secondly, they provide opportunities for language learning to take place (Spolsky, 1988, p. 385). An important distinction that the author tackles next lies in acknowledging the difference between formal and informal opportunities for language learning. Social factors directly influence the amount of informal situations and potential opportunities to interact with speakers of the target language. As Candlin and Mercer (2001, p. 3) state, many learners do not learn languages in a classroom – they learn them on the street, in the community, and in the workplace. However, formal situations (various kinds of institutionalized educational opportunities) stay in the foreground of language learning and teaching, as they involve most of us from early age. At school, we are not only provided an opportunity to learn a language – we are obliged to do so. Thus, it is important to note that more often than not, we cannot choose which foreign language to learn first, or whether to start learning it at all. This may affect our attitudes and motivation in these formal situations and ultimately lead to a less successful learning experience, which supports Spolsky's theory.

However, other social factors have the ability to affect the learning process in a positive way – namely social relationships that learners engage in inside and outside of a classroom, which this model does not explore in much detail. A study mentioned by Razavi (2014), focused on adult English learners of Italian, showed that developing a social bond within a group helped the learners significantly to stay motivated and persevere with learning. Although the students joined the class for a variety of reasons and were taught by a number of teachers with different approaches, maintaining motivation while learning proved to be closely connected to the social aspects involved. One of the researchers, Danijela Trenkic, explained:

> We found that those most likely to stick with it were the ones who developed a social bond within a group. For them, learning Italian became part of their social identity: something they do one evening a week with a group of pleasant and like-minded people. For both groups [in the study], social participation was the driving force for sustaining motivation. (as cited in Razavi, 2014).

Social context appears to be a significant variable, which has the power to affect all stages of the learning process. As Roberts (2001) states, although studies have not ignored it in recent years, the references to socio or socio-cultural context often give it a marginal role in the process of language development (p. 108). This should not be the case, considering that social elements influence us to start learning, have the ability to keep us strongly motivated to move forward, and often impact our opportunities to use a chosen language. Thus, when looking for answers to the question proposed in the beginning of chapter 1.1, we could say that in many cases, it is the society that drives us to learn a language – be it purposely or incidentally, on small or big scale. What is more, we have to take social factors into consideration especially when we become proficient in a chosen language. Consequently, examining language in its social context may prove to be helpful in both language learning and teaching.

1.2 Language and society

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

(Wittgenstein, as cited in Martland, 1975, p. 19)

Language as an entity does not exist in isolation; it has always been closely connected to the society in which it is used. This chapter is to deal with the way these concepts influence one another and to bring attention to the reasons why social context needs to be considered an integral part of the language learning process.

A discipline that deals with the way social factors affect language – sociolinguistics – can simply be defined as "the study of language in relation to society" (Hudson, 1996, p. 1). According to Hudson (1996), the value of this specific part of linguistics is in the light it throws on the nature of language in general, or on the features of a particular language. As he points out, "it is hard to think of any characteristic of a society which is as distinctive as its language, or as important for its functioning" (p. 4). Similarly, Holmes (1992) states that sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, social functions of language and the way it conveys social meaning (p. 1-2). Social factors can influence our choice of grammatical constructions, accents, dialects, intonation, or degree of formality when using a language. We refer to a set of linguistic forms used under special social circumstance as *variety* (or sometimes *code*) – a sociolinguistic term describing language in context (Holmes, 1992, p. 9). According to this definition, we can call any of the following examples varieties: English, Czech, Catalan, Portuguese, London English, the English of television commentaries, the language used by a specific person. As Hudson notes, a variety is defined in terms of the range of speakers or circumstances with which it is associated. We can speak of a variety as limited as a collection of linguistic items used by a particular family. In contrast, we can treat all the languages of a multilingual speaker (or community) as a single variety (1996, p. 23). Considering this, "the study of language in relation to society" evidently does not take into account only large social units such as nations or social classes. In fact, it is important to keep in mind that any society consists of individuals. As an example, we could consider a group of students in a classroom to represent a small-scale society. Even in such a small group, the individual people may differ significantly and may be affected by different social factors. As

Hudson stresses, "no two speakers have the same language, because no two speakers have the same experience of language" (1996, p. 11).

We might be inclined to think of a language simply as a means of expressing our thoughts, however, when speaking a chosen language, we often communicate more meaning than we realize. The meaning of an utterance may be dependant on the social setting and in turn, an utterance may evoke social behaviour. As Holmes (1992, p. 282) summarizes, people's speech reflects not only aspects of their identity (ethnicity, age, gender, social background…), it also reflects the context in which the language is used. Simply put, the way we speak varies in different situations, for example business meetings and graduation ceremonies require a much higher degree of formality than relaxed conversations at home. Spolsky (1998, p. 42) claims that it is very common to find that our speech (choice of vocabulary, grammatical forms, and even pronunciation) moves towards that of our interlocutor. We tend to adapt our language – very often without realizing it (when we talk to babies and adults in a different manner), but also consciously (when we approach beginner language learners in contrast to native speakers). As Downes (1988, p. 266) states, listeners also typically make judgements about the speaker from the way he or she speaks, and thus form stereotypes of a 'typical' member of a group. These stereotypes can have both positive and negative connotations, however, they very often lead to unfounded generalizations. Downes (1988, p. 269) says that: "the stereotypes reveal attitudes to groups, which become attitudes to language." Therefore, we should best be aware of them even before we start learning a foreign language and as language teachers, address them in our lessons. According to sociologist C. Wright Mills, language is socially built and maintained – along with it, we acquire a set of social norms and values (as cited in Macaulay, 1994, p.161).

Language could be viewed as one of the defining features of any society – it gives us the ability to communicate with other people and to share our thoughts, attitudes, values and culture. The concepts of language and society seem to be interconnected in almost all imaginable aspects and have the power to influence each other. When taking the sociolinguistic view into account, they become hard to separate and doing so would seem unwarranted.

1.2.1 Cultural context

When we speak of a society, do we simultaneously speak of its culture? According to Adachi, Salzmann and Stanlaw (2012, p. 17), there is a fine distinction between society and culture; however, the terms are often used almost interchangeably. The frequently used term "socio-cultural" draws attention to their interconnectedness, which is hardly questionable. This chapter is to comment on the link between society, culture and language.

The term *culture* has proven to be difficult to define. For many of us, it encompasses the traditions, customs, values, art, cuisine and other typical features of a specific country. Some people also class a language spoken in a particular country under the concept of culture. In his article "Culture – The Fifth Language Skill" Tomalin (2008) states that "culture covers the commonly held traditions, values and ways of behaving of a particular community". However, there are numerous ways of defining it. According to Hudson (1996, p. 78), culture may be described as the kind of knowledge we learn from other people, and this kind of knowledge is likely to play a major role when we communicate with them. This definition emphasizes the link between culture, language and society. It implies that culture could be viewed as a kind of intermediary between the concepts of society and language – if we were to use visual representation, culture would stand between them on an axis. We acquire knowledge about the culture that surrounds us from other people since the day we are born, and the process of transmitting culture of an older generation to a younger one plays an important part in our development, including language skills.

However, when considering these three concepts without a specific definition, language appears to be the real intermediary, which pervades the other two – without it, culture could hardly be shared at all in a society. Hudson (1996, p. 93) states that especially during formal education, we learn many concepts through language – whether or not we could have learned them without it. He then claims that besides cultural, we learn some of our most important abstract concepts by being told about them. Thus, language becomes an important 'instrument of socialization' (Hudson, 1996, p. 105). As psycholinguist Frank Smith said, "language is not a genetic gift, but a social gift". Speaking the same language inevitably draws people together and embodies an important aspect of our identity. It can play a major role in adapting to a new culture and help us feel comfortable in a group. According to Spolsky (1998), language has a special role among other 'instruments of socialization' because it establishes social relations and organizes

the thought (p. 57). Adachi, Salzmann and Stanlaw (2012, p. 2) go as far as to claim that the study of language is one of the keys to understanding much of human behaviour.

Acquiring social and cultural awareness may, in turn, reflect in our use of language. This notion can be described as linguistic representation of cultural knowledge (Jourdan & Tuite, 2006) and presents a part of language learning that should not be overlooked. When using a foreign language, we often face unfamiliar and unexpected situations. Moreover, meeting people from different cultures and social backgrounds can sometimes result in misunderstanding, or even conflict. The way in which we deal with differences seems to be increasingly more important in today's world. Being aware of them and using a language politely and effectively becomes more and more significant, and to achieve that, we need to acknowledge the various factors that affect it. Holmes (1992) describes this knowledge that underlies people's ability to use language appropriately as *sociolinguistic competence* (p. 370). In formal education, a foreign language is often presented as a matter of learning grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation from an assigned book; however, the concept of sociolinguistic competence and the connectedness of language, society and culture show that it entails much more than that.

In conclusion, socio-cultural context has the power to influence us to start learning a language, greatly affects the learning process itself, and becomes a very important factor when using the chosen language in real-life situations. Consequently, it should be emphasized in language teaching from the very start. Learning a foreign language presents learners with new challenges and opens many doors, and ss language teachers, we should help them walk through these doors successfully.

1.3 Music and poetry

"There is no human society without its poetry. There is no human society without its music."

(Maley, 1992, p. 3)

The terms *music* and *poetry* represent two art forms that are known to be enjoyed by countless people all over the world, regardless of language and circumstances, and constitute a significant part of most societies and cultures. For that reason alone, these means of expression appear to contain a lot of potential to be useful in language teaching (and teaching in general).

Music and poetry share many common features – according to Storr (1986, p. 337), both embrace mood, mode, meter, rhythm, accent, tempo and dynamic range in the deliverance of their message. The author also mentions the treatment of theme, style, stress and climax among striking similarities of these two art forms. Similarly, Walton (2011) argues that sound, meter and rhythm are just as important in poetry as in music, and some poetry belongs more naturally with music than with other literary forms (p. 456). This could be explained by their shared history – as Binns (2006) notes, these two artistic expressions combine for example in an important body of early English literature: story songs, or ballads, which were passed along from singer to singer. According to Walton (2011), "it is arguable that in the past when poetry was almost always spoken, it was hardly distinguishable from a song, then probably the dominant form of music" (p. 456). Correspondingly, Towell (1999) describes poetry as a natural outlet for music because of its cadence, rhythm and rhyme. However, it is important to note that intertwining of music and poetry does not belong to distant past – drawing a line between these two forms of expression may become difficult with many recent popular songs, the lyrics of which are frequently considered poetry. Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen and Paul Simon belong among the most typical and prolific artists whose works could be classified as "rock-poetry" (Ferri, 1970). Some of their songs (e.g. Cohen's "Hallelujah") stay very well known and liked despite the fact that a few decades have passed since they were written, which can be considered an outstanding achievement. However, it may not come to be surprising precisely because of their concentrating on the poetic form. Storr (1986) remarks that poetry (just like different forms of music) gains intensity when interpreted by the human voice, and music as an accompaniment to the message in a song serves as an aid to poetry in intensifying the emotional impact of the lyrics (p. 338).

An interesting area of research lies in comparing the ways in which the terms *song* and *poem* can be defined across different cultures and parts of the world. Perhaps the most striking example mentioned by Chen-Hafteck (2000) reveals that in Cantonese (one of the Chinese dialects), two characters make up the word 'poem' and one of them is exactly the character for 'song' – this shows that in Cantonese culture, the musical quality of the language or words in a poem is clearly recognised, and thus, songs and poems seem to belong to the same genre. Cantonese children tend to perform a song and a poem in a similar manner – this stands in contrast with Western culture, where singing songs and reciting poems represent much more distinct activities (Chen-Hafteck, 2000). Finding more examples that display differences in perceiving these terms would not be a difficult task (e.g. African culture in contrast to European). It seems apt to this thesis to point out that when adopting cross-cultural approach to research, the terms connected to music and poetry may become quite difficult to define and the previously discussed characteristics and similarities may not apply globally.

The rest of this chapter aims to supply evidence that besides serving as a source of enjoyment and comfort for listeners and readers, music and poetry may become helpful tools in dealing with socio-cultural issues due to some of their shared features, and to justify their use in the practical part of this thesis.

1.3.1 Cultural and social importance of music and poetry

Music and poetry, along with other art forms, form an indispensable part of culture in European context. We usually learn simple songs and poems since we are children – thus, they serve as one of the instruments that enable us to pass our culture to a younger generation.

According to Spitzer and Walters (n.d.), songs can serve as evidence of people, places, and attitudes of the past, and help listeners understand its significance and its relationship to the society and culture from which they emerged. Musicians and poets often employ their work to express their opinion and react to social issues, and many artists even use their work as a means of protest, to communicate what is important to them and stand against the majority – certain songs become "anthems" for particular generations in this way, such as Bob Dylan's "Blowing in the Wind" in the 1960s (Spitzer and Walters, n.d., p. 7). Eyerman (2013) states that "music and

song are very important in forging group solidarity, a sense of belonging and common purpose and they are also means of overcoming fear and anxiety in trying situations". According to him, music and poetry play an important role in creating and communicating a narrative, articulating who we are, what we stand for and what we are against. Preferring a certain type of music or identifying with the content of specific songs may create a feeling of belonging to a group and an opportunity to socialize with other people due to a shared interest. As Spitzer and Walters (n.d., p. 7) summarize, songs serve to unify groups of people, move them to common action and help them express emotions. In contrast, poet Daisy Fried in the article "Does Poetry Have a Social Function?" stands very much against concentrating on the content of poems – according to her, the social function of poetry does not come from what it means but from what it is, and its utility is to shake us out of our "half life". Similarly, Billy Collins (former Poet Laureate of the United States) claims that poems have the power to inspire and make us think about what it means to be a member of the human race in the introduction to the program "Poetry 180: A Poem a Day for American High Schools". In the poem "Introduction to Poetry" he addresses the students' intention to always look for a clear meaning in any poem and "torture a confession out of it" (Collins, n.d.). Nevertheless, songs and poems may undoubtedly serve as efficient instruments to convey a message, and using these artistic forms may give us an advantage over a simple narrative. This effect becomes evident for example when listening to a radio broadcast – advertisements in the media exploit the potential of short songs and poems to make a message more memorable for listeners. Burnside (2012) summarizes the impact of poetry as follows:

> At the most basic level poetry is important because it makes us think, it opens us up to wonder and the sometimes astonishing possibilities of language. It is, in its subtle yet powerful way, a discipline for re-engaging with a world we take too much for granted. (Burnside, 2012).

1.3.2 Advantages of implementing music and poetry into ELT

Implementing music and poetry into an English language classroom offers space for a variety of possible activities, which in the author's experience often have the power to positively affect the learning process. This chapter is to list some of the major ways in which these two art forms may present an advantage.

Listening to music seems to be an enjoyable daily ritual for most students. For that reason, teachers often play music in the background, to change the mood in the classroom or engage students in a chosen topic more. As Murphey (1992, p. 8) states, songs are relaxing, provide variety and fun, and encourage harmony. Music can also be used to set the mood at the start of the lesson, and to conclude it (Scrivener, 2005, p. 339). However, songs have the potential to become a central part of a lesson and a helpful tool in many areas of language learning – as Scrivener (2005, p. 338) notes, many recent course books include for example songs focused on specific grammatical and functional items. In the author's experience, these are frequently appreciated by students as a more enjoyable way of learning these difficult concepts. Murphey (1992) also mentions the notion that songs work on our short-term and long-term memory, and thus help us remember the subject matter better. Moreover, according to Towell (1999), music may benefit children with learning difficulties, and become a very powerful tool in primary education, as it exposes children to rhyme, rhythm, and repetition and can motivate them to read. Byrd and Levy (2013) propose a few potential advantages of using music in a classroom in their article "Exploring Social Justice Through Music":

> First, most songs generally last no more than a few minutes. As such, you only have to devote a small portion of your class time to this activity. Students can easily listen to a song with minimal effort and without needing time outside of class to complete the task. Secondly, many songwriters are concise with their messages. When studying the lyrics of most songs, students only have to read a few verses. Not only can these passages be read in just a few minutes, but the messages are often easy to remember as a result of being so succinct. Lastly, pairing an important message with enjoyable music can lead someone to listen to those ideas over and over, not because they have to, but because they actually want to. (Byrd & Levy, 2013).

Of course, listening to music does not guarantee that a student will automatically learn what we intend to teach - in order to maximize the benefits that songs have to offer, we should carefully choose those that are best suited to the current classroom topics (Byrd & Levy, 2013). Due to music being enjoyed by so many people, it is sometimes regarded as a language of its own, which all cultures use to communicate. According to Towel (1999), the sound and rhythm of music cross cultural boundaries, and music is a language that all cultures understand. Similarly, Simpson (2015) claims that music has universal appeal, connecting all cultures and languages, which makes it one of the best and most motivating resources in the classroom, regardless of the

age or background of the learner. Moreover, Byrd and Levy (2013) state that music can help us introduce societal problems (such as racism, poverty, addictions, violence…) and may serve as inspiration for students to examine them further – this notion is crucial for this thesis. It may also aid students in imagining – visualising images from their own imagination or someone else's words, which is a great way to personalise topics (Scrivener, 2005, p. 339).

When we speak of poetry as an artistic form, it is safe to claim that nowadays, only a minority of students engage in reading poems to the same degree that they engage in listening to music. Nevertheless, the similarities between these two artistic expressions ensure that many of the advantages connected to incorporating music into a language lesson apply to poetry alone (or accompanied by music) as well. As Lavery (2001) points out, poetry is also music – it helps students tune in to the rhythm of English, lends itself to acting out and to thought-provoking discussion. The author also mentions that it can appeal to teenagers – they may not be embarrassed to recite a poem, in contrast to singing a song (p. 117). Šimáková and Zeisek (2015, p. 7) list the improvement of language skills and students' creativity, reduction of stress, enrichment of lessons by creative activities, focus on fluency and fun among the main aims of using poetry in English lessons. Scrivener (2005) also mentions that poetry can serve as a very useful tool in teaching creative writing and help students express and understand metaphors.

Poetry, represents something out of the ordinary for most students, and carries with it an element of surprise. As Scrivener (2005) points out, it wakes us up to see things in new ways, and being surprised by an odd idea or use of words helps us remember better (p. 360). Correspondingly, Budden (2007) claims that using a poem as a springboard into a topic will make the class memorable for students. Poems cover a wide range of topics – McRae (1998, p. 67) remarks that "a good poem is rarely about only one thing". Thus, poetry appears to be especially advantageous in bridging the gap between language and other concepts. Byrd and Levy (2013) imply that songs and poems help us link teaching a language to teaching history and literature, which becomes an effective way to present socio-cultural context, as presented in the practical part of this thesis. In an answer to the question whether other art forms can carry out the same task, Emily Warn (2006) says: "Poetry is especially adept at helping us experience, and so understand, celebrate, mourn, curse, or philosophize about our relations". McRae (1998, p. 53) claims that voices in a poem can represent place, dialects, and even whole societies; similarly,

Lavery (2001, p. 105) states that music and literature can introduce social contexts, geographical areas and periods in history, and a combination of them can build up a rich tapestry on a theme.

It can be seen that both music and poetry are very versatile as art forms and further research could be carried out to explore their specific aspects. Due to the reasons discussed in this chapter, it can be concluded that both have the potential to become advantageous in several areas of language teaching, as well as in addressing various issues though language, which is central for this thesis.

1.4 Conclusion of the theoretical part

The research that was done for the theoretical part of this thesis showed that the concepts of language, society and culture are very closely connected. Consequently, socio-cultural context greatly influences the language learning process and determines the conditions in which we can use a chosen language.

Knowledge of socio-cultural background may reflect in our use of language, and in turn, language may serve as an instrument of socialization. Thus, using a language appropriately and being aware of various factors that affect it becomes very important in order to avoid misunderstanding and conflict, and ensure that use of a chosen language will not impact the learners negatively. For these reasons, emphasizing the importance of socio-cultural context and its connectedness to language in teaching is crucial.

This research also brought the confirmation that besides being socially and culturally important, music and poetry may become advantageous in ELT due to some of their shared features and serve as valuable tools in presenting socio-cultural issues, which supported their successful use in the practical part of this thesis.

2 Practical Part

2.1 Lesson planning – potential challenges

A number of factors needs to be considered when planning a lesson, some of which may become problematic when we decide to set emphasizing socio-cultural context as our main objective. Some of the most important and potentially challenging aspects will be addressed in this chapter.

According to Harmer (1998, p. 371), one of the most important elements of lesson planning is stating our aims. Thus, some of the key points to think about when we start planning are the outcomes that our teaching will try to achieve. As Harmer (1998, p. 371) points out, many teachers use the acronym SMART to describe lesson aims, indicating that they should be *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed*. All of these characteristics were taken into account when compiling the lesson plans presented in this thesis. However, setting furthering students' socio-cultural awareness as a primary aim presents us with a challenge – the aim becomes very difficult to measure. This problem may be alleviated in different ways, for example by asking students to provide feedback (as was done with lesson plans described below). In this case, the lessons were realized with the author's long-term individual students, so there was very good rapport established between the students and the teacher. The received feedback may have been influenced by this fact, which made the author question its value. However, getting any kind of feedback definitely helped to reflect on the lesson and ascertain whether the set aims were at least partially fulfilled.

As Scrivener (2005) emphasizes, we always need to keep our learners in mind during the planning phase and consider whether the lesson will engage them, whether they will benefit from it and whether they will enjoy doing it (p. 109). To construct a lesson appropriately, we need to be aware of a variety of factors – especially students' language level and age. Keeping these specifics in mind remains important when deciding on a topic, and choosing specific activities and materials. Of course, planning a lesson based on the knowledge of students and their background becomes much easier when teaching individuals and small groups (as in the case of the lesson plans described below), as opposed to teaching large classes. Especially when aiming to develop students' awareness about a particular issue, personalization becomes an important aspect that may be beneficial. The use of interaction based on the students' personal opinions, experiences and feelings (Ur, 1988, p. 22) seems to be almost unavoidable when incorporating this kind of topics into a lesson. Furthermore, the ability to connect an issue to our own experiences can make us more open to learning and help us remember the content better.

According to Ur (1988, p. 22), to avoid personalization is to deprive ourselves of a valuable source of interesting activities.

Choosing and presenting a topic connected to socio-cultural context can become a challenging task. It may evoke different responses from learners and affect their motivation in a positive or negative way. Lightbown and Spada (2001, p. 34) argue that we can hardly influence students' reasons for studying a language or their attitudes towards the language and its speakers; however, we can positively affect their motivation to learn. Consequently, choosing a topic that has the potential to interest the students and create meaningful discussion is crucial. In this case, the connectedness of social, cultural and historical context allows the author to relate the chosen topics to other areas that are often dealt with in language lessons – literature, art and history. This provides almost unlimited possibilities to create diverse activities. As Rivers states, as language teachers we are the most fortunate of all teachers, since all subjects are ours – whatever the students want to communicate about can become our subject matter (as cited in Murphey, 1992, p. 5). It is important to note that in the lesson plans presented in this thesis, the author had the advantage of taking the needs and interests of individual learners into account. Using varied, enjoyable materials can showcase the importance of the issue in question and even more importantly, make the lesson more enjoyable for students when teaching one-on-one classes (Kaye, n.d.).

Especially when choosing a topic out of the ordinary, planning the procedure in detail can prove to be very helpful and eliminate potential problems. Consequently, it becomes important to choose a lesson plan format that is easy to use, clear and informative. The formal lesson plans presented in the following chapters were constructed with the challenging aspects mentioned in this chapter in mind and were based on the grounds of Scrivener's formal lesson planning (2005, p. 118 – 124). In the author's opinion, this lesson plan format clearly states all the necessary information (including specific aims for each stage, which becomes helpful for measuring the overall aims) and has proven to be useful in practice.

2.2 Lesson plan I.

This lesson plan focuses on social expectations and stereotypical portrayal of men and women. Chosen activities are based on "Three Poems For Women" – a poem by an American writer Susan Griffin and "Boys Don't Cry" – a song by a British rock band The Cure. The author was able to base the lesson plan on the needs and characteristics of two of her long-term students, Adéla and Hana (aged 14 and 16), who occasionally attend lessons together. Their language level is approximately the same (A2-B1). However, they each have difficulties in a different area, which makes attending lessons together really beneficial for them – Adéla is more outspoken and does not have major pronunciation problems, whereas Hana is more shy to speak and quicker and more successful in writing. Their main focus lies in practicing grammar and vocabulary that needs to be mastered for their lessons at school, but they also see the need to practise speaking about various topics to be prepared for real-life situations. Occasional use of songs and short poems has proven to be a great way to make the lessons more interesting and enjoyable for them.

Topic: Social expectations
Age group: 14+
Language level: A2+
Time: 45 minutes
Aims: By the end of the lesson, students will have:
1. discussed social expectations and roles of men and women
2. practised listening and speaking
3. revised and acquired vocabulary connected to emotions and relationships

Materials: printed text of the poem - one copy cut up into lines (Appendix 1), song lyrics (Appendix 2) + a copy of a worksheet with missing words (Appendix 3)
Stages of the lesson:

STAGE 1

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Lead in – teacher introduces the topic (social expectations), asks students to discuss whether expectations affect men and women equally and think of specific things men and women are expected to do in a society.

Tasks: Students discuss in a pair, and then share their thoughts with the teacher.

Aims: Students will be introduced to the topic, practise speaking and expressing their opinions on the topic.

STAGE 2

Time: 4 minutes

Procedure: Teacher introduces the poem by Susan Griffin, gives out lines of the poem on pieces of paper to students and asks them to put it in order while the teacher reads it aloud.

Tasks: Students listen to the poem and try to put the lines in order.

Aims: Students will practise listening comprehension and get acquainted with the poem.

STAGE 3

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks students to check the poem they put together with the original version and allows time to explain any vocabulary that the students are not familiar with.

Tasks: Students check the poem, silently read it, and ask about any vocabulary they are not familiar with.

Aims: Students will get time to read the text for themselves and check comprehension.

STAGE 4

Time: 8 minutes

Procedure: Follow up discussion – teacher asks students what comes to their mind after reading the poem, how it makes them feel, and why the author constructed it this way (noting the use of repetition and the words of senses).

Tasks: Students share their thoughts about the poem and discuss the given topics.

Aims: Students will practice speaking; discuss the structure of the poem and the author's intention.

STAGE 5

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Teacher introduces the theme of the song by The Cure by asking students to think about whether there are also certain things men and women are *not* expected to do by the society, then gives out printed lyrics and asks students to fill in missing words while they listen.

Tasks: Students listen to the song twice and fill in the missing words.

Aims: Students will practise listening comprehension.

STAGE 6

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks students to read the lines with filled in words, asks them whether there are any words that are not familiar to them in the song (if so, explains them).

Tasks: Students read the specific lines, ask about any words or phrases that are not familiar to them.

Aims: Students will revise and acquire vocabulary.

STAGE 7

Time: 7 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks follow-up questions (What is the song about? What does it say about showing emotions? Do you think it is still relevant today?)

Tasks: Students answer questions, discuss the given topics in a pair

Aims: Students will practise speaking and have space to discuss the topic of emotions, relationships and different expectations of men and women.

<u>STAGE 8</u>

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Round up the discussion – teacher asks students to share any of the conclusions they came to while discussing the questions in STAGE 7, or any personal experience connected to expectations

Tasks: Students answer questions and discuss the topic.

Aims: Students will practise speaking and get an opportunity to share their own experience (personalization).

Reflection:

This lesson was paired with a challenging topic for discussion, which meant that the students were quite reluctant to speak at first and needed a lot of prompting from the teacher (e.g. supplying examples of typical roles assigned to men and women). Switching STAGE 1 and STAGE 2 and using the poem by Susan Griffin as the starting point of the lesson could possibly be more effective. As it contains simple vocabulary that both of the students knew, they fulfilled the task connected to it without any problems and the subsequent discussion showed that they were quite impressed with the author's means of expression. Since there was no unknown vocabulary to the students, this part of the lesson took even less time than originally planned. However, this became an advantage in the second half of the lesson, which proved to be more challenging. They found fulfilling the listening task quite difficult – the chosen song by The Cure contains many words and phrases that they were not familiar with. Consequently, checking the correct forms of missing words and explaining the meaning of previously unknown phrases took more time than originally planned. Some of the vocabulary items had to be related to their Czech equivalents, which was beneficial for this lesson – it helped the students grasp abstract concepts connected to emotions more easily (e.g. forgiveness, break down). As for the follow up discussion, the questions had to be made more specific by the teacher to give students a clear idea of what to focus on. In conclusion, the lesson progressed without any major problems and could be classified as successful, apart from minor changes in the lesson plan that had to be performed on the spot (making the questions more detailed and adjusting timing).

Students' feedback:

The students were asked to give short feedback (in Czech or in English) after the lesson, so that it could be evaluated more accurately. The feedback consisted of three questions:

1. What did you find easy/difficult during this lesson?

2. Did you learn something new? (If yes, give an example.)

3. Would you like to have a similar lesson in the future? (If yes, do you have any suggestions to make it better?)

Both of the students shortly answered these questions and their answers were very similar – they shared that it was quite difficult to talk about the topic and understand the vocabulary in the second part of the lesson, but at the same time they learned new phrases and found the activity quite fun because they enjoyed listening to the chosen song. One of them also remarked that although dealing with the poem seemed like a difficult task at first, it turned out to be surprisingly easy. Both of them liked the lesson as a whole and stated that doing something different and discussing an unusual topic made learning more interesting for them. This part of the feedback was reassuring in terms of the choice of materials for the lesson – they were neither too difficult, nor too easy, helped fulfil the aims of the lesson and were ultimately enjoyed by the students. Both of them would like to have a similar lesson in the future and the only suggestion was to have more time for the activities, so they would not have to be rushed.

2.3 Lesson plan II.

This lesson plan focuses on Australia, its settlement and indigenous culture. The chosen activities were based on a song called "Solid Rock" by an Australian rock band Goanna. This lesson plan was adapted to suit the author's student Michaela (aged 22), to fit her needs (mainly listening and speaking practice) and fulfil her wish to incorporate Australian culture into our lessons, as she would like to travel there in the future. Michaela's level of English (B1-B2) allows her to discuss challenging topics without major problems, however, she wants to work on her fluency and also expand her vocabulary, so that taking a university class in English and talking to foreigners as a part of her job becomes less challenging for her.

Topic: Australia
Age group: 15+
Language level: B1+
Time: 45 minutes
Aims: By the end of the lesson, students will have:

1. learned more about the European settlement of Australia and Australian indigenous cultural heritage
2. practised listening comprehension
3. practised speaking and discussing a challenging topic

Materials: printed lyrics of the song (Appendix 4) and a short text to accompany it (Appendix 5), a computer (or a tablet)
Stages of the lesson:

STAGE 1

Time: 5 minutes
Procedure: Lead in – teacher introduces the topic and asks the student what represents Australia for her (which associations immediately comes to her mind) and whether some of those things could be considered symbols of Australian culture.
Tasks: Student shares her thoughts, shortly discusses them with the teacher.

Aims: Student will be introduced to the topic and practice speaking (including immediate response to a question).

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Teacher introduces the next part of the lesson by stating that we need to look at the beginning of Australia as we know it today when trying to understand Australian culture, and shortly introduces the song by Goanna that deals with European settlement of the continent. The teacher then hands out the lyrics of the song and asks student to follow the text while it is played.

Tasks: Student listens to the song, with the option to follow the printed song lyrics.

Aims: Student will practise listening comprehension.

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks the student to read through the song lyrics again and think about the message the author is trying to convey, and encourages the student to ask about any individual words that are not familiar to her.

Tasks: Student reads the lyrics, asks about the meaning of unknown words and shares her idea of the message of the song.

Aims: Student will practise reading comprehension and acquire new vocabulary.

Time: 8 minutes

Procedure: Teacher presents a short text about Aboriginal culture and a video showing Uluru (Appendix 5) on which the song is based on, to provide the student with some background on Australian indigenous cultural heritage.

Tasks: Student listens and takes notes (optional).

Aims: Student will get acquainted with basic facts about Australian indigenous culture.

STAGE 5

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure: Teacher presents the student with a list of questions relating to the song and the topic (Appendix 6) and leads the discussion. (Optional – if time allows, the teacher plays the song again and discusses the way it was constructed with the student – use of traditional musical instruments etc.)

Tasks: Student tries to answer the given questions, discusses the topic and the possible meaning of the lyrics with the teacher.

Aims: Student will practise speaking and critical thinking.

STAGE 6

Time: 7 minutes

Procedure: Teacher rounds up the discussion and summarises it in a few sentences, then asks the student whether she would like to visit a place of such significance like Uluru and why (if not, what would be the reasons for that).

Tasks: Students listens to the summary, and then answers the teacher's question.

Aims: Student will hear a summary of the lesson and get an opportunity to express their opinion.

Reflection:

As the topic was chosen with the student's interest in mind, the expectations for the lesson were very positive, however, a couple of problems arose that need to be addressed.

The first and major issue concerned timing – in the third stage, the assigned time of 5 minutes to discuss the vocabulary and meaning of the song was not sufficient and needed to be extended to over 10 minutes. This was a necessary change, as discussing the content of the song properly was crucial for the rest of the lesson. Another change in the plan would be fitting in the following stage, as the information about Aboriginal culture was presented by the teacher without the student being able to read it – supplying the student with the printed text would make it more comprehensible for her. Due to these reasons, the first part of the lesson plan did not progress as well as expected and should probably be reconsidered for future use. However, the following part

created an interesting discussion, overreaching the assigned questions, which showed the positive impact of the song (confirmed by feedback from the student) and justified spending more time on it in the first part. Overall, besides surpassing the estimated time, the lesson went well and fulfilled the primary aim – discussing Australian indigenous culture and related social issues.

Student's feedback:

Michaela was also asked to provide feedback (in Czech or in English) after the lesson, so that it could be evaluated better. Her answers to the suggested questions were short but concise. She mainly appreciated that the lesson was focused on Australia and Aboriginal culture, as she is interested in it and it provided a challenging topic for discussion. She stated that she found it quite difficult to talk about, but remarked that she likes being challenged and being able to share her opinions – for these reasons, she would like to experience a similar lesson again. Her suggestion was to spend more time on the vocabulary – maybe pre-teach it in our previous lesson, so that understanding the song and the text about Aboriginal culture would have been easier for her. She also stated that using a song and discussing its meaning made the topic more interesting, even though the song was not newly released and well-known, which was reassuring as for the choice of the materials. She appreciated the connection with music also due to the fact that she never thought of looking for authentic Australian music and she felt inspired to do so after the lesson.

2.4 Lesson plan III.

This lesson plan was inspired by a poem named "My Gran Visits England" written by Grace Nichols – a Guyanese poet who has been living in England since 1977. Besides providing social commentary and dealing with cultural topics, one major asset of Nichols' poetry is the emphasis on rhythm and musicality. For that reason, the activities chosen for this lesson were based on her reading of the poem. This lesson plan was used with the author's student Adéla (14 years old), whose language level is approximately A2-B1. Her language learning goals are to expand her vocabulary, eliminate grammar mistakes and practise speaking. As she is planning to spend a longer period of time (a few weeks) abroad for the first time this year, she expressed interest in topics connected to travelling and dealing with different cultures.

Topic: Dealing with cultural differences
Age group: 13+
Language level: A2+
Time: 45 minutes
Aims: By the end of the lesson, students will have:

1. discussed the topic of dealing with cultural differences and become familiar with the term *culture shock*
2. practised listening, reading and speaking
3. acquired new vocabulary

Materials: printed text of the poem by Grace Nichols and a video of her reading (Appendix 7), short text containing tips to overcome culture shock (Appendix 8)
Stages of the lesson:

STAGE 1

Time: 6 minutes
Procedure: Teacher introduces the poem by Grace Nichols and the video in which she reads it, then asks the student to listen carefully to the way it is read (first without looking at the printed text, then for the second time while simultaneously reading the text) and decide which lines form

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the most important part of the poem according to the intonation (which part is most emphasized by the poet).

Tasks: Student listens to the poem while watching the video and while reading the text, and then marks specific lines that seem to form the most important part of the poem.

Aims: Student will get acquainted with the poem by hearing the author read it, and practise listening and paying special attention to intonation and emphasis.

STAGE 2

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks the student to look at individual words and phrases that are likely to be unknown to her and discuss their meaning – i.e. digging (spree), earthworms, weeds, seeds, spade, wonder and ponder, slug, pass by, pose. Teacher defines these words and explains their meaning in English if possible.

Tasks: Student discusses new vocabulary with the teacher, makes notes to remember the new words and understand the poem better.

Aims: Student will acquire new vocabulary and get a better understanding of the content of the poem.

STAGE 3

Time: 10 minutes

Procedure: Teacher asks the student to focus on the middle section of the poem and think about the author's reason for using these similes ("ground was as groundy… bees were as busy as those back home"). Proposed questions – What did the grandma find out after she started digging? How did the she feel in the end? What could be considered the main message the author was trying to get across in this poem?

Tasks: Student reads the relevant parts of the poem again and discusses the proposed questions with the teacher.

Aims: Student will practise reading comprehension and poem analysis.

<u>STAGE 4</u>

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Teacher introduces the general topic – dealing with cultural differences – in relation to the poem (the gran mentioned in the poem finds similarities between her country and England and decides to focus on them, however, many people deal with a confrontation with a foreign culture in a different way). Teacher asks the student to imagine how different people feel when they are confronted with a new culture in a foreign environment and to list some adjectives describing these feelings.

Tasks: Student listens to the teacher and writes down a few adjectives to describe feelings related to being surrounded by a foreign culture, then shares them with the teacher and shortly discusses them.

Aims: Student will imagine a situation in contrast with the poem and revise adjectives connected to feelings.

<u>STAGE 5</u>

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Teacher introduces the term *culture shock* and uses the adjectives discussed in STAGE 4 to describe different ways people can feel when it affects them. Teacher then proposes questions for discussion (In which situations can we experience culture shock? Can we experience some form of it also in our home country? Do you think you have already experienced culture shock in a particular situation?).

Tasks: Student discusses the topic with the teacher and relates it to personal experience (optional).

Aims: Student will practise speaking, learn a new term connected to dealing with cultural differences and relate it to personal experience (if possible).

<u>STAGE 6</u>

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Teacher hands out a short text focused on tips to prevent culture shock and deal with it easily, asks student to quickly read it and think about whether those suggestions would really be helpful and try to come up with some additional advice for people experiencing culture shock (this task is followed by a short discussion).

Tasks: Student reads the text, evaluates the points and tries to think of other tips to add to the list.

Aims: Student will practise quick reading of a text and will get challenged by the task of trying to come up with a solution.

STAGE 7

Time: 5 minutes

Procedure: Teacher prompts the student to relate the concept of culture shock to the poem; the protagonist (gran) did not seem to experience it – why?

Tasks: Student discusses the question with the teacher and asks additional questions.

Aims: Student will relate the newly acquired knowledge to the poem and get an opportunity to ask questions.

Reflection:

This lesson was first seen as quite challenging by the author, not because of the chosen poem and the vocabulary it contains, but due to the language of instructions and the choice to use quite complex questions for discussion.

Indeed, the language of instructions in this lesson plan had to be modified to be as easy to understand for the student as possible, which turned out to be quite difficult at times (for example, when introducing the general topic of dealing with cultural differences in STAGE 3|, or explaining the similes in the poem). However, being able to use the video of Susan Griffin reading her poem was a tremendous advantage – it helped the student see where the poet places emphasis and understand the meaning more. Working with auditory and visual support made the first part of the lesson much more interesting and effortless. Moreover, the student shared more than a week after this lesson that she still remembered specific lines of the poem, even though she only heard it two times. This confirmed the impact of the musicality of this poem and showed

that hearing it read aloud really made a difference and it came to be much more memorable than most of the poems that the student dealt with in the past. Therefore, the first part of the lesson can be considered very successful. The subsequent part of the lesson connected to the topic of culture shock progressed according to the plan, with only a few minor obstacles connected to vocabulary and giving instructions – the teacher had to help out the student a few times when she was struggling with searching for the correct words to use and repeat instructions (for example prompt adjectives in STAGE 4).

Student's feedback:

Feedback from the student for this lesson was positive – she stated that she enjoyed reading and listening to the poem more than she expected to, and appreciated that it made her remember some new and interesting words. However, she also said that she found discussing the meaning of the poem quite difficult and for that reason enjoyed the second part of the lesson a bit more. The concept of culture shock was new to her and she suggested basing another lesson on it in the future.

2.5 Lesson plan IV.

This lesson plan was based on a well-known song called "Sunday Bloody Sunday" by Irish rock band U2. The song was inspired by the incident called Bloody Sunday during which British troops killed unarmed civilians participating in a peaceful protest in Ireland. Apart from addressing this incident and the issue of senseless violence, the lyrics of the song raise many other relevant topics for discussion – i.e. the impact of mass media. For that reason, this song served as the perfect basis for a lesson with the author's student Kristýna – a 22 year old university student, who enjoys discussing current issues and whose main interest lies in improving speaking skills. Her language level is approximately B2 and her main goal is to work on fluency and speak without mistakes.

Topic: Violence and media
Age group: 15+
Language level: B1+
Time: 45 minutes
Aims: By the end of the lesson, students will have:
1. discussed relevant topics connected to social issues
2. practised listening and speaking
3. acquired new vocabulary

Materials: printed song lyrics (Appendix 9), worksheet (Appendix 10)
Stages of the lesson:

STAGE 1

Time: 5 minutes
Procedure: Lead in – teacher introduces the song as the starting point of the lesson, asks student to listen (with the option to follow the printed lyrics) and notice the way it is sung – tempo, use of instruments, singing style and emphasis.
Tasks: Student listens, follows the lyrics and shares her thoughts about the song and the way it is constructed.

Aims: A warm up – student will be introduced to the song, listen to it as a whole without having to focus on any details, practise listening comprehension while following the printed lyrics.

STAGE 2

Time: 5 (+3) minutes
Procedure: Teacher asks the student which specific event inspired the song to be written, and whether she knows anything more about it or about the band (U2) – if needed, teacher allows the student to make use of the internet, look up the information and share a few sentences (3 minutes). Teacher then adds a few more facts and summarizes the information.
Tasks: Student shares what she already knows about the song and the band (and if needed, looks up additional information).
Aims: Student will acquire more information about the background of the song and about the Northern Ireland conflict.

STAGE 3

Time: 8 minutes
Procedure: Teacher gives student time to quickly read through the instructions of the first task in the worksheet and then try to complete this task while the song is playing. When the song ends, teacher checks the task together with the student and discusses the meaning of the selected words and phrases.
Tasks: Student listens to the song for the second time, completes the first task from the worksheet and discusses the meaning of particular words and phrases with the teacher.
Aims: Student will practise listening comprehension and acquire new vocabulary.

STAGE 4

Time: 6 minutes
Procedure: Teacher asks the student to read the second task in the worksheet and find the correct lines in the printed lyrics of the song to match the given sentences, then checks whether these

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pairs are accurate and encourages student to ask about any other lines that might not have a clear meaning.

Tasks: Student completes the second task – underlines the parts of the song with the same meaning as the given sentences, and if needed, asks about the meaning of any other lines that are not clear.

Aims: Student will acquire new vocabulary and ascertain the meaning of the song's lyrics.

STAGE 5

Time: 12 minutes

Procedure: Teacher summarizes everything that was stated about the song and introduces the next part of the lesson by relating it to the first discussion question in the worksheet (task 3), then asks the student to read the questions, leads the discussion and encourages her to share her opinion on these issues.

Tasks: Student discusses the given questions with the teacher.

Aims: Student will practise speaking and expressing opinions on relevant social issues.

STAGE 6

Time: 6 minutes

Procedure: Round up the discussion – teacher asks student whether she knows and likes any other songs dealing with such a serious topic, or ones that could be described as "protest songs". (Optional question for discussion – can songs like this have an impact, influence people and even help resolve a problem?)

Tasks: Student answers questions about songs and their impact.

Aims: Student will practise speaking and get an opportunity to talk about her favourite music.

Reflection:

This lesson plan was created for the author's student Kristýna, who is very communicative and highly motivated to improve her language skills because of her job and travelling plans. Thus, she is interested in covering various topics and focusing on conversation. Using a song provided

the lesson with a new element and a base for meaningful discussion, as the student enjoys listening to music and has previously stated that reading song lyrics had helped her expand her vocabulary.

The chosen song was known to the student (excluding the background information), which was ideal for this lesson. The first two stages of the lesson progressed according to the plan. In the following stages, working with the lyrics (Task 1 and 2 in the worksheet) turned out to be quite challenging for the student, especially Task 1 – listening for specific words in the song. Depending on the student, it might be more effective to concentrate on words that he/she is already familiar with for the listening activity, and focus on the challenging words in the next stage. A bit more time was spent on explaining the meanings of specific words and phrases related to the tasks in the worksheet (e.g. dead end, to put up against a wall) than assigned. The rest of the lesson that was focused on discussing questions about the issues of violence and mass media (Task 3 in the worksheet) went very well, mainly due to the fact that the student is very communicative and likes talking about current topics. Overall, the lesson can be considered successful – especially using the song as an introduction to the topic was evaluated very positively by both the teacher and the student.

Student's feedback:

The feedback received from Kristýna confirmed the teacher's evaluation – she stated that she found the listening task difficult, however, she did not consider the overall lesson too difficult (or too easy). She liked the chosen song as the introduction to the topic, as the song's meaning was new to her and she found learning about its background interesting, and also appreciated Task 2 in the worksheet because relating lines from the song to these explanations allowed her to understand them more easily. She did not list any suggestions for future lesson, but stated that she would like to have a similar lesson again, mainly because of the use of the song and focusing half of the lesson on discussion, which she enjoys and values as speaking practice.

2.6 Conclusion of the practical part

The practical part presented different ways to use music and poetry to address selected socio-cultural issues in English lessons. The findings of the research that was done for the theoretical part were considered when creating the lessons plans, and their realization and feedback from the author's students further confirmed some of these findings.

Perhaps the most valuable was the students' response to the chosen materials, which was predominantly positive, despite the fact that the songs and poems used for these lesson plans were not previously known to them. All of the lessons confirmed the notion that using these two artistic forms as a springboard to a topic can be very advantageous. Besides making the chosen topic more interesting (as mentioned multiple times in the students' feedback), the selected songs and poems also served as tools used by the teacher to introduce and revise vocabulary, and concentrate on improving specific language skills – mainly listening, reading and speaking. The chosen materials occasionally made the lessons more challenging for the students, in terms of dealing with new vocabulary and a topic out of the ordinary. This fact also lead the teacher to realize the importance of being able to adapt our language level to the language level of our students. It can be concluded that the chosen materials made the lessons more memorable for students, and ultimately proved to be a very valuable source of activities that helped to present the chosen topics.

In conclusion, the lessons could be classified as successful, apart from specific parts of the lesson plans that were identified and solutions were made to eliminate problems in their future use. A very important conclusion for the author was that the selected topics were received well by the students – this was largely due to the fact that the author had the advantage of taking interests and characteristics of specific students into account, but also thanks to the materials, as was evident from the feedback. The socio-cultural issues addressed in these lessons presented new information that the students subsequently showed interest in (e.g. the concept of culture shock) and incited meaningful discussion in all cases, which further confirmed the importance of highlighting socio-cultural context in language teaching.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Three Poems For Women

(Susan Griffin, n.d.)

1.

This is a poem for a woman doing dishes.

This is a poem for a woman doing dishes.

It must be repeated.

It must be repeated,

again and again,

again and again,

because the woman doing dishes

because the woman doing dishes

has trouble hearing

has trouble hearing.

2.

And this is another poem for a woman

cleaning the floor

who cannot hear at all.

Let us have a moment of silence

for a woman who cleans the floor.

3.

And here is one more poem

for the woman at home

with children.

You never see her at night.

Stare at an empty place and imagine her there,

the woman with children

because she cannot be here to speak

for herself,

and listen

to what you think

she might say.

Appendix 2 – Boys Don't Cry

(The Cure, 1979)

I would say I'm sorry

If I thought that it would change your mind

But I know that this time

I have said too much

Been too unkind

I try to laugh about it

Cover it all up with lies

I try to laugh about it

Hiding the tears in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

I would break down at your feet

And beg forgiveness

Plead with you

But I know that

It's too late

And now there's nothing I can do

So I try to laugh about it

Cover it all up with lies

I try to laugh about it

Hiding the tears in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

I would tell you

That I loved you

If I thought that you would stay

But I know that it's no use

That you've already

Gone away

Misjudged your limits

Pushed you too far

Took you for granted

I thought that you needed me more

Now I would do most anything

To get you back by my side

But I just

Keep on laughing

Hiding the tears in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

Appendix 3 – Boys Don't Cry (worksheet)

I would say _____

If I thought that it would change your mind

But I know that this time

I have said too much

Been too unkind

I try to _____ about it

Cover it all up with lies

I try to _____ about it

Hiding the _____ in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

I would _____ at your feet

And beg _____

Plead with you

But I know that

It's too late

And now there's nothing I can do

So I try to _____ about it

Cover it all up with lies

I try to _____ about it

Hiding the _____ in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

I would tell you

That I _____ you

If I thought that you would stay

But I know that it's no use

That you've already

Gone away

Misjudged your limits

Pushed you too far

Took you _____

I thought that you needed me more

Now I would do most anything

To get you back by my side

But I just

Keep on _____

Hiding the _____ in my eyes

'cause boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

Boys don't cry

Appendix 4 – Solid Rock

(Goanna, 1982)

Out here nothin' changes, not in a hurry anyway

You feel the endlessness with the comin' of the light of day

We're talkin' about a chosen place

You wouldn't sell it in a marketplace, well

Well just a minute now

Standing on solid rock

Standing on sacred ground

Living on borrowed time

And the winds of change are blowin' down the line

Right down the line

Round about the dawn of time, when dreamin' all began

A crowd of people came

Well they were looking for their promised land

Were running from the heart of darkness

Searching for the heart of light

Well it was their paradise

But they were standin' on solid rock

Standing on sacred ground

Living on borrowed time

And the winds of change were blowing cold that night

Oh

They were standin' on the shore one day, saw the white sails in the sun

Wasn't long before they felt the sting, white man, white law, white gun

Don't tell me that it's justified, 'cause somewhere, someone lied

Yeah well someone lied, someone lied, genocide

Well someone lied, oh

And now you're standing on solid rock

Standing on a sacred ground

Living on borrowed time

And the winds of change are blowin' down the line

Solid rock, standing on sacred ground

Living on borrowed time

And the winds of change are blowing down the line

Solid rock, standing on sacred ground

Living on borrowed time

And the winds of change are blowing down the line

Oh-oh-oh no, no-oh

Appendix 5 – Australian indigenous culture

The Indigenous cultures of Australia are the oldest living cultural history in the world – they go back at least 50,000 years and some argue closer to 65,000 years. One of the reasons Aboriginal cultures have survived for so long is their ability to adapt and change over time. In Australia, indigenous communities keep their cultural heritage alive by passing their knowledge, arts, rituals and performances from one generation to another, speaking and teaching languages, protecting cultural materials, sacred and significant sites, and objects.

Land is fundamental to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The land is not just soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture. For Indigenous Australians, the land is the core of all spirituality and this relationship and the spirit of 'country' is central to the issues that are important to Indigenous people today. For Aboriginal people all that is sacred is in the land. Knowledge of sacred sites is learned through a process of initiation and gaining an understanding of Aboriginal law. It is, by definition, not public knowledge. This is why the existence of many sites might not be broadcast to the wider world unless they are threatened. Perhaps the most well-known sacred site in Australia is **Uluru.** Located in the centre of Australia, southwest of Alice Springs, the first European explorers named it Ayers Rock. The caves inside the rock are covered with Aboriginal paintings. In 1985 the Commonwealth Government of Australia returned Uluru to its traditional owners, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people (also known as Anangu).

Source: http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-cultural-heritage

Video showing Uluru - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUADPqYbnvI

Appendix 6 – Solid Rock (questions)

1. Why did the author choose "solid rock" (Uluru) as the main motif of the song?
2. What do you think the author means by "living on borrowed time"?
3. Which lines would you consider to be the most important part of the song?
4. What does the author mean by stating that "someone lied"?
5. Can you think of another example of an indigenous culture that was suppressed by European settlers?

Appendix 7 – My Gran Visits England

(Grace Nicholls, n.d.)

My Gran was a Caribbean lady

As Caribbean as could be

She came across to visit us

In Shoreham by the sea.

She'd hardly put her suitcase down

when she began a digging spree

Out in the back garden

To see what she could see

And she found:

That the ground was as groundy

That the frogs were as froggy

That the earthworms were as worthy

That the weeds were as weedy

That the seeds were as seedy

That the bees were as busy

as those back home

And she paused from her digging

And she wondered

And she looked at her spade

And she pondered

Then she stood by a rose

As a slug passed by her toes

And she called to my Dad

as she struck pose after pose,

'Boy, come and take my photo – the place cold,
But wherever there's God's earth, I'm at home.'

Video of Grace Nichols reading her poem and talking about her inspiration:
https://vimeo.com/34548714

Appendix 8 – Tips to minimise culture shock

1. STOP THINKING ABOUT HOME

Avoid constant comparisons with home. It won't help you to settle in.

2. MEET THE RIGHT KIND OF PEOPLE

Make friends with positive-minded people. Try to avoid people who are critical of your new home.

3. GET ACTIVE!

Start a new hobby or pastime, which isn't possible back home.

4. STAY IN TOUCH

Keep in regular contact with home, family and friends.

5. SHARE

Share your own culture with your new friends and neighbours.

6. DON'T BE SHY

Communicate your feelings. Tell friends, colleagues and loved ones how you feel.

7. TRAVEL!

Travel and see new places that will make you appreciate your new home country. This is a once in a lifetime experience – enjoy it! Go trekking, explore ruins, attend cooking classes, learn the language and, most importantly, don't look back and say what if…

Remember, even the most hardened and well-travelled business people experience culture shock.

Source: https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/top-tips-overcoming-culture-shock/

Appendix 9 – Sunday Bloody Sunday

(U2, 1983)

I can't believe the news today

Oh, I can't close my eyes

And make it go away

How long...

How long must we sing this song

How long, how long...

Because tonight... we can be as one

Tonight...

Broken bottles under children's feet

Bodies strewn across the dead end street

But I won't heed the battle call

It puts my back up

Puts my back up against the wall

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

And the battle's just begun

There's many lost, but tell me who has won

The trench is dug within our hearts

And mothers, children, brothers, sisters

Torn apart

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

How long...

How long must we sing this song

How long, how long...

Because tonight... we can be as one

Tonight...

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Wipe the tears from your eyes

Wipe your tears away

Oh, wipe your tears away

Oh, wipe your tears away

(Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

Oh, wipe your blood shot eyes

(Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

Sunday, Bloody Sunday (Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

And it's true we are immune

When fact is fiction and TV reality

And today the millions cry

We eat and drink while tomorrow they die

(Sunday, Bloody Sunday)

The real battle just begun

To claim the victory Jesus won

On...

Sunday Bloody Sunday

Appendix 10 – Sunday Bloody Sunday (worksheet)

Task 1

Listen to the song and try to complete these lines as you hear them. If you are not sure when listening, choose the missing words from the list below. Some of these words are verbs in past tense – try to write their base form. After completing the lines, discuss meaning of the words that are unknown to you with the teacher and use the list to write their definitions to help you remember their meaning.

a) Bodies _____ across the _____ street

b) But I won't ____ the battle call

c) And the battle's just _____

d) The trench is _____ within our hearts

e) _____ the tears from your eyes

f) And it's true we are _____

dug –

immune –

dead end –

begun –

wipe –

strewn –

heed –

Task 2

Look at the complete lyrics and try to find and underline specific lines, which express these ideas:

a) It puts me in a critical, hopeless situation.

b) The problem will not go away if we don't do anything about it.

c) Tonight we can all agree.

d) People believe what they hear on TV and do not question it.

Task 3

Discuss the following questions:

1. There have been many acts of senseless violence in recent years – is there a way to explain them? What are some of the reasons people can have to feel like they need to do something so drastic?

2. Are there any ways to stop or minimize these incidents? Do you think it is important to talk about them?

3. Do you think the media play an important role in today's world? Do they have the power to influence someone to commit a crime?

4. Do you think you can trust what you hear on TV or read on the Internet? Why?