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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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**The level of knowledge of the cultural background of
English-speaking countries among students of English
language at a secondary school**

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

V Olomouci dne 18.června 2012

.....

*I owe honest thanks to Simon Gill, M.A. for his kind help, useful comments, valuable advice
and motivating support which I appreciate the most.*

ANOTACE

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Název práce:	Úroveň znalostí reálií anglicky mluvících zemi u studentů anglického jazyka na střední škole
Název v angličtině:	The level of knowledge of the cultural background of English speaking countries among students of English language at a secondary school
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zabývá úrovní znalostí reálií anglicky mluvících zemí u studentů na střední škole. Vymezuje důležitost anglického jazyka v českém prostředí a uvádí důvody, proč je důležité učit se cizí jazyk. Dále se snaží definovat pojmy kultura, kulturní podvědomí a reálie. Na konci práce analyzuje dotazníky, které byly zaměřeny na toho téma a snaží se z nich vyvodit závěr.
Klíčová slova:	znalost anglických reálií, důležitost anglického jazyka, kultura, kulturní podvědomí, reálie
Anotace v angličtině:	This diploma thesis describes the level of knowledge of the cultural background of English speaking countries among students of English language at a secondary school. It also explains why learning English is so important in Czech surroundings as well as names reasons for studying a foreign language. Next, it tries to define the words culture, cultural awareness and cultural studies. Finally, the questionnaires are analyzed at the end of the thesis, these questionnaires were focused on this topic and the conclusion was also made.
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ABSTRACT

English is considered as a universal language nowadays, therefore its knowledge seems to be crucial. Learning language consisted of a language itself as well as the cultural background of the country connected to the language.

This diploma thesis describes the level of knowledge of the cultural background of English speaking countries among students of English language at a secondary school.

It explains why learning English is so important in Czech surroundings as well as names reasons for studying a foreign language. Next, it tries to define the words culture, cultural awareness and cultural studies.

Finally, the questionnaires are analyzed at the end of the thesis, these questionnaires were focused on this topic and the conclusion was also made.

Introduction

This diploma thesis is focused on the topic of cultural background and the knowledge of it among students at a grammar school. The aim of the thesis is to discover the level of knowledge of British cultural background among students at a grammar school. The questionnaires consisting of the knowledge test and opinion research were used for it. The work is divided into four main chapters.

First chapter deals with the importance of English in the Czech language, in terms of the linguistics adaptation, its influence and translation. It also tries to explain their processes and roots.

Next, there is a more extensive chapter trying to answer the question why learning languages is important nowadays. This chapter is divided into eight parts, each of which dealing with a different reason for studying a foreign language. Firstly, the role of a foreign language while one is dealing with the global issues, then working and studying opportunities as well as improving life and cognitive abilities as a result of studying a foreign language. Next topics are a connection between a mother tongue and a foreign language and its importance for understanding literature, music and film created by foreign artists. Last parts focus on the importance of English or any other foreign language while travelling, the fact that knowledge of a foreign language can help to understand one's own culture. Finally, the reason for learning English as a foreign language could be also the fact that English is very easy to learn.

The third chapter serves a view on a British cultural background studies. It explains the term culture and cultural studies and it is more deeply aimed at cultural awareness – its meaning, ways of teaching it and its usage in nowadays multicultural world. At the end of the chapter there is a list and analysis of secondary sources used in Czech schools for teaching British cultural studies.

The last chapter is based on questionnaires that were spread among two different classes of students at the grammar school Slovanské gymnázium. These questionnaires include two parts – a test of students' knowledge and opinions. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the differences between these two classes as well as the difference between the students who have visited Great Britain and those who have not. Finally, there is a brief overview of students' opinions.

1 The importance of English in the Czech language

The importance of the knowledge of English is becoming more and more important nowadays. Besides other reasons, this knowledge is significantly important for Czech people, because there are words coming from English that are becoming fully accepted terms in the Czech language.

Jazyky.com (2012) pointed out that English language burst into Czech language for the first time at the beginning of the last century. In those times, the Czech language started accepting new English words, mostly from the field of sport (football, hockey), music (jazz, foxtrot) and the film industry. There was another extensive era of acquisition of English words which started after the year 1989 and it has continued until nowadays (Jazyky.com, 2012). Topzine.cz (2010) claims that together with this boom, new words come into areas such as computer technology, the advertising industry and management. There is also a problem with the literal translation of some phrases (e.g. *Mějte hezký den!* is a collocation that some people started to use instead of *Mějte se hezky!* or *Hezký den!*; it is obviously the English phrase *Have a nice day!* translated into Czech language (Topzine.cz, 2010).

Speaking about the political level, Czech people are aware of necessity of the English language in the international communication and cooperation with other countries. With reference to the personal point of view, there are even more factors. The first one we could mention is the Internet knowledge: *click, check, chat, facebook, twitter, google, web, blogg* - all these words are originally English terms widely used in the Czech language as well. People have realized that some words do not have to be translated because everyone understands their original meaning.

Next issue which is closely connected to the knowledge of the English language is the fact that the world around us is changing and turning more multicultural than it was before. There are many foreigners everywhere, travelling has become so easy that it possible nearly for everyone and finally, being able to communicate in English with overseas is rather necessary.

Last thing that is worth mentioning is the fact that speaking English nowadays could be understood as the act of being able to stay in contact with the outside eclectic world. Jazyky.com (2012) claims that while the globalization has become wide-spread (in terms of speaking and using coinages), the English was and still is the most preferential language from

which the new words are adopted. Those words occur in lots of different spheres of our lives and as was stated before, they are fully understood by the target group of people thus translation is not needed (e.g. workfare, management, marketing, benefit, hacker, cracker, spam, e-mail, merchandising, budget, piercing, drum'n'bass, indie, snowboarding, surfing, etc.) (Jazyky.com, 2012). The website *Čeština po síti* (2003) states that these words can be found mostly in Economics (for instance *cash flow*, *diskont*), computer technology (for instance *skenner*, *internet*, *server*), modern music (for instance *house*, *hip hop*, *eurodance*), sport (for instance *pivotman*, *snowboard*, *skateboard*, *time out*, *play off*) and journalism (for instance *flash interview*, *news room*, *prime time*, *peoplemetr*).

Another crucial factor is the role of English language in cyber communication. There are many words that have been shortened or replaced by numbers what makes the communication so much easier and mainly quicker (e.g. *OK*, *4you*, *ASAP*, *MMNT*, *THX*, *NP*). Despite the fact that these words usually have fully-fledged Czech equivalents, Czech people (especially the young ones) have started to use them because it is simply easier that typing the whole phrase in Czech. Apart from this, Czech young people have also started to shorten Czech highly-used words according to the English model while chatting (e.g. *JJ = jojo*, *NN = nene*, *NZ = není zač*, *NJN = no jo no*, *Z5 = zpět*). As well as in English, there are plenty of these words and there are also a lot of web pages that show the majority of them and also for what they stand for.

Jazyky.com (2005 – 20012) deals with the fact that there are several problems in using new English words: the biggest ones seem to be the declension of English words in Czech language and on the other hand using English grammar structures in Czech language. In the first case, there must be clearly visible if the process of taking over new English words into Czech has been finished or not. If yes, we can decline the word easily and it is not a mistake (e.g. the word *esej* taken from English word *essay* or the word *image*). If not, we have to follow its “look” and leave it as it is (f.e. *all inclusive* – here any declension cannot appear as the words have not been fully accepted by the Czech language) (Jazyky.com, 2012).

The other problem, as was mentioned above, is the issues of using the English grammar structures and English word order in the Czech sentences. Jazyky.com (2012) claims that this problem occurs mostly in the advertisements (for example “*Gambrinus den*”, which could be translated into English as “*Gambrinus day*”, should be named as “*Den s Gambrinem*” in the correct Czech language; “*Sazka Arena*” is exactly the same case, it should be named “*Aréna Sazky*”). Moreover, Topzine.cz (2010) points out the name of a shopping mall which is called *Hybernská centrum*, which sounds unnaturally in Czech.

Surprisingly, this phenomenon is not new; in 1930s there were names such as *Rokoko kabaret* (Topzine.cz, 2010).

Altogether, using the English terms in Czech language does not necessary have to be a negative phenomenon as many people would think - not all these words harm our mother tongue (Jazyky.com, 2012). Topzine.cz (2010) mentions that there are many expressions which help Czech language to deal with dearth of domestic terms. In technical field words such as *software* or *upgrade* can be translated but none of these translations could be able to rival the English equivalents (Jazyky.com, 2012).

Apart from this, Topzine.cz (2010) claims that there are words, that have become adopted by Czech language. A very good example is the English word *weekend* which has become Czech word *vikend* and as the time goes, a word *vikendovat* also occurred (Jazyky.com, 2012).

On the other hand, there are many English words that have fully-fledged Czech equivalents, but using them in their English version is a matter of fashion nowadays (*e.g. meeting, team building, brainstorming*), therefore a lot of people use them to be “up to date” (Jazyky.com, 2012). The question is weather these words will be fully accepted by our mother tongue or not.

2 The reasons why one should learn English language

There are many factors and views why studying languages is a valuable and necessary activity. Vistawide.com (2012) claims that studying foreign languages is leading to the personal, social, professional and economic advantages. Here are some of the most significant reasons expressing the advantages rising from the language learning.

2.1 The understanding of global issues

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart” – Nelson Mandela (Dold, 2011)

“The limits of my language are the limits of my word” – Ludwig Wittgenstein (Dold, 2011)

Each language is related to a different culture and the ability of using the language enables the learner to penetrate to this culture, accept the habits and traditions and to understand the national consciousness. Without these abilities, the access to another culture cannot succeed. Vistawide.com (2012) asks why these aspects are so important. The answer might be more paramount than one would expect. We live in a world where understanding other cultures is crucial - we need to solve problems (political, economical, social and personal), supply goods and services, provide information, guarantee international security and do more activities where nations and peoples should be familiar with the disposition of the other nations (Vistawide.com, 2012).

Speaking about global issues, Graddol (2000) thinks that English language is generally considered to be a global language. He (Graddol, 2000) provides figures from a research where nearly four thousand respondents agreed that English will stay the world's language, while nearly two hundred people disagree and a hundred people have no view. Graddol (2000) also says that the development of English as a global language is very unclear with a response to economical, technical and cultural trends which might change its learning and usage the English in 21st century.

Referring to English as an international language, Antimoon (2012) states, that majority of world's contests are performed in English – e.g. The Olympic Games, Miss World competition. Almost all conferences and international organizations (e.g. the United Nations, the European Free Trade Association, NATO, etc) use English as a main language to communicate with other politicians, diplomats and other state officers (Antimoon, 2012). The absence of the knowledge of English (or any other foreign language in general) can lead to several complications in terms of global problems – Vistawide.com (2012) points out political misjudgement and misinterpretation, lack of ability to cooperate, compromise or to deal with international partners.

From the personal point of view, this can be also a reason for misunderstanding the global problems. Majority of the news are provided in English so if a person wants to be well-informed about the outside world, he definitely needs English (or another foreign language) which helps him to understand both sides – the one presented in mass media and the one presented in a reliable independent source (that is likely written in foreign language).

2.2 Working and studying opportunities

According to Vistawide.com (2012), nowadays, a lot of the companies are willing to expand abroad nowadays, so they need their employees can speak a foreign language. Those employees who can speak only their native language are able to speak or cooperate just with other people in their native country. While the bilingual or multilingual employees can refine hand in hand with their company (Vistawide.com, 2012). Besides business, there are many working spheres where language knowledge seems to be a significant advantage: travel agencies, advertising or publishing industry, science research, media, engineering, politics, etc.

Antimoon (2012) moreover advises workers to use several examples of working in which their foreign language skill could be significantly useful: technology, computer science, business, science, etc.

For instance, Great Britain has published a report claiming that the Brits suffer from monolingualism that leads Britain to an economic drawback (Smithers, 2000). It is recommended by the report that the language skill should be valued as equal to literacy,

numeracy and communication technology; and it should be well-trained from basic school to secondary school and later to the higher education (Smithers, 2000). Smithers (2000) also points out that there is a chronic deficiency of people with useful language skills among British workers.

Whichever job a man decides to do, being able to communicate in some foreign language cannot decrease his employability (Vistawide.com, 2012). In addition to that, it is an advantage when applicants asking for the same position know only their mother tongue and one of them is able to speak a foreign language. There are many opportunities in a career which are not available for monolingual people.

As well as on working area, language learning also affects man's educational progress. Vistawide (2012) shows that there are a lot of different learning abilities that are taking part in the process of learning languages. These abilities do not only help to learn the foreign language itself, but they also improve the learning as it is – for example those children who have learnt a foreign language have better results in Maths or reading than the ones who have not studied any foreign language.

Moreover, H. Curtain (1990) believes that:

“Research has shown that through foreign language study, elementary school children receive the opportunity to expand their thinking, to acquire global awareness, to extend their understanding of language as a phenomenon, and to reach an advanced proficiency level in that foreign language.”

Altogether, we can say, that the process of foreign language learning improves children's approach to learning in general. It has a proved impact on learning other subjects as well as on succeeding in everyday life.

Vistawide.com (2012) points out that a minimum of two years of studying a foreign language is required by most of the colleges and universities which leads to the fact that these schools consider the language knowledge as a part of education. Of a language study, schools encourage their students to become bilingual or even multilingual people. We can see this process here in our surroundings as well – there are different variations of optional language courses in which students can sign up, as well as many different workshops and lectures dealing with learning or teaching languages. These workshops and lectures are highly appreciated.

Language course in so-called evening school have recently become popular among adults and therefore there are plenty of language schools to choose from.

It is the same with the application to the college or university as with the job application. The knowledge of one or more foreign languages will not do harm to your application; quite contrary, it can improve it and help it to be accepted.

Moreover, there is a wide range of offers to go and study abroad. A lot of the programmes provide not only studying trips but also stays during which students partly study and partly work. The programmes are mainly focusing on studying a chosen discipline abroad and also on improving foreign language skills, obviously. The most popular program is Erasmus. NAEP (2012) mentions that Erasmus is a flagship in an area of European Union programs which are dealing with education and professional training on a university level. NAEP (2012) also says that Erasmus has been lasting already for twenty-five years and an accessible statistic shows that from the year 1998, there have been over fifty-one thousand students and pedagogical workers who travelled abroad and nearly twenty-five thousands students and pedagogical workers who came to the Czech Republic by means of this particular program. Both numbers are increasing every year (NAEP, 2012).

What could be seen as a disadvantage is the learner's negative approach to a certain language. All the advantages listed above arise from the positive learner's attitude towards target language which leads towards successful results. A lot of different factors can have a negative impact on foreign language learning. We can mention only some of them: lack of encouragement from parent's side; wrong selection of a studied language that leads to demotivation and refusal; an unqualified or inappropriate teacher or a teacher with a lack of enthusiasm; or in simple terms, lack of motivation and interest. There comes the teacher and it is his or her hard job and challenge to make the language learning interesting and the learners willing to study that particular language.

Vistawide.com (2012) points out that adults who have studied a foreign language are proving better aptitude in solving problems, understanding and deliberating and also they are also more skilful when creativity and mental flexibility are needed.

Apart from that, there are also some more cognitive advantages resulting from learning languages. Bilingual or multilingual people proved to be more open to fast-changing world so that they can cope with the new situations and new life necessities much easily than monolingual people (Vistawide.com, 2012).

2.3 Connection to the mother tongue

“Those who know nothing of foreign languages, know nothing of their own.” – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Michael Swan (2008) names three areas where a mother tongue and foreign language share a connection: mother tongue can or does not have to support the foreign language, or it can even obstruct the new language learning. On the other hand Vistawide (2012) says more positively and shows a different point of view. It claims that learning other languages leads students to understanding their mother tongue efficiently. Moreover, foreign language learners understand the language better, their literacy is improved; they are also more skilful in using different types of vocabulary, in reading as well as in listening and their memory is also better (Vistawide.com, 2012).

In other words, there is certainly an influence on both sides – mother tongue can help while a man learns a new foreign language. In my experience, Swedish people are much better English-language-learners than Czechs. On the other hand Czech people would probably be better learners of Russian language than Swedish people. This occurrence results from the fact that English and Swedish both belong to the Germanic group of Indo-European languages, while the Czech and Russian belong to the Slavonic group of Indo-European languages.

I would say that this phenomenon is very clear and well-known but there are also many other kinds of impact of the foreign language on the mother tongue. Some of them are listed above, and in the following lines another is mentioned: Kecskes (2009) has made an experiment at a Hungarian secondary school. He uses the fact that learning foreign language is more valued than acquisition at the elementary schools in Hungary which is not actively practised. That means pupils are taught to apply certain learned patterns, creativity is not required and work of the students is mostly characterized by the usage of structures and grammar that have been discussed within the lessons. The problem comes at the secondary school – obviously the students are not able to use the foreign language spontaneously and creatively. As well as that, independence, originality and natural expressivity were missing.

Kecskes (2009) has created three classes at a secondary school which were involved in the pattern-language-learning system at their elementary schools. The students in these classes

were on the same level considering their mother tongue – they were taught Hungarian language from the same books and equally long and they had been tested for the degree of their mother tongue.

First class had some of their subjects taught in French. Second class was called specialized and had all the subjects taught in English and had also seven or eight classes of English a week. The last class “continued” in the established educational system. That means the students in this class had two or three lessons of some foreign language (Russian or French) per week.

After two years all three classes were given three different writing tests but with exactly the same instructions for each class. The first test was writing a composition, the next one a composition and a story related to the certain given pictures (the students were asked to write the story in a foreign language and then in their mother tongue) the last test was an answer to an advertisement (in a foreign language they have been studying as well as in their mother tongue). All the tests were conscientiously explored by Kacskes and eventually, he made two final conclusions:

1. “Intensive and successful foreign language learning can facilitate mother tongue development” (Kecskes, 2009)

The first and the second class achieved higher level of development in creativity while using their mother tongue. As for their foreign language, they used the learned patterns sensibly and effectively.

Meanwhile the third group did not prove any significant improvement regarding written performance. It resembled a dialogue, it was more spontaneous than sensible and it was not formal enough.

2. “The difference between the restricted code and the elaborated code can be explained by the ontogenesis and development of written speech.” (Kecskes, 2009)

Kecskes (2009) claims that the development of a written speech, which is connected to the school activities, can explain the differences between restricted and elaborate codes.

Doceo.co.uk (2010) explains the difference between restricted and elaborated codes on Bernstein’s research (1971). He (Bernstein, 1971) showed a scrip cartoon to a group of children. Some of them said:

“They’re playing football

*and he kicks it and it goes through there
it breaks the window and they're looking at it
and he comes out
and shouts at them
because they're broken it
so they run away
and then she looks out
and she tells them off"*

On the other hand, some other children said:

*"Three boys are playing football and one boy kicks the ball
and it goes through the window
the ball breaks the window
and the boys are looking at it
and a man comes out and shouts at them
because they've broken the window
so they run away
and then that lady looks out of her window
and she tells the boys off."*

Bernstein claims that the first answer is an example of a restricted code; it makes sense if you have the script in front of you. However, without the script it does not mean a lot (Bernstein, 1971). It seems like a part of a story, where a piece of prior knowledge is necessary. Bernstein (1971) also explained the elaborated code as the second example where the main feature is the fact, that it can stand on its own and the reader would understand it without any knowledge.

With regards to the experiment in Hungary, Kecskes (2009) assumes that the divergence between restricted and elaborated codes can be seen as an improvement of written speech. While being in this process, students acknowledge how to use abstraction and choose different vocabularies which leads to a large number of conscious and controlled operations.

According to Kecskes (2009), these operations lead to a combination of mother tongue conscious skill and controlled skills gained from the school activities. The third class did not prove this new ability which meant that not only did they remain in the same level of their mother tongue, but also their foreign language speaking skill did not improve at all. (Kecskes, 2009)

It is clearly visible that foreign language learning has a positive effect on a progress in the mother tongue.

2.4 The improvement of life and cognitive abilities

As it was said above, there are a lot of different learning abilities taking part in the process of learning languages. These abilities do not only help to learn the foreign language itself, but also improve the learning as it is – for instance those children who have learnt a foreign language have better results in Maths or reading than the ones who did not study any foreign languages. Additionally, adults who have studied a foreign language proved better aptitude for solving problems, understanding and deliberating and also are more skilful in creativity and mental flexibility.

Apart from that, there are also some other cognitive advantages resulting from the process of learning languages. Bilingual or multilingual people proved to be more open to a fast-changing world and that they can cope with new situations and new life necessities more easily than monolingual people.

Moreover, they are also more likely to accept and tolerate other cultures and minorities which, from my point of view, is a relevant advantage in a nowadays world. Language learners would probably behave differently when meeting a foreigner in comparison with monolingual people who might behave in a rather reserved way. The learner's knowledge of a foreign language that is a stranger's mother tongue would simplify the situation.

The learner often feels very happy when he understands the stranger and moreover, when he can communicate with him as well. Even in a situation when two strangers meet and do not speak a language which is not a mother tongue for any of them, those who have an experience with a foreign language learning would probably show more sympathy, behave

more open-mindedly and make an effort to actually communicate than those who have never learnt a foreign language.

Even here in Olomouc, we can see that people from other countries are coming to visit or stay in our town. According to Český statistický úřad (2001), there were about seven thousands foreigners who had the permission for a long-term stay in the year 2001. These seven thousands people consisted of several different groups according to the nationalities: Vietnamese (approximately one seventh), Ukrainian (approximately one seventh), Slovak (approximately one seventh again), then Russian, Polish and the others.

Český statistický úřad (2001) also mentions the citizenship of these foreigners: while majority of Vietnamese, Ukrainian and Russian people kept the citizenship of the country they had come from and only about a quarter of Russian and Ukrainian people and about four percent of Vietnamese applied for a Czech citizenship, ninety percent of German, eighty-six percent of Slovak and seventy-five percent of Polish people held Czech citizenship. The double-citizenship could have been mostly seen with Czech-Slovak people (three point six percent) (Český statistický úřad, 2001).

There could be many various reasons for which these people come to Olomouc. According to my opinion, majority of these people arrive and stay in our city because of the business. For instance, Vietnamese people are extremely well-know for they clothes shops and fast-food restaurants, besides, they have recently started to open fake-nails beauty saloons, amusement arcades and newsagents'. It is said that these people are very hard-working and imaginative so that they somehow feel what kind of business is going to be the successful one.

There are some Italian people trying to establish restaurants with traditional Italian cuisine likewise or Greek and Macedonian people, who are very successful with their fast-food "windows", moreover, Macedonian kiosk in Riegrova street has its own fan page on Facebook with nearly tree thousands fans (Facebook.com, 2012).

Then we have Ukraine people working as labourers on the building sites (Ukraine people also worked on the reconstruction of our faculty last summer) and Polish people with their vegetable kiosks at market places. The activities of Polish retailer were recently discussed because of his untrustworthy shop near the railway station. This shop was meant to sell the drugs with pretence of selling souvenirs. Olomouc citizens' reactions were very critical towards this shop as well as politicians' attitudes. Finally, the shop was closed and the its owner was sent to prison.

Another group coming to stay in Olomouc or generally in Czech Republic consists of people who study here. Majority of these people attend universities, in Olomouc the Palacký University. According to a video called “Univerzita Palackého se představuje” (YouTube.com, 2010), there were 1818 foreign students in 2010. Lots of them study the Medical Faculty and speak perfectly English (YouTube.com, 2010).

The last reason why people come and stay in the Czech Republic could be their family relationships, either new ones or already existing ones.

Altogether, there are many significant reasons for people from other countries to come and live in Olomouc. We, as Olomouc citizens, should be able to speak at least one foreign language not only to be able to communicate with these people but also to be appropriately open-minded to accept their culture and habits.

On the other hand what I see as an up-coming problem of the Western civilization is the fact that in the recent years there have been a number of problems with immigrants. We can name just several of them: firstly, immigrants in Western Europe (especially Polish and Ukraine people) would do the manual and menial work for lower salary than the original inhabitants, so that there are some economical problems connected with this. Secondly, some nations of immigrants are perceived rather reservedly (Indian, Pakistan or Arabic people) because people have strong prejudices about terroristic and other kinds of attacks.

The last problem that could be mentioned is the cultural and language influence. It is obvious, when two nationalities live next to each other; they influence each other in many ways – language skills (vocabularies or pronunciation), traditions, religion, eating habits, clothing, etc.

2.5 An ability to admire literature, music and film done by foreign artists

“It is a luxury to be understood.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson) (The Painter's Keys, 2012)

“What I cannot create, I do not understand.” (Richard Feynman) (The Painter's Keys , 2012)

“Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the songs of a bird?” (Pablo Picasso) (The Painter's Keys , 2012)

There are plenty of works that have been written in other languages than our mother tongue. It is possible to translate them all but there are several problems which go hand in hand with the translation. The translated text cannot ever express exactly the same thoughts and feelings as the original; the style can be postponed as well as its beauty and uniqueness. Moreover there might be some terms that simply cannot be translated. References to the culture, metaphors, cues, word plays and more are unique in the original work and often lose their purpose in translated works. One must be able to read the original work to understand it clearly and to be able to fully appreciate it.

Martin Hilský (2009), who is a well-known translator and connoisseur of William Shakespeare's work, while translating sees the biggest problem in the wordplays. Shakespeare liked to play with words, but translating this from English into Czech language is very challenging. Hilský (2009) also adds that he enjoys it very much and when he is successful in his search for the similar Czech expression, he is very pleased.

The differences and small variances between the original work and the translated one can be visibly noticed in bilingual books which are nowadays very popular. One can clearly see the way the translator coped with the structures, metaphors, wordplays etc. Additionally, through this way, man can learn language by means of comparing and finding mother-tongue equivalents for foreign language expressions.

When speaking about literature, film should be mentioned as well. A topic being discussed a lot in media as well as in personal lives is the "struggle" between the dubbing and subtitles.

Firstly, it has to be said that the Czech Republic is renowned for dubbing overwhelming majority of foreign films and serials. Puk (2011) says that double language-sounds almost does not appear on common channels, everything comes already dubbed. Next, Puk (2011) mentions that the quality of dubbing has recently risen although that does not change the fact that a lot of people complain about it in general. These people are mainly serial fans who had watched their favourite serials online before Czech channels have started to broadcast them (Puk, 2011).

Here comes the problem, which I can identify with. The serial *The Big Bang Theory* can be used for illustration. This serial is about four young scientists (two Americans, one American Jew and one Indian) and a very pretty blond girl who is not as intelligent as they are. Each of the characters is lingually specific – for instance one of them speaks very quickly while explaining some physic rules and has also very distinctive intonation while the Indian

and Jew ones have both accents related to their nationality. These features are not included in Czech version. Although these problems are connected just to the actors' voices, there are also wordplays that cannot be fully translated without losing sense, which means that whereas following subtitles, man can always hear the original version and the wordplay, while with the dubbed version, this is not possible. In my opinion, this serial is intelligently funny and specific from the language point of view (accents) that dubbing harm its original wit and popularity.

In comparison to that, there are also serials where dubbing makes a great job. There are extremely funny and the "new" voices fit to the existing characters. Puk (2011) names for instance *Friends* or *Stargate*.

Puk (2011) also points out an interesting but not very surprising fact, that while watching films or serials with subtitles seems to be more appropriate for fans, dubbed versions are rather for masses. This statement is true because people appear to be too lazy to watch a film and read the subtitles at the same time. On the other hand, it have to be said, that television is to be blamed here because general broadcasting does not offer a lot of programmes in original version with subtitles. Honestly, undubbed programs could be count on one hand per each week. This is not a lot. Luckily, we have the Internet so that watching the original is not impossible.

What is also important to mention is the global opinion on dubbing. Müllerová (2009) claims that there are countries where dubbing is highly value (such as the Czech Republic, Germany, France or Italy). In comparison to that, there are also countries, where it is almost impossible to watch a movie that has been dubbed (for instance United States or Scandinavia) (Müllerová, 2009). Poland could be named as well because here the original sound is turned down (but it is still audible) and the whole translation is read by one person (Müllerová, 2009).

In simple terms, everyone should at least try to understand music, literature and films as they were made by the authors. On the other hand, good translators are important people as well because not everyone is able to read a whole book or watch a whole film without any help of subtitles or a dictionary.

2.6 Easy and enjoyable travelling

“In both business and personal life, I’ve always found that travel inspires me more than anything else I do. Evidence of the languages, cultures, scenery, food, and design sensibilities that I discover all over the world can be found in every piece of my jewelry.” (Ivanka Trump)
(BrainyQuote, 2012)

Nowadays travelling abroad is much more common than it was when our parents were the same age as we are now. My mother, for example, keeps saying that the opportunities we have were not even in her dreams when she was my age. Travelling in general is something we are very used to. People travel on their holiday, for business trips, to stay and work somewhere new or just to visit and experience something new.

Language, of course, is a needed skill while travelling. Vistawide.com (2012) warns that without a good knowledge of a native language of a country you are going to, one cannot fully understand the culture, be involved in every-day life or simply communicate with native inhabitants.

Basic vocabularies such as words connected to greetings, food and restaurant, asking for direction, using different means of transport, etc. are required if one goes for a short journey (holiday, business trip). Although these kinds of expressions do not help to participate in an ordinary life, they can help to survive and easily spent few days in a different surrounding. On the contrary to that, advanced knowledge of the native language is expected when a man goes for a longer stay. This knowledge enables to fit in the new surrounding, meet and communicate with new people and understand the culture.

2.7 The knowledge of man’s own culture

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” (Marcus Garvey) (BrainyQuote, 2012)

Travelling abroad can help people to understand their own culture. Being in a foreign country provides a view on one’s native country from a different level. People can compare and maybe even improve their lives according to habits, traditions, food, fashion, music or anything else they have come across during their stay abroad. All these features lead to deeper reflection on one’s own habits, traditions, food, etc.

People are eager to visit new places, meet new friends and try unexpected things. All this should go hand in hand with the appreciation of their own culture and should encourage them in the national pride and patriotism.

2.8 English is very easy to learn

Antimoon (2012) thinks that English is not only the most useful language in the world but also the easiest one to learn and use. Antimoon (2012) continues with examples: English language has a simple alphabet: no diacritics (as in Russia or German language), uncomplicated plural with very few exceptions, short words that are easy to learn (*sitcom* = *situational comedy*, *fridge* = *refrigerator*), no declension (words stay the same), a man can call everybody “you”.

In comparison to that, O’Blunt (2010) says that learning English language is confusing not only for a foreigner but also for people who speak English as their mother tongue. O’Blunt (2010) warns that she is looking at the language from the humorous side and first example she provides is the fact that while the expressions *slim chance* and *fat chance* mean the same, *wise man* and *wise guy* are the opposites. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2007), *slim chance* means that it is not probable that something is going to happen, whereas *fat chance* is very informal (and rather ironic) used when someone do not believe something is going to happen. Simply put, these two idioms are similar but definitely not the synonyms. As for the *wise man* and *wise guy*, the first one is an expression for someone who is very smart and intelligent; on the other hand, the second term is disapprovingly used for “a person who speaks or behaves as if they know more than other people” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2007) – we can say that these expressions are the opposites, however, a wise guy can be a wise man too.

O’Blunt (2010) continues with the homophones which are words that sound the same but mean something else:

*“They were too **close** to the door to **close** it but the young man thought there is no time like the **present**, and decided it was time to **present** the **present**. She explained, “I do not **object** to the **object**, but the giver”. A **row** ensued knocking an entire **row** of books on his head. The*

doctor had to **subject** the **subject** to a series of test which gave evidence that this was one case where the insurance was **invalid** for the **invalid**.”

Lastly, O’Blunt (2010) provides examples of puzzling words or phrases:

- “There is no egg in eggplant
- No ham in hamburger
- No apple or pine in pineapple
- A guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
- English muffins weren't invented in England
- French fries were not invented in France.
- Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.
- Quicksand can work slowly
- Boxing rings are square
- We have noses that run and feet that smell” (O’Blunt, 2010)

I agree with the statements listed above. As a learner, I often find some words very confusing as they do not mean what one would expected at the first sight. On the other hand, I find some problems connected to learning English language more serious and also very significant for a particular group of learners according to the country they come from. For instance, from my point of view, Czech people learning English find it very difficult to cope with indefinite and definite articles, prepositions, usage of adequate tenses, etc. In my opinion, all the grammar occurrences that are considerably different in man’s mother tongue than in the language they are trying to learn, could be a problem.

In addition to this, Vít (2011) writes about an expression *Czenglish* that is a blended word from *English* and *Czech* and it basically means an English language spoken by Czech learners and strongly influence by their mother tongue so that there are major mistakes in grammar and vocabulary usage. Vít (2011) also thinks that these mistakes cannot be avoided as our mother tongue is so strongly rooted in our mind and unconsciousness that we tend to do these mistakes all the time. According to Vít (2011) this phenomenon is not unique just for Czech learners; on the contrary, there are many “types” of English language: *Germanglish*, *Polinglish*, *Rushinglish*, *Italinglish*, *Frenglish*, etc.

I have to say that the world *Czenglish* is often used by the teachers at our department as it is the easiest way how to explain a particular mistake.

Vit (2011) points out that he comes across these mistakes very often so that he decided to make a sequence of articles. Each article is going to deal with a particular mistake (for instance: these days vs. nowadays, the usage of still, according to me, very like, give vs. put, etc.).

3 English cultural background studies

3.1 What is the culture?

“The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts.” (Charles Darwin) (BrainyQuotes, 2012)

“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.” (Mahatma Gandhi) (BrainyQuotes, 2012)

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2007), culture is a term, which we can understand as a “way of life (“the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group”), “art/music/literature”, “beliefs and attitudes”, “growing/bleeding”, “cells/bacteria”.

As it is listed above, there are many definitions of the word culture. O’Neil (2006) agrees with this statement and adds that it could mean something quite unlike for different units of people – for instance for somebody it could relate to music, art or literature; for a biologist it is likely connected to cells and bacteria (for example in a yoghurt); and people like anthropologists and other scientists who examine human’s behaviour would say that “culture is the full range of learned human behaviour patterns”.

I would say that culture is perceived by the general public in our Western society as a group of non-material things created by humans such as art, history, food, traditions and habits, music, literature, media, education, etc. Each continent, each country, each area and city or village can have something in common with other people living around or (more likely) can differ in many cultural aspects.

Benediktová (1999) looks at the culture as at a patchwork composed of many customs and a man’s view of the world rise from this mixture of his own culture. What is normal in one culture does not have to be accepted by the other culture (Benediktová, 2009).

“The trouble with life isn't that there is no answer, it's that there are so many answers.” Ruth Benedict (BrainyQuotes, 2012)

We can see this in our everyday lives (British people pour milk in their tea, we do not; we wear slippers at home, British people do not; people from South Europe get up late and go

to bed late, we get up early and go to bed early – relatively, in comparison to Spanish or Italian people).

What is also very important to say, is the fact, that culture is not still and permanent. Although, some features tend to be the same not concerning the time (customs), they change even if the humans do not want to. Other features create and shape as the outside world is creating and shaping. Although some people think that nothing new can appear (in fashion, entertaining industry, food), the opposite is truth.

The world opens new possibilities, approaches and variations every day. For instance, it is not so long ago when people kept saying that dubstep is not valuable music and that it will never be popular. Nowadays, there are several millions viewers on Youtube channel under the entry “dubstep”. The technology progress is not even worth mentioning – there are plenty of new technical inventions every now and then. Eating habits are changing as well.

3.1.1 Layers of culture

3.1.1.1 Body of cultural tradition

O'Neil (2006) thinks that three different levels of the culture could be distinguished. The first level is cultural root of one specific society - O'Neil (2006) provides an example: “When people speak of Italian, Samoan, or Japanese culture, they are referring to the shared language, traditions, and beliefs that set each of these peoples apart from others.” This statement means that culture serves as a means of difference among humans.

The basic division goes hand in hand with nationality (Czech vs. Slovak people), which divide into areas (Bohemian vs. Moravian people) in each country, cities, villages, etc. Culture cannot be represented by a single person because as O'Neil (2006) says, culture is “acquired by a man as a member of society” which means that the culture is shared and common for the people from particular society/country/town/etc. It is a learnt pattern that our parents present to us and we are supposed to present it to our children. Therefore it can be said that culture is something that we acquire during our lives. That is how the culture remains in its existence.

3.1.1.2 Subculture

O'Neil (2006) speaks about another layer of the culture which he calls subcultures. According to his opinion (O'Neil, 2006), the subculture means patterns shared by a group of people who come from a particular area and start to live in another area. O'Neil (2006) provides an example with subcultures in United States – ethnic groups such as Vietnamese Americans, African Americans or Mexican American. All these people share food, language, traditions, music, etc. and general way of life from their original or ancestral background (O'Neil, 2006).

O'Neil (2006) also claims that as the differences between subculture and the dominant culture disappear during times, subculture remains as a group of people with mutual ancestors which is a case of German Americans from which the majority presents them as Americans, not Germans.

Cliffs Notes (2012) firstly explains the subculture in the same way as O'Neil, however, he continues with a slightly different definition. A subculture is a smaller group of people which exist alongside the dominant culture but differs in some aspect: for instance heavy metal music fans, body-piercing and tattoo devotees, motorcycle gang members, and Nazi skinheads (Cliffs Notes, 2012). Members of these groups shared distinctive language, fashion and behaviour; however, they partly accept some aspect from the dominant culture (Cliffs Notes, 2012).

Many subcultures could be seen also around us in Olomouc. There are music subcultures – people who are interested in punk (Zatrest), indie (No Distance Paradise, Flash the Readies), drum'n'bass (you2), etc., sports subcultures such as skateboarders, baseball players (Skokani Olomouc), football fans (Sigma Olomouc), etc. or ecologic or political activist. Each of the subculture has specific language features, fashion, attitudes and behaviour. Subcultures are sometimes strongly related to some territory such as street or part of the city or favourite place where the members meet. Members of the subculture are often very close friends so that there are strong relations inside the group.

Generally speaking, it is released as many new inventions and attitudes as created subcultures. The most recent ones could be mentioned bloggers, hipsters, rave, straight edge, emo, etc. Lastly, it is important to say, that subcultures are mainly created by young people, probably because of their fresh and original attitudes and perceptions. Some of the subcultures are accepted by general public without any significant problems (video gamers, tennis players, rock music listeners), but on the other hand, there are many subcultures which are perceived very negatively: because they endangered ordinary people (skateboards vs. pedestrians, snowboarders vs. skiers, motorcyclists vs. car drivers), they get drunk all of the

time (punks, heavy metals), they take drugs (tattoo & piercing funs, hip hop listeners, hippies), etc. It needs to be said that these opinions are rather stereotypical.

There is a new book/project called "*Kmeny*" by Vladimir 518 and Karel Veselý which is dedicated to subcultures spread in the Czech Republic and it presents them in eighteen chapters (Tattoo, Graffiti, Punk, Meatheads, MMORPG, Hardcore, Hip hop, Otaku/Cosplay, Emo, Hackers, Skinheads, Sneakers, Freetekno, Neohippies, Circus, Skate, Virtual, Motorbicyclers, Hooligans, Black, Ska, Queer, Goth, Straight Edge, Hipsters) (Vladimir 518, Karel Veselý, 2011). The introduction of this book starts with a motto during riots in Paris in 1968: "*Are you a consumer or participant?*" (Vladimir 518, Karel Veselý, 2011: 8). According to this book, a definition of a subculture (or the "urban tribe" as the authors used this term) has three layers. Firstly, those subcultures are groups of people, who share the same opinions and thoughts, style in clothing and specific language; secondly, all these aspects distinguish them from the mainstream culture and lastly, each "urban tribe" produces values which refers to a word "participant" from the motto mentioned above (Vladimir 518, Karel Veselý, 2011: 8-13).

As well as Vladimir 518 and Karel Veselý explains the meaning of the word "urban tribes", urbandictionary.com (2012) specifies this expression similarly:

"Urban tribes" were young city people that gathered in relatively small, fluid groups. These groups shared common interests that were, in general, different from the interests of mainstream culture" (urbandictionary.com, 2012)

3.1.1.3 Cultural universals

Last layer of the culture that O'Neil (2012) mentions is the "cultural universals", that are learned behavioural patterns common for all people around the world. O'Neil (2012) also provides examples of these patterns: "communicating with a verbal language consisting of a limited set of sounds and grammatical rules for constructing sentences, using age and gender to classify people (e.g. teenager, senior citizen, woman, man), classifying people based on marriage and descent relationships and having terms to refer to them (e.g. wife, mother, uncle, cousin), raising children in some sort of family setting, having a sexual division of labour (e.g. men's work versus woman's work), having a concept of privacy, having rules to regulate sexual behaviour, distinguishing between good and bad behaviour, having some sorts of body ornamentation, making jokes and playing games, having art, having some sort of leadership roles for the complementation of community decisions" (O'Neil, 2012)

On the other hand, Learner.org (2012) claims that there ten universals of culture: “themes (values, ethnics, symbols), economics (trade and money, division of labour, technology), geographic setting (influence of other civilizations, resources, topographical characteristic), food, clothing, and shelter (food – methods of production and animal domestication, clothing and adornment, shelter, dwellings, and architecture), political organization (government, law enforcement, war and peace), family and kin (marriage and type of family groupings, child training and rites of passage, roles and responsibilities), attitude toward the “unknown” (religious beliefs, religious practices, scientific understanding, death rituals), esthetic values (art, music, dance, drama, literature), communications (language, number system), recreation (games and sports, use of leisure time)”. (Learner.org, 2012)

According to these two enumerations, I would say that several rules that each culture should provide are briefly set. Some of them are probably equally developed in all cultures (money, role of family, difference between the good and the bad), some of them seems to be rather aspects of well-developed and very advanced cultures (art, technology, influence of other civilization).

Altogether, all cultures include these cultural universals in some ways; however, highly-ranking cultures provide these aspects as fully-developed with continuing process of improving. It is visible that new opinions, esthetic values, fashion innovations, development in science or technology or economics related aspect nearly always come from developed countries and being accepted by the less advanced ones.

3.1.1.4 Conclusion

Lastly, O'Neil (2012) warns about replacement or misunderstanding of the words culture and society. While culture is a complex aggregate of learned behaviour, society is a group of humans that interact with each other. Although animals have their societies as well (flocks of birds, hives of bees), they do not interact inside the group on the same way as people do. As well as culture, society is different one from another. It is also important to say, that interaction is very important both for culture and society. “Cultural patterns such as language and politics make no sense except in terms of the interaction of people. If you were the only human on earth, there would be no need for language or government.” (O'Neil, 2012)

Moreover, O'Neil (2012) thinks that if we take culture as a collection of acquired behavioural patterns, then some animal species have their culture as well - they teach their

offspring how to survive and what to eat. Some of the intelligent apes (chimpanzees) teach their children what kind of food is medical, how does the hierarchy work, what social patterns the group follows, how to hunt or care for their babies. (O'Neil, 2012)

3.2 Cultural studies

At the first sight, cultural studies seem to be an academic discipline dealing with different cultures and their features. This statement is not a hundred percent true. According to Turner (1996: 11), in 1983 a significant change has been done by Richard Johnson, a former director of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, who corrected grammar in the title of his own work from “What Is Cultural Studies Anyway?” to “What *Are* Cultural Studies Anyway?”. From this statement we can see that there are “many” cultural studies or nicely put more aspect which cultural studies examine. Turner (1996: 11) adds that the most significant aspect how to look at cultural studies is basically root in the scientist itself or more precisely in the field from which he comes from – for instance historians have different attitudes than sociologists or literary critics.

Turner (1996: 11) continues with an opinion that although cultural studies fill the empty space where other fields do not reach, it is a complex and united discipline which contains common elements: principles, motivations, preoccupations and cultural categories.

On the other hand, Wise Geek (2012) claims, that “cultural studies is the science of understanding modern society, with an emphasis on politics and power”. “Cultural studies” is an umbrella term used to look at a number of different subjects. Categories studied include media studies including film and journalism, sociology, industrial culture, globalization and social theory. To pursue cultural studies is to try to decipher the world that we live in.” (Wise Geek (2012).

As opposed to that, cultural studies have some negative sides as well. Wise Geek (2012) thinks that according to academics, thanks to cultural studies, political correctness went mad. I have to agree with this statement because being an absolutely politically correct person or speaker requires a big amount of effort. I do not think that intelligent and well-behaved people need these rules to show respect to someone.

Additionally, there are many discussions, videos and articles about the fact that political correctness gone too far. This or that (2012) names five reasons for that: for instance there are more and more names that are supposed to be neutral and non-offensive; people with some health problems (disabled, blind – both these terms are politically incorrect) have

probably more serious things to care about than think if somebody named them correctly or not, some schools have given away classes for gifted children in order to do not harm or insult the non-gifted children. I do think that these reasons are very serious and alarming. In my opinion the political correctness is exaggerated in some cultures. Moreover, there are some jokes which are worth mentioning:

“She is not a BABE or a CHICK; she is a BREASTED AMERICAN.

She is not a SCREAMER or MOANER; she is VOCALLY APPRECIATIVE.

She has not BEEN AROUND; she is a PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED COMPANION.

He is not QUIET; he is a CONVERSATIONAL MINIMALIST.

He is not SHORT; he is ANATOMICALLY COMPACT.

He does not EAT LIKE A PIG; he suffers from REVERSE BULIMIA.” (Lots of Jokes, 2012)

At any rate, political correctness is here to be followed.

Wise Geek (2012) thinks of another disadvantage of cultural studies, which is deconstruction and extreme analysis of literature that could lead to hostility to reading and the literature itself.

On the other hand, there are some significant advantages. Focusing on cultural background connected to the language that a student would like to acquire can help his motivation and enthusiasm. For instance a passion for a particular serial, music group, architecture or anything else connected to a certain culture, can increase student's interest in learning the language. In my opinion this kind of motivation can be very beneficial.

What could be also mentioned as a very helpful usage of cultural studies is the application of real materials in the language lessons. Books, magazines, leaflets, newspaper articles can be used as an improvement for reading skill as well as radio interviews, film dialogues or music songs can be appropriately applied in the lessons as well. Those real materials obviously require observing, conscientious selection and good preparation which could be time-consuming and demanding but on the other hand, it could be very interesting, valuable and motivating for the students.

Slávka Tomaščíková in her study *“Sitcom within British Studies”* (2005) points out that over last two decades, media and media texts has extend in nearly all academic spheres. For researches, teachers and students, media has changed their function from a supplementary into a crucial source of practise and knowledge (Tomaščíková, 2005). Tomaščíková (2005) also claims that the television plays an essential role in terms of mass medial participation in

our lives and it always transmit a message about conditions and changes in society (history, politics, culture and lots of other fields that are related to the subject of British studies.

Last point to make, holiday being organised as a tour with a guide has recently become wide-spread and very popular either for group of students with a teacher or for enthusiastic individuals as well. Those tours are usually precisely organized so that history, traditions, eating habits, art, literature and even more cultural aspects are included. I would suggest that these holidays are a very good idea because they apply theoretical knowledge practically. The learners acquire art, history, music, fashion, eating habits with their own ears and eyes. Language aspect is also worth mentioning – students meet native language speakers, communicate with them and practise vocabulary and structures from areas, they have been taught during lessons of English language such as: greetings, getting to know someone, shopping, in a restaurant, history, art, etc.

3.3 Teaching cultural awareness

Wise Geek (2012) claims that cultural studies lectures and seminars are nowadays highly popular among university students. For those who want to be a politician or participate in media industry, it could be a significant advantage in their future lives (Wise Geek, 2012). Even though these cultural studies courses teach their students how to understand culture as a means of power and to become familiar with social and political patterns of each country and their interaction with each other (Wise Geek, 2012); Maley (1993: 3) claims, that “generations of learners have been taught *about* culture”. Both Wise Geek (2012) and Maley (1993: 3) persuade to encourage students in discussions, critical thinking about cultural stereotypes and to develop tolerance.

3.3.1 Cultural and cross-cultural awareness

Maley (1993: 3) adds that culture (mostly with capital “C” meaning high culture) tends to be a top focus of language education in Classical-Humanistic models. On the other hand, most recent models have tried to focus on the culture’s role in communication and its eventual breakdown (Maley, 1993: 3). This point is very interesting – through culture students should be able to understand and communicate with other learners from a different cultural background.

Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5) use a term *Cultural awareness* which refers to the fact that language use and communication are sensitively influenced by culturally-introduced behaviour. Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5) come with three practical qualities that the students should acquire while studying language in relation to culture:

- “awareness of one’s own culturally-introduced behaviour
- awareness of the culturally-introduced behaviour of others
- ability to explain one’s own cultural standpoint” (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 5).

Acquiring cultural and even cross-cultural awareness is significantly important in today’s society where contacts with people from different cultural backgrounds have become parts of our every day life.

Moreover, Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5) come with four reasons why cross-cultural interaction is important: “the rise in economic importance of the Pacific Rim countries, the influence of increased immigration on curricula, the study of pragmatics, and the study of non-verbal aspects of communication”.

Teaching Cultural and cross-cultural awareness proves to be very important in many working areas. Here are some examples from different websites advertising courses about cross-cultural awareness:

“Working, meeting, dealing, entertaining, negotiating and corresponding with colleagues or clients from different cultures can be a minefield. Understanding and appreciating intercultural differences ultimately promotes clearer communication, breaks down barriers, builds trust, strengthens relationships, opens horizons and yields tangible results in terms of business success.” (Kwintessentia, 2012)

“Communicating with patients from a range of cultures is an integral part of your job. The development of your own cultural awareness will add to your effectiveness and is an ongoing learning process. Your ability to understand and explain cultural differences can make an enormous difference in facilitating and enhancing patient/provider communications. Before you explore how to develop cultural awareness, let’s review the definition of the term.” (Medical Interpreting Code of Ethics, 2012)

“Cross-cultural awareness is a key ingredient of knowing your audience and planning communications with the audience in mind. Recognizing and acknowledging cultural

differences, and responding through appropriately chosen communication messages and media, can make the difference between communicating successfully and missing the mark entirely.

Cross-cultural awareness courses and related resources are available, often at the community level, and should be considered an essential part of preparing to communicate with people of other cultures.” (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009)

According to those advertisements, it is clear, that cultural awareness and knowledge of cultural background are highly valued in nowadays global world.

Quappe, Cantatore (2010) believe that cultural awareness is a basis for communicating with people as well as a capability of being mindful of our own cultural distinctions, opinions and attitudes. Cultural awareness become valuable while meeting and co-operating with other people from a different cultural background – what is perfectly appropriate behaviour in our environment, do not have to be appropriate for the other side and vice versa (Quappe, Cantatore, 2010).

Quappe, Cantatore (2010) provide an example:

“As an Italian it is almost automatic to perceive US Americans as people who always work, talk about business over lunch and drink their coffee running in the street instead of enjoying it in a bar. What does it mean? Italians are lazy and American hyperactive? No, it means that the meaning that people give to certain activities, like having lunch or dinner could be different according to certain cultures. In Italy, where relationships are highly valued, lunch, dinner or the simple pauses for coffee have a social connotation: people get together to talk and relax, and to get to know each other better. In the USA, where time is money, lunches can be part of closing a deal where people discuss the outcomes and sign a contract over coffee.”

Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 8) warn against these stereotypes as well: “To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.”

Quappe, Cantatore (2010) also claims that deficiency of knowledge in our behaviour incite us to assume rather than realizing what a behaviour means to the other person. The problem here is the fact that we have learnt how to think and react since we were born and this behaviour became a part of our unconsciousness (Quappe and Cantatore, 2010). To

became culturally aware, we have to step back from our own cultural patterns and realize the others' ones as well as try to avoid assumptions that someone is similar to us, it is always safer to think that he is not (to prevent from inappropriate behaviour) (Quappe and Cantatore, 2010).

Last Quappe and Cantatore's (2010) point that should be mentioned is the division of degrees of cultural awareness. There are four basic levels of acknowledging the cultural awareness:

1. "My way is the only way" – people at this stage are mindful of their own culture only, ignoring the influence of cultural differences
2. "I know their way but my way is better" – in this level, people are familiar with other cultures and their aspects but they rather overlook these differences in order to prevent possible problems
3. "My way and their way" – people at this stage are aware of their own cultural behaviour as well as others' one and are able to act appropriately according to the specific situation; they are also familiar with the fact that cultural differences can result in both problems and advantages
4. "Our way" – this is a final stage where people from different cultural background get together, think and discuss about various opinions, attitudes or rules; they create a culture of shared meanings (Quappe and Cantatore, 2010).

3.3.2 Goals in teaching cultural and cross-cultural awareness

Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 7) present "seven goals of cultural instruction" which have been modified from Ned Seelye's *Teaching Culture* (1988):

- to create and confirm a knowledge in student's minds that all people around them behave and act in order to their cultural background
- to create and confirm a knowledge in student's minds that social difference such as age, gender, social class or place of residence play a significant role in people's behaviour and manner of speech
- to develop an awareness among students that about conventional behaviour that is required in common situations in the target culture

- to increase student's knowledge about the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language
- to provide instructions how to fairly evaluate and generalize facts about the target culture on the basis of valuable evidence
- to help the students to find and organize information about the target culture
- to encourage students in intellectual inquisitiveness about the target culture and develop reasonable empathy and understanding towards its people (Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 7,8).

Finally, Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 8) encourage the teachers in practical usage of culture in the lessons of English language. They (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 8) stimulate the teachers to cover cultural awareness in each lesson and use the taught language to presents the culture. As well as awareness of the target culture, students should be also aware of their own country after accessing these language lessons (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 8). Lastly, students should be able to understand that culture plays a significant role in their own and other's behaviour, so that cultural tolerance, awareness and empathy are key competences to learn (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 8).

Similarly, Thanasoulas (2003) presents the same opinions on cross-cultural studies: "Foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own or another culture. For scholars and laymen alike, cultural competence, i.e., the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country, is indisputably an integral part of foreign language learning, and many teachers have seen it as their goal to incorporate the teaching of culture into the foreign language curriculum."

3.3.3 Teaching cultural awareness in the Czech Republic

According to my experience, in our surroundings English culture is mostly taught in the lessons of English language. The main focus is given on the British cultural studies, although American cultural studies are covered as well, on the other hand Canadian and Australian cultural studies are rather omitted.

In terms of English language teaching, Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 6) presents that in Europe and North America, traditional part of school curricula is the study of British and American culture. Although sometimes there is a special course for those studies (for instance *Civilisation* in France, *Landeskunde* in Germany or *Civiltà* in Italy), the focus of the subject is to highlight aspect of British and American culture (history, geography, institutions, literature, art, music and the way of life) (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 5).

What has to be said is the reality that while practical usage and goals of cultural awareness (presented above) are probably extensively used in Western Europe and North America, here in Central Europe, the learning is more through theoretical study. Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 9) present that: “In our teaching we have found that, when students have understood the language being used in a situation and then go on to gain an understanding of the cultural factors at work, this is for them one of the most absorbing and exciting parts of any language lesson. Studying culture with a task-oriented and cooperative learning approach adds a new dimension of achievement and understanding for the students – and for us as teachers!”

In the Czech Republic, the valid document for educational system is called “Rámcový vzdělávací program (2007)”. As this thesis is practically focused on students at a grammar school, I will always refer to the “Rámcový vzdělávací program pro gymnázia (2007)”. A part dealing with five sectional topics: “Media Education”, “Environmental Education”, “Education for Thinking in European and Global Relations”, “Interpersonal and Social Education” and finally “Multicultural Education” (RVP, 2007: 65-77) is significant for cultural studies.

Aside from English or any other language lessons, RVP (2007: 72) firstly introduces the topic “Multicultural Education” as a key one in cultural and cross-cultural awareness. This topic occupies one of the main positions in nowadays and future society as it is based on international relationships (RVP, 2007: 72). It has a cardinal reason especially for young people who are preparing for their life in culturally diverse society (RVP, 2007: 72).

Next, RVP (2007: 72) determines goals of this topic as a part of curricula: students’ understanding to themselves, comprehending their own culture and encouraging their integration in a wide multicultural surrounding with a respect and maintenance their own cultural identity. To reach the aims of this topic, multicultural education has to be also successful across whole educational and pedagogical school environment – relationships at school (between teachers and students, among students, between teachers and parents), school climate on the background of school and social milieu or the figure of the teacher.

While comparing the Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5-9) and Czech educational curricula RVP (2007: 72-74) we can say that:

- cross-cultural awareness (Tomalin, Stempleski, 1993: 5-9) and multicultural education (RVP, 2007: 72-74) both tend to prepare the students for their future lives in multicultural world
- while Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 11-13) generally encourages practical approach (providing activities, discussions, brainstorming, critical thinking, answering real questions, etc.), RVP (2007: 72-74) tends to be more theoretical from the point of view that students understands what the multicultural education is and what are its aims
- Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 7) suggested that students should “develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours”, what I see as a key skill while acquiring cultural studies; on the other hand, although RVP (2007: 73) claims that students should become familiar with the fact that all the people are different persons with unequal individual strangeness, RVP (2007: 73) do not say that this inequality rises from their cultural background
- RVP (2007: 72) encourages the student in integration and maintenance their own culture unlike Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5-9) who focus more on the recognizing and becoming familiar with the other (or target) cultures

Tomalin, Stempleski’s opinions seem to be for a start, very practical focusing on the real situation and real materials, and secondly, encouraging a sensible and tolerant approach toward different cultures as well as high-lighting the background knowledge of those cultures which is a significant skill while learning cultural studies.

RVP’s approach is achieved through promoting the main features of multicultural behaviour with an emphasis on integration, acquiring an understanding of our own culture and its values, respecting other culture’s beliefs, etc.

RVP (2007) claims, that except for the multicultural education, the significant role in learning cultural-awareness skills is made with a school subject dealing with a foreign language.

According to Tomalin, Stempleski (1993: 5-9) cultural awareness is encouraged through learning the foreign language itself and through gaining the information about the target country (especially the cultural related information) so that it could be said that cultural

awareness in our school educational system is supported by learning foreign language and learning the culturally related information about the target country.

3.4 Teaching cultural studies in the lessons of foreign language

According to RVP (2007, 16-18) the students should be acquiring several skills while learning a foreign language.

First of all, these are skills connected to the language itself such as receptive skills – understanding and analysing speech or text; productive skills – writing and speaking using appropriate language structures and vocabulary; and interactive skills – being able to express opinions and attitudes and accept and react to the different points of other people. Those skills are realistically practised on every-day-life situation from areas such as work, education, social, personal, etc.

Next, students are learning basic linguistic aspects of the target language such as phonetics, lexicology, grammar and spelling rules.

Lastly (and the most importantly), a field of cultural background of the target country is presented to the students. This sphere contains of: politic and economic position in the world; brief characteristic of the economics, society and culture; relationship towards the Czech Republic; literature, significant works and authors; science, technology, sport, art, important figures, works, achievements; life and traditions, family, education, national hobbies and curiosities; language strangeness and differences; media and its impact on an individual and on society, actual events and affairs with a major value.

3.4.1 Supportive materials for teaching and learning cultural studies

Speaking about the English language, there are plenty of materials, books and course books done especially for studying about the English-speaking-countries cultural background listed in the third field. The books listed bellow are the most common and recommended for student of English language at a grammar school in the Czech Republic according to my experience from my own grammar-school-studies as well as from the teaching practise.

Brendlová (2006) divided her book *Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí* into three chapters: The British Commonwealth of nations (The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand), The Republic of Ireland, The United States of

America. Each of the chapters deals with geography, political system, history, economy, life in that particular country, education and cultural heritage (Brendlová, 2006: 8-105). The main focus is given to the Great Britain (2006: 8-64).

Odehnalová's *The Reading about English-speaking Countries* (2004) is split very similarly as the previous book – introduction to the English Speaking Countries, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The United States of America, Canada, Austria and New Zealand. As well as in Brendlová's *Realie anglicky mluvících zemí* (2006: 8-105), chapters in *Reading about English-speaking Countries* (2004, 3-57) deal with geography, people, national economy, life in that particular country and history.

Both books are black-and-white printed, while the first one includes some pictures and maps, the second one do not show any supportive materials. Both are written in English by a Czech author and there are not any practical exercises connected to the informative text in any of them.

Another book with a focus on English cultural studies is a colourful *In Britain* by Vaughan-Rees (1995) which presents itself as “the authentic introduction to British civilization and everyday English language. This fully up-to date book enables students to practise all four language-learning skills. The main reading-practice section includes questions, exercises and speaking activities. It covers every aspect of Britain today, with over 40 topic headings, including classic and contemporary English literature, the media, economics, the environment and employment. For students visiting Britain, there are useful information about daily life, transport, London and the regions. The Workbook section of *In Britain* contains follow-up writing exercises and listening activities, based on a cassette.”

In Britain (1995: 40, 52, 64) is focused mainly in cultural background and every-day-life real situations finding a job, in the street, modern literature, etc. It is accompanied by a lot of colourful pictures and photographs as well as maps, symbols, graphs, etc. The overall impact is finished with questions, quizzes and exercises that examine reader's knowledge.

The last culturally-focused book is bilingual (Czech and English) *Anglické realie* by Smith-Dluhá (2006). Although the content of this book seems to be the same as in the first and second one (The United States of America, Australia, Canada, Ireland, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, New York City, New Zealand, London and other cities), this book is mildly focused on United States of America, as it is the very first chapter and New York City makes one separated chapter (unlike London, which is connected with other cities such as Brighton, Cambridge, Oxford and Liverpool) (Smith-Dluhá, 2006: 6-130).

Anglické reálie (2006: 6-130) looks very well-structured as there are many chapters and paragraphs but on the other hand there are not any pictures or maps.

3.4.2 Important topics in British cultural studies

According to Brendlová's *Reálie anglicky mluvících zemí* (2006: 39-51) who named the chapter "Cultural heritage", there are four significant areas: British art, music, film and literature. Speaking about the music, she (Brendlová, 2006: 40) mentioned very famous and well-known events such as *The Proms* which are the BBC Promenade Concerts. This festival took place every year since 1895 in the Royal Albert Hall and it consists of more than seventy concerts nowadays (Brendlová, 2006: 40). Brendlová (2006: 40, 41) also points out two large festivals: the first one is *The Edinburgh Festival* which is said to be the largest arts celebration in the world and it is an annual music and drama international festival. The second listed festival is *The Glastonbury Music Festival* "in Somerset which is well-known "mythical" place, reputedly the site of Camelot and King Arthur's knights of the round table. Nowadays it hosts Britain's main music festival" (Brendlová, 2006: 40).

As for the British history and political system, all listed books deal with it properly. Smith-Dluhá (2006: 71-73, 76) is dealing with the topics such as government, elections, political parties, police services and history. Brendlová (2006: 10-18) speaks about the Queen, parliament, government and national symbols as well as early history, kings and queens (1066-2006) and genealogy of the Royal family up to the year 2006.

All of the books mentions London as it is a capital city of Great Britain so that students should be familiar with this city. Smith-Dluhá (2006: 119-133) dedicates to London a whole chapter: she (Smith-Dluhá, 2006: 119-133) starts with basic information (geography and brief history), continues with places of interest (The City of Westminster, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, Downing Street, Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus, Whitehall, Marble Arch, The Strand, Westminster Abbey, The West End, The East End, Financial Districts, The Tower of London, Tower Bridge, etc.) and finishes with the means of transport (The Thames, Roads, Railroads and Taxicabs). Additionally, Brendlová (2006: 23-30) focuses on the similar historical sights and monuments, however in the topic dealing with transport in London, she mentions London Underground providing a map of nowadays network of lines.

Education is another field covered in the books about English cultural background. Odehnalová (2004: 18-19) explains primary, secondary and university educational system,

types of schools in Great Britain and different sorts of school-leaving exams. As well as Odehnalová, Smith-Dluhá (2006: 74) briefly introduces educational system.

4 Student's practical knowledge of the British cultural background

The following research consists of precisely a hundred of questionnaires. These questionnaires have been completed by students of second and fourth year from a grammar school Slovanské gymnázium Olomouc. All of the students are studying English as a second language.

Altogether sixty-one students from second year were asked to fill the questionnaires. Twelve of those students were in Great Britain and forty-nine have never been to England. From fourth grade, thirty-nine students were given the questionnaires, seventeen of those have visited great Britain and twenty-two have not.

4.1 Questions based on cultural-background knowledge

4.1.1 Historical questions

9) *Vilém Dobyvatel porazil posledního anglo-saského krále Harolda v bitvě u Hastingsu*

v roce:

- a) 1016*
- b) 1066*
- c) 1491*

10) *Královna Alžběta II je na anglickém trůně od roku*

- a) 1953*
- b) 1973*
- c) 1993*

Although these historical and politically-related questions tent to belong to the easiest ones, the results are not very satisfactory.

no 9, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	38	7	31
INCORRECT	23	5	18

In the question number nine, thirty-eight students from the second year marked the correct answer; on the other hand twenty-three students marked the wrong answer. Fifty-eight percent of those students who were in Great Britain answered correctly and surprisingly sixty-three percent of students who have never been to great Britain had this answer right. Therefore we can assume that in this question the visit of Great Britain is not as important as the knowledge from history lessons.

no 10, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	24	4	20
INCORRECT	37	8	29

Altogether only twenty-four students answered the question number ten correctly (1953) and thirty-seven students answered it wrong. Three quarters of the students who were in England were also right in this question (4/12) and forty percent of the students who have not visited England yet were right in this question (20/49). So that we can say that visiting England does not play a significant role in the knowledge of English politics.

Four-year students were more successful while answering these questions.

no 9, 4th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	34	13	21
INCORRECT	5	4	1

Altogether, only five students answered wrong the question about a battle of Hastings and thirty-four students answered correctly. Those who were in England (seventy-six percent

correct answers) did not score significantly more than those who were not in England (ninety-five percent).

no 10, 4 th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	26	12	14
INCORRECT	13	5	8

The question number ten seemed to be quite complicated for second-year students and it is probably as well for four-year students. Twenty-six students were successful in that question but thirteen students were unsuccessful. Visiting England cannot be considered as a key role.

4.1.2 Questions about transport in London (Great Britain)

1) Heathrow, Luton, Gatwick a Stansted jsou 4 největší

- a) londýnská letiště
- b) londýnská nádraží
- c) anglické hory

2) Pokud chcete v Anglii řídit auto

- a) nesmíte před tím pít vůbec žádný alkohol
- b) můžete si dát dvě piva (ne víc)
- c) můžete si dát kolik alkoholu chcete

6) Londýnské metro, které je nejstarším metrem na světě, má označené linky:

- a) čísla (1,2,3) jako autobusy
- b) písmeny (A,B,C) jako pražské metro
- c) názvy, které symbolizují některou ze stanic (Victoria line, Piccadilly line) nebo čtvrt, kterou linka projíždí (East London, Central)

8) Taxi v Londýně jsou proslulé svým starým vzhledem. Jaká je jejich barva?

- a) černá
- b) červená

c) *žlutá*

These three questions about different means of transport in London are suggested to be very simple for those students who have already visited London or Great Britain. However, students who have not visited London or Great Britain are not in a disadvantage because the majority of supportive materials deal with this topic in details.

no 1, 2 nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	34	8	26
INCORRECT	27	4	23

no 1, 4 th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	34	16	18
INCORRECT	5	1	4

While sixty-six percent of second-year students who were in Great Britain answered the first question dealing with airports in London correctly, only fifty-three percent of those who were not in Great Britain picked up the right answer. This fact can be seen also among four-year students: ninety-four students who have been to Great Britain answered correctly and eighty-one students who have never visited Great Britain answered correctly.

My assumption was, that flying is much more popular than bus-travelling nowadays and that is why students visiting Great Britain either in the past or in the future, should be familiar with the names of airports in London. Moreover, it needs to be mentioned, that the other two options in this question (*see Appendix A*) are rather irrelevant. In my opinion, Victoria station and Waterloo station are very popular railway stations in London so that I would suggest that the second option is not right. And finally, the third option which offered the answer that Luton, Gatwick and Stansted are English mountains should not be chosen as well as students acquired English geography in the lessons of Geography. Unfortunately, five student from second and four year decided to choose this option as a correct one.

I have included the question number two as I think that Great Britain is an exceptional country where one can have a glass of wine or two beers before he would drive a car. I also think that having a driving licence is an absolute must nowadays so that people should be aware about other countries' driving rules.

no 2, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	23	7	16
INCORRECT	37	5	33

no 2, 4th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	12	6	6
INCORRECT	27	11	16

This answer seems to be the most difficult one as it has the highest number of all in both classes. In the second-year, altogether seventy-four percent of students answered wrong. In the four-year, sixty-nine percent of all students answered wrong. So that the results were not satisfactory however this question was included in the questionnaire as an interesting one.

The question number six was in my opinion quite challenging, although the students' knowledge appeared to be very satisfactory.

no 6, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	45	9	36
INCORRECT	16	3	13

no 6, 4th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	29	14	15

INCORRECT	10	3	7
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In the second year, only sixteen students from overall sixty-one (twenty-six percent) answered wrong, three of which have been in Great Britain and thirteen have not been in Great Britain yet. This result is very good according to my opinion.

Similarly, the four-year students were also very effective in answering this question. Only ten students were wrong in this question and twenty-nine were right (seventy-four percent). Three respondents who answered wrong have been in Great Britain and seven respondents who answered wrong have never been in Great Britain.

As for the question number eight, I put three colours as an optional answer. These colours all stand for some vehicle of the public in English-speaking world. Black are taxis in London (this was the right answer), red are double-deckers in London and yellow are taxis in New York. Although traditional black taxis do not necessarily belong to the students' knowledge, I think that red double-deckers in London and yellow taxis are so popular and well-known (it is highly-predictable that students acquired this knowledge either from school or from some secondary sources such as serials, films, etc.) therefore I can suggest that this question will be very highly-scored.

no 8, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	41	9	32
INCORRECT	20	3	17

no 8, 4th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	30	14	16
INCORRECT	9	3	6

This question was correctly answered by seventy-five percent of those second-year students who were in Great Britain and only sixty-five percent of those who were not in Great Britain. With regards to the four-year students, the results were more superior here. Eighty-

two percent of students who were in Great Britain answered the right option and seventy-two percent of students who have never been to Great Britain answered correctly.

In simple terms, my prediction was not right; students are not well-informed about the traditional colours connected to the public transport in English-speaking countries, although I must say that the results from four year are more satisfactory than from the second-year.

4.1.3 Shopping in Great Britain

3) *Marks and Spencer je*

- a) *firma vyrábějící repliky starých motorek*
- b) *známá londýnská restaurace, kam ráda chodí královna Alžběta II.*
- c) *sít obchodů prodávající oblečení, bytové doplňky a kvalitní jídlo*

International companies are becoming wide-spread and some of them are opening their branch here in the Czech Republic as well. Marks and Spencer could be the instance. This shop selling clothes, food and other products originally come from Great Britain where it belongs among the most popular labels. I suggested that Marks and Spencer is an internationally known shop so that students would answer this question very easily, especially those who have come across this shop abroad or even here in Prague.

no 3, 2 nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	48	11	37
INCORRECT	13	1	12

Only one student of those who have visited Great Britain from second year answered this question incorrectly, so that ninety-two percent of respondents were successful. Of those who were not in Great Britain, only seventy-five answered correctly. Therefore we can say that being in Great Britain can play a significant role in this question.

no 3, 4 th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
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CORRECT	29	14	15
INCORRECT	10	3	7

As for the four-year students, ninety-four percent who have been in Great Britain and nine-five percent who have never been in Great Britain answered the question correctly. Again, there are less wrong answers among those who have been in Great Britain.

We can summarize this question saying that those students who have been in Great Britain and score better than those who have never been there.

4.1.4 Royal family

7) *Manželka prince Williama se jmenuje Kate. Její příjmení před svatbou bylo:*

- a) *Middleton*
- b) *Spencer*
- c) *Parker Bowle*

The Royal family wedding was such an extremely discussed topic therefore I think that through this event, students can learn some more information about the Royal family as it is definitely an important part of British cultural studies. As well as learning “about” the family, watching this event on TV or in the newspapers, students could acquire some of the values the Brits stand for (for example the attitude towards the Queen and the Commonwealth, the opinions about the future successor to the throne, the overall British characteristic as a nation).

no 7, 2nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	58	10	48
INCORRECT	3	2	1

no 7, 4th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	34	14	20

INCORRECT	5	3	2
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Altogether, nearly ninety-five percent of second-year students and eighty-seven percent of four-year students answered this question correctly. Therefore, this question can be considered as a question with a biggest amount of right answers. According to the student's knowledge, we can assume that they are familiar with basic facts about the Royal family.

4.1.5 Fashion

5) *Wellington boots neboli Wellies jsou boty, které se nosí*

- a) *ve velmi horkém letním počasí*
- b) *když sněží a mrzne*
- c) *když hodně prší a je bláto*

The question number five seems very tricky at the first sight but concerning the facts, that these boots have become very popular even here in Czech Republic in recent times and that some of the shops selling these boots leave the name on the label in English so that customers were buying “wellies” instead of “gumáky”, I claimed that some of the students have heard this term before.

no 5, 2 nd year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	46	8	38
INCORRECT	15	4	11

With regards to the students of the second-year, two thirds of those who were in Great Britain were right, one third was wrong. Those, who were not in Great Britain, were surprisingly more successful: seventy-seven percent was right.

no 5, 4 th year	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	26	13	13
INCORRECT	13	4	9

As for the four-year students, altogether an exact two thirds were right while answering this question.

In both years, correct answers occurred more among those who have visited Great Britain, although it is questionable if this visit is crucial for answering this question.

4.1.6 The overall result

In some of the answers, the visit of Great Britain seems to be significant, for instance questions number one and eight. On the other hand, historical questions were not influenced by a journey to Great Britain, but we cannot say that it is not helping either.

2nd year (overall)	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	392	81	311
INCORRECT	218	39	179

The overall amounts of correct answers among second-year students reached to sixty-four percent. The average score of each test was 6,42 (6,75 for those who have visited Great Britain and 6,35 for those who have not visited England).

4th year (overall)	summary	visited GB	not visited GB
CORRECT	283	131	152
INCORRECT	107	39	68

As for the four-year students, the results were slightly better. Seventy-two percent of all answers were correct. 7,25 was the average score of each test (7,7 for those who have visited Great Britain and 6,9 for those who have not visited Great Britain).

From these result, we can claim that four year students proved better knowledge in to topic of British cultural studies than second year students. Students that have been to Great

Britain scored better than those who have not been there in both classes (the difference is more noticeable in four year class – nearly 0,8 points).

In my opinion, the good score at this test is either influenced by the intelligence of the students and their knowledge acquired from school lessons or, the other case, by his attitude towards Great Britain and an amount of enthusiasm about this country.

4.2 Question based on students' opinions

Vyjmenuj oblasti anglických reálií, které jste v hodinách anglického jazyka doposud probrali: Která oblast z těchto reálií tě nejvíce zaujala? Proč?

Students from both classes answered this question rather similarly. They mostly mentioned politics, food, literature, music, weather, customs and traditions, sport, history etc. Some of the answers were rather surprising (5 o'clock tea, Manchester United) but even these topics could have been covered in lessons.

With regards to second connected question, the answers were quite different. The second year student mostly referred to the topics of film, music and theatre, while the fourth year students select London, history, historic sights and architecture. Both classes seem to be interested in sport, holiday and food. Eight students from both classes said that they are not interested in any topics from the British background studies.

Která oblast anglických reálií tě zajímá a není podle tebe dostatečně zahrnuta v učivu? (film, hudba, divadlo, jídlo, móda, zvyky, ...)

As for this question, there is a substantial difference. It could be either a variance of students' interest and hobby or the amount and vastness of curriculum that has been already covered. Students from the second year seem to be highly interested in theatre and fashion, while students from the four year mostly selected movies. Both classes also mentioned music. Those areas scored the most, although lots of the students responded traditions, sport and

food. There were also some rare and interesting answers such as nature, Christmas, celebrities, Shakespeare, science or humour. Two students from the fourth year said, that all the topics are covered satisfactory enough. Unfortunately, six students from both years mentioned, that there is no topic they are interested in from the British background studies.

*Používáš nějaké zdroje k získání informací o anglických reáliích (o kultuře, zvycích, historii)?
Pokud ano, jaké? Vypiš prosím konkrétně.
(filmy, seriály, hudba, cestování, literatura, internet ...)*

In this question, majority of students answered similarly. The most frequently, they referred to film and the internet as secondary sources for studying English. Other sources they mentioned were literature, music, friends, travelling and magazines.

Although according to their answers, the majority of students from both classes showed interest in using secondary sources while studying the language, there were students that answered this question as “No”. More precisely, forty-two percent from second year and twenty percent from fourth year said that they do not use any secondary sources. This could be considered as a significantly bigger enthusiasm for British cultural background among fourth year students than among second year students.

Jaký je tvůj názor na Velkou Británii jako takovou dle toho co jsi se dověděl v hodinách angličtiny? (zaujala tě/nezaujala, proč?)

Students were asked to express their own opinions on Great Britain according to their knowledge from lessons of English. Some of the students left this question without any answer and five students (from both classes) said that they do not care or do not have any opinions about Great Britain.

Seventy-four percent of students from fourth grade and eighty percent of students from second grade find Great Britain exiting – lots of the students mentioned its rich history, political conservatism, interesting traditions, culture or London. Some of the students also suggested that they would like to learn more about this country in the lessons of English language.

4.3 The overall result of the questionnaire

According to the result from the questionnaire, students are taught the English language as well as the cultural background connected to this language. The majority of students proved an excitement for Great Britain and its cultural studies, although there were few students who were not interested at all (those even do not fill some questions).

Conclusion

This thesis deals with the topic of cultural studies and awareness. The focus of the thesis was to prove the importance of including the cultural studies and cultural awareness in teaching English at a grammar school and in general. In the theoretical part of the thesis, there is firstly an explanation of the influence the English language has on the Czech language, then there are eight basic reasons for studying English as a foreign language and lastly, the role of the cultural studies and cultural awareness in everyday life, especially in the Czech educational system.

The practical part is based on the questionnaires, which were given to the students at the grammar school Slovanské gymnásium. By using the questionnaires, the knowledge and the opinions of the students concerning cultural studies were discovered.

The main aim of the thesis was to analyse the level of knowledge of a British cultural background among students at this grammar school. The results were compared according to two main aspects: different age and direct experience with British environment. As was presumed, students from the higher grade proved better knowledge as well as the students who have visited Great Britain themselves.

For me as a future teacher, the most valuable part of the analysis is the one concerning students' opinions suggesting the possibilities how to enrich the lessons of English language with respect to the cultural background studies.

Appendix

- 2) Heathrow, Luton, Gatwick a Stansted jsou 4 největší
 - a) londýnská letiště
 - b) londýnská nádraží
 - c) anglické hory

- 3) Pokud chcete v Anglii řídit auto
 - a) nesmíte před tím pít vůbec žádný alkohol
 - b) můžete si dát dvě piva (ne víc)
 - c) můžete si dát kolik alkoholu chcete

- 4) Marks and Spencer je
 - a) firma vyrábějící repliky starých motorek
 - b) známá londýnská restaurace, kam ráda chodí královna Alžběta II.
 - c) síť obchodů prodávající oblečení, bytové doplňky a kvalitní jídlo

- 5) Glastonbury je
 - a) největší anglický hudební festival
 - b) město v severní Anglii
 - c) známá anglické módní značka

- 6) Wellington boots neboli Wellies jsou boty, které se nosí
 - a) ve velmi horkém letním počasí
 - b) když sněží a mrzne
 - c) když hodně prší a je bláto

- 7) Londýnské metro, které je nejstarším metrem na světě, má označené linky:
 - a) čísla (1,2,3) jako autobusy
 - b) písmeny (A,B,C) jako pražské metro
 - c) názvy, které symbolizují některou ze stanic (Victoria line, Piccadilly line) nebo čtvrt', kterou linka projíždí (East London, Central)

- 8) Manželka prince Williama se jmenuje Kate. Její příjmení před svatbou bylo:
 - a) Middleton
 - b) Spencer
 - c) Parker Bowle

- 9) Taxi v Londýně jsou proslulé svým starým vzhledem. Jaká je jejich barva?
 - a) černá
 - b) červená
 - c) žlutá

- 10) Vilém Dobývateľ porazil posledního anglo-saského krále Harolda v bitvě u Hastingsu v roce:
 - a) 1016
 - b) 1066
 - c) 1491

11) Královna Alžběta II je na anglickém trůně od roku

- a) 1953
- b) 1973
- c) 1993

Vyjmenuj oblasti anglických reálií, které jste v hodinách anglického jazyka doposud probrali:

Která oblast z těchto reálií tě nejvíce zaujala? Proč?

Která oblast anglických reálií tě zajímá a není podle tebe dostatečně zahrnuta v učivu?

(film, hudba, divadlo, jídlo, móda, zvyky, ...)

Používáš nějaké zdroje k získání informací o anglických reáliích (o kultuře, zvycích, historii)?

Pokud ano, jaké? Vypiš prosím konkrétně.

(filmy, seriály, hudba, cestování, literatura, internet ...)

Jaký je tvůj názor na Velkou Británii jako takovou dle toho co jsi se dověděl v hodinách angličtiny? *(zaujala tě/nezaujala, proč?)*

Velkou Británii jsem navštívil.

ANO

NE *(zakroužkuj)*

Děkuji ti za vyplnění ☺

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RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá tématem reálií anglicky mluvících zemí. Je rozdělena na dvě části, teoretickou a praktickou. Teoretická část je zaměřena na téma prolínání anglického jazyka s jazykem českým. Dále popisuje osm základních důvodů pro studium anglického jazyka, respektive jakéhokoliv cizího jazyka. Poslední kapitola teoretické části vysvětluje pojmy kultura a kulturní uvědomělost a její praktické využití ve výuce cizího jazyka, obzvláště angličtiny.

Teoretická část je postavena na rozboru dotazníků, které zjišťují úroveň znalostí anglických reálií u žáků na Slovanském gymnáziu Olomouc. Dotazníky obsahují znalostní test a prostor pro vyjádření názorů žáků.

Analýza dotazníků prokázala, že znalost anglických reálií je na vyšší úrovni v případě žáků čtvrtého ročníku než u žáků v ročníku druhém.

Diplomová práce se snaží ukázat význam výuky anglických reálií v hodinách anglického jazyka na českých školách.