

Reviews

Training TEFL students to be interculturally communicative competent

Kostková, K.: Rozvoj interkulturní komunikační kompetence. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2012, 224 s. ISBN 978-80-210-6035-7

The monograph written by Klára Kostková offers an insight into her research on the development of intercultural communicative competences of university students of English language. The research includes curricular document analyses and a case study of English language teacher trainees.

The first part of the book introduces the fundamental terminology and clarifies the theoretical and methodological foundations for the study. The author covers several perceptions of culture, differentiates between intercultural and multicultural education and includes the issue of competences. She discusses the connection between language and culture within the understanding of hermeneutic philosophy, introduces several models of intercultural communicative competences, which can serve as basis for foreign language teaching. The author chose the four dimensional model by Fantini (2000) as the basis for further analyses. She also described several theories and approaches of ICC development within foreign language teaching.

The place of intercultural learning is analysed in the context of the Czech national curriculum and school curricular documents. Kostková claims that curricular documents do not sufficiently include development of ICC. Even though the national curriculum for the English language covers all dimensions of ICC, the dimensions are covered only superficially, without any deeper elaboration of individual dimensions. 17 school curricula for English language were quantitatively analyzed according to the four categories of ICC (knowledge, attitudes, skills and awareness) and one category of communicative competence. The communicative competence was present in 94% of instances, while only 6% of instances were devoted to development of ICC. Overall, the development of ICC is included only on general basis and the curricular documents do not offer sufficient support for the language teachers. This statement can be only agreed with, as I came to very similar findings (2012) that Slovak national curriculum for the English language does not offer sufficiently elaborated guidelines concerning the development of ICC.

The most valuable part of the study is the development and execution of a new study subject *Intercultural communicative competence* for university teacher trainees. The efficiency of this subject is supported by the YOGA form questionnaire and focus group discussions with the students. The researcher and teacher - as the same person - appears to have done a very valuable job creating a completely new subject, and she has succeeded in achieving better results i.e. developing the ICC of her students. My only criticism is the choice of quantitative content analyses of the focus group, as the quantitative outcomes comparing the focus groups at the beginning and then at the end of the semester, do not show the development of ICC. The author herself points additionally to the importance of qualitative analyses which she also carried out, as the numbers (quantitative analysis) in this case did not reflect the real development of ICC. The YOGA form questionnaire at the beginning and the end of the course showed a positive development of the ICC of the teacher trainees. Comparison of the questionnaire outcomes and the qualitative analyses of the focus groups support the reliability of research. The author proved that the development of ICC is also possible in an artificial classroom environment. I agree with Kostkova's point that to be interculturally communicatively competent does not guarantee to be a good teacher of ICC. There is definitely a need to create a subject, which would be didactically preparing teachers on how to develop ICC of their learners within English language lessons. I suggest that the created subject of *Intercultural communicative competence* should be applied into other study programmes, not only foreign language teacher courses, as education of interculturally competent people is one of the priorities of the education in general, and not only the domain of foreign language study.

Eva Reid

Slovakia, a Shattered Idyll, Could Become His Home

Milan Kovacovic: Ma's Dictionary: Straddling the Social Class Divide. Duluth: Greysolon Press, 2011. 340p. ISBN 978-0578081687

Saint-Aquilin, Bzince pod Javorinou, Paris, Chicago, San Francisco, Würzburg, Duluth. These are just few places Milan Kovacovic's life is connected with and which together create an exotic setting for a memoir written by a professor of French language, literature and culture at the University of Minnesota.

To understand his quest for identity, as he states it to be the primary impulse that initiated the writing of this book, it is useful to review his ethnic and social background. Kovacovic was born in 1942 to Slovak parents who worked for a