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The Role of English Literature in Teaching Englishes: Moving Towards Educating Transcultural Communicators

ABSTRACT

With the globalization of English, multilingual speakers of other languages have started to influence it linguistically and culturally, potentially challenging its established norms and standards. This paper first addresses terminological issues related to the area of Global Englishes and English as a lingua franca, then upon reviewing curricular documents relevant to the Czech educational context it summarizes findings from a pilot study conducted at local academically oriented high schools, which reveal that the English teachers still seem to associate “English” literature with inner circle creative production. Intending to bridge the gap between theory and practice, we designed and piloted several lesson plans taking heed of a broader conception of the anglophone literary canon inclusive of works from across all Kachruvian circles. We postulate that extended exposure to such literary creativity may help raise a generation of transcultural communicators, i.e., language users who thrive in dynamic language interactions across cultures.

Keywords: Global Englishes, English as a lingua franca, literary creativity, multicultural communicators, teacher education

Vloga angleške literature pri poučevanju angleščin: premik proti izobraževanju transkulturnih komunikatorjev

POVZETEK

Z globalizacijo angleščine pridobivajo večjezični govorniki drugih jezikov vpliv nanjo tako jezikovno kot kulturno ter predstavljajo potencialen izziv za ustaljene norme in standard. V članku najprej obravnavamo terminološka vprašanja na področju globalnih angleščin in angleščine kot lingue franca ter nato sledeč pregledu kurikularnih dokumentov, ki so pomembni za češko izobraževalno okolje, povzamemo ugotovitve pilotne raziskave, ki smo jo opravili v lokalnih gimnazijah. Te razkrivajo, da profesorji angleščine “angleško” literaturo še vedno povezujejo s kreativno produkcijo notranjega kroga. Da bi premostili vrzel med teorijo in prakso, smo zasnovali in pilotirali več učnih načrtov, ki vključujejo širše razumevanje anglofonskega literarnega kanona, vključno z deli iz vseh krogov po Kachruju. Predpostavljamo, da lahko večja izpostavljenost tovrstni literarni kreativnosti pomaga vzgojiti generacijo transkulturnih komunikatorjev, tj. uporabnikov jezika, ki se uspešno znajdejo v dinamičnih medkulturnih jezikovnih interakcijah.

Ključne besede: globalne angleščine, angleščina kot lingua franca, literarna kreativnost, medkulturni komunikatorji, izobraževanje učiteljev



1 Literature and WEs/GEs Scholarship: Terminological Issues and Key Questions

To discuss literary creativity within the area of World Englishes / Global Englishes in the broadest sense of these terms and their application in ELT,¹ we will first briefly define how these terms are understood and how their understanding has evolved in recent years (Quinn Novotná 2013, 2014). The study of World Englishes (WEs) dates back to the late 1970s, but came under the linguistic spotlight especially after Kachru proposed his concentric circle model (1986).² According to the original version of this model, the inner circle is where English is spoken as a native language (e.g., the UK, the USA, Ireland, etc.), the outer circle where English is used as a second language (e.g., in India, Singapore, etc.) and the expanding circle where English is used as a foreign language (e.g., the Czech Republic, Japan). Since the rise of the WEs paradigm, several other terms and paradigms, such as Global Englishes (GEs), English as an International Language (EIL), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), among others, have been used in the literature, all essentially trying to capture the historical and current global role(s) of English.³ Traditionally, World Englishes or New Englishes are associated with the second English diaspora, i.e., with countries such as India, the Philippines, Nigeria, Singapore, etc. (see: Jenkins 2009, 24–25) – the so-called outer circle countries mentioned above which were former British or American colonies (see below). Jenkins (2006, 157) offers a simple definition of WEs “to refer to the indigenized varieties of English in their local contexts of use”. More recently, the term has acquired many other uses and has become a non-stigmatized term both for traditional (applied) linguists and for WEs and ELF researchers when referring to either EIL or ELF, or both. Even though the field of studying WEs is a well-established section of English linguistics, it was not chosen for the purposes of our study as an umbrella term since it does not encompass all facets, varieties, and so on of GEs. It is, for example, less suitable for the study of global virtual communities of practice, which are characteristic of the young generation of English users.

English as an International Language (EIL) historically preceded the later dominant term of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); EIL has been associated with the Inner Circle English (ICE), which is also referred to as English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Mother Tongue (EMT), Standard English (SE), or BANA English (see also Pakir 2009, 225). ICE has been viewed as a “model” language, and the word “international” in EIL meant that the English that speakers from the Outer and Expanding Circles were to acquire would be used for communication with native speakers of English, mostly from the UK and the USA. This rather narrow inner circle orientation is still very common in the ELT discourse.

¹ We will be using the abbreviation ELT (English Language Teaching) throughout the paper as we consider it an all-inclusive umbrella term (referring also to Teaching English as a Foreign Language or TEFL / Teaching English as a Second Language or TESL / Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages or TESOL). For a discussion of terminological distinctions and conflicts within the field, see McArthur (2005).

² We use the Kachruvian concentric circle model in this study as a starting point since it is well-established in the discipline, and has had an immense impact on the study of World Englishes; at the same time, we are aware both of its contribution and its limitations (see Jenkins 2009, 18; Bruthiaux 2003, 160).

³ For more on the ongoing terminological debate see Seidlhofer (2011, 1–27), Quinn Novotná (2012, 26–36), Jenkins, Cogo, and Dewey (2011, 281–315), Bolton (2004, 369), and Mauranen (2018, 106–19). It is beyond the scope of this paper to review (even briefly) the extensive critique each of these terms and paradigms has been subjected to over the last two decades.

Finally, Jenkins (2009, 164), defines ELF⁴ as “communication between people with different linguacultures whether they are considered native speakers or non-native, second or foreign language users”, cf. Baker (2011, 197). Seidlhofer (2011, 7) tends to think of “ELF as any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option.” Mauranen⁵ (2018, 4–5) sees “ELF as similect contact”, in other words, “[w]hen people use English as a *Lingua Franca*, it is these similects⁶ that come into contact with each other: speakers of, say, a Dutch-based similect talk to speakers of an Italian-based similect, producing English as a *Lingua Franca*.”

Having briefly sketched out the terminological and conceptual differences and complexities, we have made a decision to treat Global Englishes (and not Global *English*) as an umbrella term and use it interchangeably with the terms listed above. The usage of GEs as an inclusive and neutral term has been gaining prominence⁷ in the last decade, and one of the reasons is that all the other above-mentioned terms (WEs, EIL, ELF – we only selected the most dominant ones) each represent a certain paradigm and have connotations that for researchers from other (sub-)fields can be problematic and/or – as research progresses – have become dated. We understand the term GEs as an overarching term that puts Englishes written and spoken from across all three Kachruvian concentric circles on an equal footing. It thus avoids hierarchization of different varieties of English, some of which were formerly classified as “central”, and highlights both unity (common language – English) and diversity (local and individual variation).

The paradigm of World Englishes (WEs) has been around for about half a century.⁸ Having said that, fairly little empirical attention – perhaps due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the issue – has been given to the topic of literary creativity in/through GEs and their implications for teaching English as a foreign/international/second language,⁹ or for teacher training in this domain.

In this paper, we first sum up our four-year engagement with the topic of literary creativity within Global Englishes. Second, we report on our pilot project of surveying the status of

⁴ For different phases of ELF research see Jenkins (2015). A good overview of the notion of ELF is provided by Ishikawa and Jenkins (2019).

⁵ In her unpublished lecture (Feb 22, 2016, UCL London) Anna Mauranen defined ELF as a second-order contact between similects which include native English varieties.

⁶ “Thus, for instance Finglish, the kind of English spoken by L1 speakers of Finnish, is a similect.” Mauranen (2018, 4).

⁷ To illustrate this, Jennifer Jenkins’ *World Englishes. A Resource Book for Students* (2009), for example, was renamed in its third edition to *Global Englishes. A Resource Book for Students* (2014); see also Galloway, McKinley, and Rose (2021).

⁸ The journal *World Englishes* first appeared in 1978; most studies on English as an International Language (EIL) and International / Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) came out in the 1990s; and English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) has been researched since the late 1980s culminating with the launch of the *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* in 2012.

⁹ For example, GEs literature is absent from one of the few publications that try to bridge the gap from theory to ELF-aware practice – Kiczkowiak and Lowe (2019). In the Czech context, credit has to be given to Michaela Čaňková who published two textbooks focussing on literature; *Open Channels* (1997) has a section in Chapter 15 on diverse writers, many of whom are non-British Booker Prize laureates; her goal is, however, to teach about anglophone literature, rather than through it.

teaching literature in English classes at academically oriented high schools¹⁰ in the Czech Republic and on the subsequent process of designing ready-made lesson plans for high-school teachers. The progress within this project has been presented at several conferences in the Czech Republic and abroad. We designed these lesson plans to promote intercultural (IC)¹¹/transcultural (TC)¹² values, ELF-awareness and students' agency through WEs literary works, and to integrate our theoretical findings with the goals specified in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001) and the *Curriculum Framework for Czech High Schools* (Jeřábek, Krčková, and Hučínová 2022). With that, we briefly report on the teachers' and students' experience with piloting the lesson plans.

When it comes to culture, literature, teaching and innovation, very few theoreticians or teaching practitioners would disagree with any or all of the following statements (emphasis added):

- a) whether it comes to teaching and learning a foreign, second or mother tongue, reading literary works is beneficial;¹³ according to Maley (2012, 300; emphasis added), they “**offer a rich and varied linguistic resource**, and as such, provide the kind of input [...] regarded by many as essential for effective language learning, in contrast to the more restricted and narrow exposure offered by many pedagogically-driven texts. They are also an ideal source for the **development of language awareness: of language variation** [...], of social appropriacy, of ideological bias, [...] etc.,”
- b) literature encodes both latently and explicitly the “**native**” and/or **adopted cultural background** and experience of its author;
- c) having spread globally, regionally and socially, the English language varies and forms several **distinct “major” varieties** (e.g., British, American, Australian, Indian, Nigerian English) and an even greater number of less defined ones (e.g., EuroEnglish, Chinese English, etc.);
- d) any innovation in education (for a comprehensive summary on innovation in Second Language Teacher Education – SLTE – see Quinn and Klečková 2021, 175) may first be encountered with **resistance**.

What follows from these observations is that students should be encouraged to read in the target language, but that when they do they should, and inevitably will, encounter some

¹⁰ In the Czech Republic, we refer to these particular high schools as *gymnázium* i.e., secondary/high/comprehensive schools which are geared towards the *maturita* exam, a secondary school-leaving examination, the equivalent of the British A levels, American SAT, or Abitur in Germany. These types of high schools in the Czech Republic are either four, six or eight years long and include students aged 11–18. Students get examined in four subjects of which Czech and either one foreign language or mathematics are mandatory. The mandatory part – common for all schools – is issued by a state-run organization CERMAT (Centrum pro zjišťování výsledků vzdělávání – Centre for the Measurement of Educational Achievement); the individual part is specific to every school and is developed locally by the heads of subject committees and senior teachers. English is one of the five foreign languages of choice (along with German, French, Spanish, Russian). The ratio of English being selected by students during the most recent exam in fall 2021 was 78%. For a complete statistical data overview see: <https://vysledky.cerमत.cz/data/>.

¹¹ Intercultural sensitivity is one of the key tenets of The OECD PISA Global Competence Framework (OECD 2018, 4).

¹² While we are aware of the differences between the terms inter-/cross-/pluri-/multi-/transcultural, for the purposes of this study, we will use transcultural as an umbrella term for them all.

¹³ For nine advantages of teaching literature, see Ur (2012).

(linguistic and cultural) variation.¹⁴ In the case of English, “[...] although we cannot hope to ‘teach’ the many varieties of English which our students will encounter in the GEs world, we can give a certain limited exposure to them through the medium of literary texts drawn from a variety of geographical sources” (Maley 2012, 309). Therefore, we feel the need to ask: what is the place of literature in language teaching? How can we reflect in ELT the fact that an ever-rising number of non-native speakers not only use English daily, but also write literary works in it? Moreover, we should not stop here at defining the purpose of the use of literature as such in language teaching, but also pose questions as to the English literary canon: which authors and works are “representative” of this immense variation, who is the arbiter¹⁵ of determining which ones are “representative”, and what it is that they should represent? Finally, building on these ideas and questions raised in our recent chapter (Quinn Novotná and Dunková 2021, 162–75), we try to describe how this may impact teaching English as a second/foreign language (through literature) and help to raise and educate a generation of – to coin a new term – transcultural communicators, i.e., language users who thrive in dynamic language interactions across languages and cultures.¹⁶

2 Literature in Teaching and Learning: A Historical Probe

Literature has always played a role in ELT (Maley 2012, 299; Kramersch and Kramersch 2000, 568); its incidence, however, changed in the course of the last century with the rise of different teaching methods and approaches. In the first decades of the 20th century, learning a foreign language essentially meant studying literary texts written in that language (Kramersch and Kramersch 2000, 554). In the second half of the century with the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), literature began to be pushed somewhat to the periphery of the teaching interest (Hall 2015, 113). Literature in ELT has been more recently used mostly as a tool for teaching receptive reading skills and a means to expand students’ vocabulary, and has come to be considered “an authentic window on a foreign language and society” (Kramersch and Kramersch 2000, 568). While typical goals of literature use had been to diffuse aesthetic, cultural and moral values (Kramersch and Kramersch 2000, 569), with the rise of CLT teachers aiming to make learners competent communicators increasingly began to apply it as a means of showing them how native speakers speak and live.

3 Literature and Curricular Documents

The current officially promoted role of literature can be, at least to some degree, established by the way it is treated in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Council of Europe 2001) and in the *Curriculum Framework for Czech high schools* (Jeřábek, Krčková, and Hučínová 2022). In the former, reading literary texts was placed among activities listed under the “aesthetic uses of language” section together with

¹⁴ We presuppose differences between the so-called standard English and other varieties/dialects/similects would be pointed out and focused on by the teacher and/or teaching materials, such as in our lesson plans as detailed in section 5.

¹⁵ The question of the “custody” or ownership of English has been a controversial topic, and was originally discussed already in 1994 by Henry Widdowson.

¹⁶ Transcultural language interaction is “communication where interactants move through and across, rather than in-between, cultural and linguistic boundaries, thus, ‘named’ languages and cultures can no longer be taken for granted and in the process borders become blurred, transgressed and transcended” (Baker and Sangiamchit 2019, 472).

singing, retelling, performing plays, etc. (Council of Europe 2001, 56). Based on critique regarding the inattention to the specific place of literature in language teaching in its original 2001 edition, CEFR started to recognize it in 2018, when a newly issued companion volume (Council of Europe 2018) added specific competence descriptors, introducing three illustrative scales for assessing skills connected with reading and working with literary texts (Alter and Ratheiser 2019, 377–86). Since CEFR is applied to many different European languages, teachers cannot realistically expect any particular recommendations as to what kind of literary texts or other cultural artefacts they can use to achieve the important goal of “*plurilingual and intercultural education*”.¹⁷

Since no specific texts or sources that the teacher/trainer can or should use are determined or suggested and no typified canon, or “pool of literary resources” – to avoid the somewhat potentially controversial concept of a (unified, clearcut) canon – is delineated in CEFR, its users are indeed provided with a ‘framework’ which gives teachers freedom in selecting and compiling a literary pool and teaching materials to best suit their local students’ needs.

Czech schools are advised to follow the national Curriculum Framework,¹⁸ which poses a challenge in that it contains a single general section on foreign languages. From the perspective of ELT, not treating languages separately can be problematic for two reasons. First, English is the most common language selected for the final school-leaving examination.¹⁹ Second, the currently most common role of English is that of a global lingua franca, a markedly different status from other foreign languages commonly taught in Czech high schools.²⁰

While it may be argued that most teachers do not necessarily read these state-drafted documents (see our Results section below) and instead teach what they deem important for their students to successfully pass their final examination, it is also true that these documents set the overall tone and help to (re-)shape priorities. For English, we believe, the lingua franca status should be recognized and reflected in this and other similar documents, as this would have a major effect on how English is viewed, taught, and also tested. While some students wish to strive to study or work in inner circle countries, most will use English as a pragmatic communicative tool, as an international (business, academic, intercultural, diplomatic, tourist) lingua franca.

4 Literature in ELT – Pilot Study

As part of the overture and preparation for our pilot study, we performed a qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2012) of four teacher training manuals (TTM) commonly used in

¹⁷ Italicized on the website. For more see the “Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education”: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/the-founding-principles-of-plurilingual-and-intercultural-education>.

¹⁸ Individual schools use the document as a framework to design their own school curricula, individual teachers then have autonomy to decide how they will realize the goals sketched in the school curriculum. For our study, we have worked with the *Curriculum Framework for Czech High Schools* (Jeřábek, Krčková, and Hučínová 2022).

¹⁹ See footnote 10.

²⁰ For other major languages taught see the previous footnote. Additionally, while some of these locally dominant foreign languages can be used as a chosen lingua franca in various situations, it is indisputable that in the Czech setting, this type of engagement with English is impossible to avoid in both tertiary education and the professional setting.

the Czech Republic (Scrivener 2011; Ur 2012; Watkins 2014; Harmer 2015). The decision to select these particular publications was based on two criteria – publication date and scope. Since we were primarily interested in examining the current situation, we wanted the analyzed publications to have been published within the last decade.^{21, 22} TTM are very powerful tools that both perpetuate certain “accepted” world-view(s), methodologies and ideologies and/or serve as instruments of change and innovation in language education. Tracing the potential link between the growing body of literature written in English by authors for whom English is not a mother tongue, and the actual teaching practice within ELT, we decided to look at the TTM to see if any of these developments are in fact reflected in them and thus in teacher training.

In order to ascertain how authors of general teacher training manuals (as opposed to, for instance, publications specifically dedicated to literature teaching)²³ approach the study of literature, we thought it important to choose publications with a broad scope, i.e., publications concerned with the teaching of all language skills and forms.

We examined the books with the following two questions in mind:

- 1) Do the publications include textual material related to the study of literature?
- 2) If so, does the textual material have a Global Englishes orientation?

We found that the examined TTMs appear to devote limited attention to how and what literature should be taught. Ur’s *A Course in English Language Teaching* (2012, 223) differs from the other analysed publications in that she recognizes that the canonicity of English literature has shifted to include texts written “by authors from other countries where English is an official or major language such as Canada, Nigeria or India. More recently, the range has been widened still further to include translated literature.”

Having reviewed the literature on the topic (Quinn Novotná and Dunková 2021) and the relevant sections pertinent to literature, culture and GEs within the selected teacher training manuals, we decided to gauge what the actual teaching reality is when it comes to the role of literature in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in the Czech Republic. In 2018, we conducted a thus far unpublished quantitative-qualitative pilot²⁴ study on this topic at academically oriented high schools. The survey was administered online via an anonymous questionnaire using the SurveyMonkey²⁵ platform (the complete set of questions can be referenced in Appendix I; all eleven survey questions were formulated in English). Seven questions were multiple-choice items, usually including a comment box at the top as well; a

²¹ That is, at the time of the analysis. Interestingly, since this research project was started, only one of these manuals, namely, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* by Jeremy Harmer (2015) has been updated with a 2019 edition. It would be commendable to replicate the study using the same methodology on this title and perhaps other similar recently published general teacher training manuals.

²² As discussed in Hovorka’s unpublished MA thesis (2016), some of the manuals are arguably also undergoing slow changes taking heed of the global role(s) of English.

²³ An example of such a publication would be *Literature in the Language Classroom* by Collie and Slater (1987, part of the Cambridge Handbooks for English Teachers series).

²⁴ This project came to a halt due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of schools.

²⁵ See <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>.

few questions, namely questions 2, 6, 7 and 9, were open-ended. Having a singular and clearly defined goal, i.e., to find out more about if and how literature is used in the ELF classroom in the Czech Republic, and trying to keep the survey brief, questions were organised in one linear flow, and no thematic groupings were deemed necessary. To analyse the collected data we used simple descriptive statistics. While our data are not representative of all high schools, the sample is illustrative of academically oriented state high schools in the capital.

4.1 Respondents

We approached 33 English teachers, mostly from Prague, selected by the means of convenience sampling. All initially agreed to participate, with 20 of them eventually answering the survey questions. Therefore, the results report 20 participants as 100%. According to the results from question 11, which elicited demographic information, the majority, i.e., 18 out of 20 of our respondents, are Czech, 17 are female, eight are aged 41+, and 15 have over 10 years of teaching experience. While the survey was anonymous, the respondents were given an option to disclose which school they teach at, and these included: Gymnázium Jana Keplera, Gymnázium Nad Kavalírkou, Gymnázium Na Zatlance, Gymnázium Nad Štolou, and Gymnázium Nad Alejí.

4.2 Results

In question 2 “What textbook(s) – if any – do you use in your lessons?” teachers indicated that the textbooks they use include: *English File*, *Keynote*, *Masterclass*, *Insight*, *Maturita Solutions*, *Complete PET*, and *Complete FCE*; in a follow-up question number 3, 75% (15) of them stated that these textbooks contain literary texts. Upon a more detailed question as to who these literary texts are written by, nine teachers responded Anglo-American authors and six a mixture of Anglo-American and international authors;²⁶ one teacher chose international authors, and four respondents were not aware whether the textbooks they use contain literary texts.

Seven teachers gave a positive answer when asked “Do you supplement the textbook(s) with additional literary texts?” (question 5); when further prompted “which ones/who are they by”, eight teachers listed the following authors (in alphabetical order):²⁷ William Blake, Robert Burns, Roald Dahl, Charles Dickens, John Fowles, William Golding, Graham Green, Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Denis Leary,²⁸ William Saroyan, David Sedaris, William Shakespeare, John Steinbeck, and Oscar Wilde; groups of authors/collections: Penguin editions, graded

²⁶ As the pilot questionnaire focused on obtaining as open-ended answers as possible, we chose not to provide a definition for “international authors” and rather left it to the respondents to define the term by themselves.

²⁷ Regarding possible response bias: while we may assume honest and accurate answers from our respondents, they may feel like they need to appear more erudite, traditional and conformist, and therefore in their responses reply with names traditionally associated with erudition, like Steinbeck, Blake and Burns, but in reality draw their teaching material from other or even no anglophone authors. This is a common potential bias inherent to the research method of questionnaires as explained, for example, in Menter et al. (2011, 143–44). It is curious (and perhaps somehow alarming) to note that while the majority of respondents were female teachers, they chose to include only male authors.

²⁸ The fact that one of our respondents reported having used the American actor and comedian Denis Leary as a literary resource text in their classroom (without specifying which particular one) illustrates that while some choices, such as this one, may be controversial (due to language, themes, style, register and other characteristics) in one classroom, they may prove useful for pedagogical aims in different educational settings.

readers, Lake Poets, Irish short stories, and Anglo-American writers; and a few particular works: *A Line Made By Walking* by Sara Baume, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae, and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker.

From the above list it is fairly obvious that the teachers rather randomly use examples of both more or less canonical (i.e., works traditionally found in school reading lists)²⁹ and/or popular authors, mostly British, North American, and Irish, i.e., coming exclusively from inner circle countries. The teachers further reported (due to the reasons listed below) that these works are often discussed within elective seminars or assigned as extra work (mostly for highly motivated/advanced students pursuing the higher level *maturita* in English Language).³⁰

In their answers to questions 6 “Why do you (not) use literary texts?” and question 7 “Do literary texts have any added value for you in teaching?”, all 20 respondents largely agreed that literature has added value, and report including literature for the following reasons (the answers have been grouped thematically, as the questions were open response):

- to pass on cultural values,
- to provide historical, socio-cultural, philosophical context and background; to inform about current issues, about British/American life and institutions, to broaden students’ horizons, etc.,
- to improve students’ reading and comprehension skills, and pronunciation; e.g., through song lyrics,
- to expand students’ vocabulary and implicitly teach grammatical structure; to explore literary style and authors’ deviations from standard usage,
- to motivate (quoting here verbatim: “it is fun, relaxing”; “to entertain”; “for the pleasure of it”; “to provide a ‘real and authentic experience’”; “to improve their marks, to share their love for literature”; “students can enjoy the language and see that the knowledge of a foreign language really works”; “it can help explore the possibilities of language”; “to show to students how the book is relevant to them – personal connections, etc.”),
- to prepare students for topics addressed in the *maturita* school-leaving examination,
- to promote critical thinking (students are, for example, required to write book reviews and encouraged to read between the lines),
- to provoke discussion.

When juxtaposed with the scholarly literature on the topic of teaching literature, these motivations are somewhat predictable. What is perhaps more intriguing is, first, the lack of

²⁹ We are aware that the definition or scope of which works are considered canonical is problematic and may vary from school to school, from country to country. Based on *maturita* examination questions and English department course syllabi provided privately by our colleagues from three different Faculties of Education and a Faculty of Arts and Philosophy in the Czech Republic, such list(s) often include anglophone authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, George Orwell; Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Emily Dickinson, Tennessee Williams, to name a few. Knowing these authors and their work is considered key for any high school student, and, of course, for any English major.

³⁰ Lower level *maturita* in English language = B1/PET, higher level *maturita* in English language = B2/FCE. For detailed requirements see *Curriculum Framework for Czech High Schools* (Jeřábek, Krčková, and Hučínová 2022, 13).

systematic work with literature (for example, a step-by-step introduction of graded readers) and, second, the almost exclusive orientation on male inner circle authors. Without passing judgement on individual teachers' choices, we are simply reporting the current situation. In line with our initial questions, we also note that any change in teaching practice may be encountered with resistance, and that change in practice needs to go hand in hand with changes in attitudes to WEs/GEs and with the "reform in teachers' perceptions making them aware of the spread of English and its status in the present world" (Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019, 246) quoting Brown (1995, 233–54)). Considering that, the lack of diversity among the responses was striking, and it invites considerations as to how to motivate teachers to expand the literary repertoire from which they could choose so that it better reflects both the immense variation of English and also so that it brings in various voices (including marginalized ones).

When asked (question 8) "Would you like to use literary texts more?" 65% (13) of the teachers provided affirmative answers; two teachers offered a further clarification, one specifying the conditions/groups in which they could apply this: "I adjust the amount of lit[erature] to the preferences of the group so it would mean more literature-minded groups :-)", the other wishing to introduce works "by a new generation of authors eg Sara Baume."³¹

This brings us to question 9, the first one to probe the teachers' openness to "different" anglophone literatures:

In 1988, the award-winning author Earl Lovelace published a short story "Joebell and America". His work features non-standard English with structures such as: "Joebell find that he seeing too much hell in Trinidad so he make up his mind to leave and go away." Do you think that there is any value in introducing students to such texts? Why?

We chose this particular snippet of the short story as it brings together Trinidadian dialect patterns while still being comprehensible to students and teachers largely familiar mainly with standard English. As such the sample illustrates the linguistically and culturally heterogeneous tapestry of present-day Englishes.

From the 20 respondents, only two would "due to low level of students" avoid introducing such texts at all. On the opposite side of the spectrum, there were three enthusiastic responses in favour. One of these pointed out that students "have to get used to / recognize non-standard English and discuss what implications it has", while the other highlighted that

[it is] [d]efinitely a value since it's important to know that languages, and especially English, are constantly in transition, that they have a past, present, and future. Languages are powerful and can be used to discriminate as well as empower.

Although from a rather limited dataset, such replies suggest a slow shift (cf. teachers' attitudes discussed by Quinn Novotná (2012) and Dunková (2018)) towards a more aware teacher who is able to see the value of literature as an exponent of linguistic and cultural variation for their students, i.e., present and future multicultural (MC) language users.

³¹ We have reproduced the replies verbatim as recorded.

Fifteen responses, a clear majority, oscillate between a neutral “yes” and a “yes, but” / “yes, under XY condition”. These teachers favour the idea of introducing non-standard Englishes into their lessons, yet they have a few reservations. These include, for example, the need for a

proper context [since] [p]ostcolonial literature may be confusing to students especially because of the language used. So to compare different ‘Englishes’ of the world – definitely yes. But I wouldn’t let the students read Caribbean (or Indian or any other postcolonial literary works which don’t follow the traditional English syntax and grammar) without any context or explanation. Maybe only advanced students.

The argument that such texts should be covered only with certain students came up often in the data, e.g., “[with] the best; advanced; higher-level; C1–C2 level; older; university students”. Some teachers point out that such exposure is preferable either “after [students] have understood the concept of a standardized language” or as long as students are (made) aware that such texts contain “non-standard” features. Later, we will argue that these perceived limitations related to students’ proficiency need not be a problem when it comes to exposure to various Englishes.

Two teachers stated that introducing non-standard Englishes “can be good for discussions, expressing different opinions, and practicing grammar structures, idioms, etc.” and that “[g]enerally, reading international authors provides cultural and historical context – helping them bridge empathetic ideas that we are all just people.”

To sum up the above, we note that the surveyed teachers seem fairly open to introducing “non-standard” English literature(s) into their lessons, but they feel that it should be used mainly/solely with higher-level students (above B2). The preliminary results of this pilot study suggest that authentic literary works may indeed be somewhat on the fringe of English teachers’ interest and outside of the scope of ordinary (high-)school curricula due to various reasons the respondents mentioned such as “time, level, age, [being] confusing [...] because of the language used”. Literary texts are mainly used with higher-level students and not in a systematic way. Therefore, it may not create enough opportunities for the students to discover the current global variety of Englishes. Further investigation will be needed to support this and other points that surfaced in the survey.

4.3 Implications

Based on the relatively small dataset in our study, we cannot arrive at any general conclusions, yet what we anticipate is that if teachers were offered more inspiration and methodological support, e.g., ready-made lesson plans offering literary samples from a diverse range of authors from across all Kachruvian circles and from within their sub-varieties, literature lists, anthologies, graded readers, recordings, etc., they would be inclined to including these sources into teaching English and they may be more likely to use them both with lower-level and higher-level students alike.

If we, again, refer back to the goal of “plurilingual and intercultural education” postulated in the CEFR, and ask how to promote intercultural/transcultural values³² in ELT – literature (poetry and fiction) written in Global Englishes offers itself as an ideal source and vehicle of such values. It would be worthy of further exploratory studies whether or not and why literature is systematically employed in the English classrooms in the Czech Republic and in other countries in (Central) Europe.

In the final section of this paper, we report on the process of designing ready-made lesson plans for teachers with (pointers to) resources provided for them which could help to bring the benefits of TC education through GEs literature more to their daily teaching practice. Out of the ten lesson plans we devised, the lesson plan chosen as an example for this study is aimed at a B2 level (which correlates with the upper level of English state *maturita* exam) – therefore a lower level than the teachers in the survey most commonly reported as fitting for introducing GEs literature. Hence, it shows a way of employing a variety of texts and Englishes across a greater range of levels of language students.

5 Lesson Plans: A Move From Theory Towards Raising Transcultural Communicators

Over the last three decades scholars (Kachru 1986, 2000; Kachru and Smith 2008, 165) have pointed out that “contact literatures”, i.e., “outer and expanding circle English literatures” had been for a long time overlooked, subject to controversies regarding canonicity (see Kachru 2005), and stayed therefore somewhat on the fringes of scholarly interest. Nevertheless, already in the 1980s Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) stressed the “range and strength of these literatures”, and talked about the “process of incorporation” of such literatures within the established literary canon. Kachru and Smith (2008, 167–8) point out that “contact literatures have by now earned a prominent place in world literatures, as is obvious from the numerous prestigious awards such works have won. These include: (1) the Nobel Prize in literature (2) the Booker Prize (3) the Betty Trask Award (4) the Neustadt Prize (5) the Pulitzer Prize” and “they are now [...] exploitable for teaching English literatures and world Englishes in other contexts, too.”

In order for these ideas to reach the classroom³³ – not just academic debates – what is “require[ed] of] ELT professionals” to [t]each “English as a pluricentric language” [is to] develop mindsets appreciative of the diversity that characterizes the English language (Clyne and Sharifian 2008). GEs cannot be implemented into a teaching program successfully without a reform

³² CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) operates with the term intercultural while, as stated, we decided to use transcultural as the umbrella term. In this case we mention both to emphasize that the values CEFR mentions are, in fact, transcultural. To understand transculturality and its values see, for example, Slimbach (2005, 211) when he states that “transcultural learners can see themselves as the vanguard of an increasing swath of humanity that must be able to move in and out of daily contexts where nationalities, languages, ethnicities, and classes coexist.”

³³ As Ur (2012, 223) pointed out, the shift to incorporating various authentic texts is not only necessary, but already on its way: It used to be taken for granted that the literature taught to learners of English should be classic British or American literature. Later this was expanded to include more modern English literature, and works written by authors from other countries where English is an official or major language such as Canada, Nigeria or India. More recently, the range has been widened still further to include translated literature. Most of us are teaching English today as an international language, for the purpose of global communication. It makes sense, therefore, to choose literature from as wide a range of sources as possible, including all the categories mentioned above.

in teachers' perceptions, making them aware of the spread of English and its status in the present world (Brown 1995). Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019, 254) point out in their study a "disconnection between theoretical knowledge and pedagogical practices", and their data "shows that the majority of teachers aired doubts about the feasibility of teaching English as a pluricentric language. This is probably because GEs are not 'readily specified as a teaching and learning construct' (Bayyurt and Sifakis 2017, 6)".³⁴

If English teachers are to teach literature precisely for the reasons mentioned above, i.e., cultural knowledge, examples of language in use and promotion of personal growth, it follows that expanding the range of texts used beyond the traditional native English-speaking communities will contribute to a deeper understanding of the current English-speaking world.

In an attempt to move towards closing the gap between the abundant theoretical literature (see also Quinn Novotná and Dunková 2021) and common curricular documents discussed thus far, and the actual teaching practice, we have designed, since 2018, ten ready-made lesson plans for high school teachers (Quinn Novotná and Dunková 2021, 167). In these teaching materials we have explored ways to promote transcultural values and ELF-awareness, and in turn foster students' (and teachers') agency. Ideally, we wish to integrate traditional linguistic goals (as specified in the *Curriculum Framework for Czech High Schools*) with raising MC awareness (as specified in the CEFR, see above). Below (see Appendices II, III) we provide a sample lesson plan which includes poems³⁵ and excerpts from poems that prompt students to reflect, through English, upon their own culture and the potential or actual loss of their own identity or upon their fluidity.

Building on the above-mentioned idea that reading literary works is beneficial in language learning, let us summarize what additional benefits could ensue from including transcultural works by authors from across all three Kachruvian circles. On a practical level, a more inclusive approach helps to:

- provide a rich source of different cultures for transcultural awareness-raising,
- promote and reflect on (a) local³⁶ culture(s) through English(es)³⁷ (e.g., by reading expanding circle/Global Englishes authors such as Amy Tan, Jhumpa Lahiri, and others),

³⁴ Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019, 255) summarize findings of research studies on WEs in ELT materials and state that "the inclusion of WEs and cultural conceptualization tied to WEs can enhance students' awareness of the diversity of English and change students' negative attitudes toward WEs."

³⁵ These particular poems have been selected since they all touch upon the issues of linguistic and cultural identity and how it can be problematic, fragile, and fluid. Thus, this lesson plan opens space for discussions of these relatively new concepts and ideas. The texts have been also chosen to be comprehensible to lower level students as a springboard to more challenging samples in our lesson plan collection showcasing, for example, texts written in strong local dialects (e.g., "Disnea Matter" by Irvine Welsh).

³⁶ What this may mean, will differ locally and based on particular students' needs. In the (Central-)European context, for example, it is commendable to include topics/questions/authors that deal with this cultural and geo-political area. But since students may indeed be using English globally, this may again vary.

³⁷ Or as Graddol (2006, 117; original emphasis) notes, "as English becomes more widely used as a global language, it will become expected that speakers will **signal their nationality**, and other aspects of their **identity, through English**. Lack of a native-speaker accent will not be seen, therefore, as a sign of poor competence."

- promote and reflect on the students' own current³⁸ English idiolect and/or regional varieties of English (e.g., Czech/German/Korean English).³⁹

In view of rising glocal and geopolitical tensions, we should – parallel to raising digital communicators and perhaps even more urgently – aspire to raise and educate transcultural communicators (TCs). The inclusion of TC literary works in the canon can facilitate this. The TC from the next generation of foreign/second language/lingua franca learners will be, as we envisage:

- bi-/multilingual/multicultural, yet respectful of local values/cultures,⁴⁰
- interested in (g)local identities and able to reflect on their own cultural and linguistic identity,
- empathetic and tolerant of 'otherness',
- capable of code and culture switching naturally,
- capable of (linguistically/culturally) accommodating easily,
- creative with language; i.e., will also (trans-)language⁴¹ easily (possibly at the expense of accuracy but not necessarily so),
- able to deal (critically) with change and complexity.

Cultural education through *belles-lettres* is just one piece of the mosaic of this bigger educational/pedagogical goal. With English gradually becoming a “basic skill” (Graddol 2006, 72), we can only anticipate that for most, especially younger, speakers it will become a means to a “varied” end (i.e., as an academic/scientific/medical/pop-culture lingua franca, etc.) and less of a target *per se*.

6 Concluding Remarks

With the ever-rising number of second-language and foreign-language users, and with more and more children growing up with ELF as a part of their language profile, non-native speakers increasingly use English to assert their (fluid) identities (including by writing literary works through GEs/ELF). Moreover, recently it is becoming increasingly accepted that one can no

³⁸ The adjective “current” is vital here; we perceive the identity of English users as always being in the process of change and oscillation between learner and users and other identities and developing proficiencies (Quinn Novotná 2012, 104).

³⁹ The topic of one's relationship with one's English language variety has been present in the works of many authors (regardless of their nationality, language profile, and/or ethnicity). To name a few examples: James Kelman's *Greyhound for Breakfast* (1988), Irvine Welsh's “Disnae Matter” in *The Acid House* (1994), Ken Saro-Wiwa's novel *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (1985), or Amy Tan's story “Mother Tongue” (1990).

⁴⁰ This is especially relevant in countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which may be largely mono-lingual/cultural, but are, for one thing, geographically located in a plurilingual area (being directly surrounded by Slovak, Czech (respectively), German, Polish, Ukrainian, and Hungarian speakers); and for another, have non-negligible ethnic and linguistic minorities, so it is not just because of their surrounding neighbours, but also because of internal diversity that multicultural and transcultural sensitivity is important for nations such as Czechs and Slovaks.

⁴¹ When it comes to non-standard Englishes in mainstream literacy, “a translingual approach to Englishes serves as an alternative to current ways of thinking about literacy instruction” (Smith 2017, 1). ELT differs from mainstream literacy in a few ways but the idea of expanding the approach is the same. We also agree that “all citizens – monolingual and multilingual alike – must be prepared to engage with Englishes that help them to meet the demands of interacting communicatively in a diverse society” (Smith 2017, 6). What we deem problematic is terming these Englishes as non-standard and seeing the translingual approach as an alternative; in our understanding, this further perpetuates the problematic binary divide which we wish to overcome.

longer identify languages with nation-states (see also Pujolar 2007) and cultures with certain areas or groups. With the rise of global communities of practice language is often emergent in every new situation, and therefore any such identification is virtually impossible.⁴²

As suggested above, we do not propose that (T)EFL be replaced by ELF/GEs or one canon by another, as “models [and paradigms] can coexist” (Quinn Novotná 2012, 257). Taking into account there may be many limitations that dictate what a glocal canon could look like, we envisage a broad pool of emergent literature(s) that teachers could tap into to create their own reading lists and teaching materials. Including what we broadly define as ELF literature, which is produced by authors from the expanding circle written for international audiences, including the first/second/foreign/whole spectrum of Englishes; these may include works written in a sterile, international English (among other characteristics bleached of all local idiom)⁴³ in thick, rich, hybrid transcultural and transdialectal works, locally immersed works and/or any fluid mixture in between. This would facilitate and support the teachers’ and students’ own choice of suitable texts and hence an appropriate intercultural focus tailored to the current (local/educational) needs, while allowing them to remain aligned with the particular institutional and curricular requirements. By creating new connections and juxtapositions and including different voices, often neglected or marginalized, while not omitting traditional canonical literary texts, we do not aim to divide but rather to **bridge gaps and divisions**.

Ultimately, we propose that introducing a broad spectrum of literary texts (from a wide range of authors) to both novice and experienced teachers and teacher trainees can provide them with yet another tool or vehicle for educating their students on the ever-expanding and evolving usage of present-day English(es), and thus to progressively help develop transcultural communicators.

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⁴² For more on this topic see Wenger (1998).

⁴³ Authors who represent this type of English are, e.g., Yiyun Li, Jhumpa Lahiri, J. M. Coetzee, Katie Kitamura, Xiaolu Guo, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Eva Hoffman; we would like to thank Justin Quinn for sharing with us in our private email communication some of his ideas on the topic from his planned book.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

1) DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

This questionnaire is voluntary, anonymous and solely serves the purpose of scientific research in applied linguistics. There are no disclosures either commercial or for profit.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the research team: quinn@langdpt.cas.cz

Please click 'yes' if you understand and agree to the terms of this research and its anonymity. Please click 'no' if you do not agree and do not wish to take part in this research. Thank you.

- 2) What textbook(s) – if any – do you use in your lessons?
- 3) Do(es) the textbook(s) contain literary texts?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure (comment)
- 4) Are those literary texts written by:
 - a. Anglo-American authors
 - b. International authors
 - c. Both
 - d. None
 - e. Other (please specify)
- 5) Do you supplement the textbook(s) with additional literary texts?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. If so, which ones / what are they (short stories, novels, poems, song lyrics)? Who are they by? (Comment)
- 6) Why do you (not) use literary texts? (time, level, etc.)
- 7) Do literary texts have any added value for you in teaching? (cultural, artistic, etc.) Please, comment.
- 8) Would you like to use literary texts more?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other (please specify)
- 9) In 1988, the award-winning author Earl Lovelace published a short story “Joebell and America”. His work features non-standard English with structures such as: “*Joebell find that he seeing too much hell in Trinidad so he make up his mind to leave and go away.*” Do you think that there is any value in introducing students to such texts? Why?
- 10) Bonus question: Have you read the last updated version of CEFR? If so, what is your take on the newest changes?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Please comment:

11) Demographics

- a. Nationality, b. Mother tongue(s), c. Age, d. Sex
- e. Years of teaching experience
- f. At your high school, what grades do you teach? (Comment)

Appendix 2. Sample Lesson Plan: Language and Identity

Teacher Notes

VERSION A (Lower-)intermediate

Time: 2x45 mins, **Level:** B1, **Age:** 12–15+

For B1 students teachers will use the same sample texts provided below with more scaffolding, help, and easier follow-up production tasks. Lesson aims remain the same.

VERSION B (Upper-)intermediate

Time: 2x45 mins, **Level:** B2/C1, **Age:** 15–19+

Lesson aim(s):

1 Raising transcultural awareness

- cultural perception – to enable students to **view their own culture from outside**
- give students a chance to **reflect upon their own (cultural/linguistic) identity**;

Questions:

What do students identify with? What does it mean (for them) to be Czech / other nationality?

How do they think “Czechness” is viewed from the outside? (Supply your own nationality.)

- sensitizing students to issues connected with **loss of identity** and being forced into embracing a new culture/language (not just English)
- raising awareness about ELF usage of English

2 Aims: language skills: reading, speaking, writing

i. Reading poems

“Accent” by Rupi Kaur

“Discourse on the Logic of Language” by Marlene Nourbese Philip

“Search For My Tongue” by Sujata Bhatt

ii. Speaking: follow-up discussion of language and identity

3 Linguistic aim(s);

Figurative language:

- alliteration, repetition, word play: *my mammy tongue, my mummy tongue, my momsy tongue, my modder tongue, my ma tongue; no tongue to mother tongue me*
- metaphors: ... *if english and my mother tongue made love*
- personification: *And if you lived in a place where you had to speak a foreign tongue – your mother tongue would rot, rot and die in your mouth until you had to spit it out.*
- rhetorical questions: *What does it matter... What is my mother tongue...*

Vocabulary: Trinidadian English, new words, neologisms: *momsy tongue; mother tongue me* (use of conversion from a noun to a verb), *to father tongue* (a novel collocation analogically modelled on *mother tongue*)

Grammar:

Identifying “non-standard” grammar structures and discussing whether they aid or prevent understanding;

Conditionals

- the teacher will concept check understanding of the form and meaning of the second and zero conditional. In sample 1 and 3 are the authors talking about the past or present experience or hypothetically?

If english and my mother tongue made love... 2nd conditional

What does it matter if my mouth carries two worlds? ZERO

Text 3 - written mostly in 2nd conditional

Answer these questions:

- 1) What do the three poems have in common?
- 2) What kind of feelings and experience do the poets describe?
- 3) Have you ever felt in a similar way? When? Why?

You can expect answers about: language stigma, accents, xenophobia, split between cultures/different worlds, trauma, frustration, lexical playfulness, code/culture switching identity

Production: active use of the second conditional: *If I spoke English perfectly I would...*

Creative tasks for a follow-up lesson (and/or to be done as homework); 4 different options of creative production to cater for different learning styles:

1. Option 1: Illustrate (visually) one of the poems
2. Option 2: Write a poem

Lower level students can write very short poems in “their” English (see also Kohn 2018); they can share & provide feedback as the whole class Option 3: Learn one poem by heart and recite it in front of the class.

3. Option 4: Write a short reflection.

Process-oriented creative production and speaking (reading aloud, exchanging peer feedback). Students will have an opportunity to compose their creative texts in small steps, cooperatively with multiple rounds of feedback.

Methodological steps: Choosing one of the four options, brainstorming ideas, writing the first draft, reading aloud in group, peer feedback, re-writing, mingling groups reading aloud, exchanging comments; choosing the most creative/fun/original texts; reflection on the learning process.

Appendix 3. Lesson Plan “Language and Identity” (Authors: Veronika Quinn Novotná, Jiřina Dunková, Šárka Císařová)

Language and identity

a) Lead-in questions

- 1) Have you been to India and Trinidad and Tobago? If not, would you like to go?
- 2) What do the two countries have in common?
- 3) What problems might people face when moving to a different country/culture?

b) Read three short bios. Find 3 things the authors have in common.



1. **Rupi Kaur** born 1992 in India; she immigrated to Canada as a child, settled in Toronto where she works as a poet, writer, illustrator, and performer.
2. **Marlene Nourbese Philip** born 1947 in Trinidad and Tobago; now lives in Canada. She practised law before completely switching to writing.
3. **Sujata Bhatt** born 1956 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat and brought up in Pune, India until 1968. She is a Gujarati speaker now living in the USA as a freelance writer.

c) Vocabulary work. Match these words with visuals: *spit, offspring, rot, anguish, languish*.

d) Read the following three poems or listen to your teacher reading the poems.

e) Answer these questions:

- 1) What do the three poems have in common?
- 2) What kind of feelings and experience do the poets describe?
- 3) Have you ever felt in a similar way? When? Why?

TEXT 1: “Accent” by Rupi Kaur, in: *The Sun and Her Flowers*

my voice
is the offspring
of two countries colliding
what is there to be ashamed of
if english
and my mother tongue
made love
my voice
my father’s words
and my mother’s accent
what does it matter if
my mouth carries two worlds

TEXT 2: “Discourse on the Logic of Language” by Marlene Nourbese Philip

English is my mother tongue
A mother tongue is not a foreign
lang lang lang language
languish anguish
a foreign anguish
English is my father tongue
a father tongue is a foreign language
therefore English is a foreign language
not a mother tongue
what is my mother tongue
my mammy tongue
my mummy tongue
my momsy tongue
my modder tongue
my ma tongue
I have no mother tongue
no mother to tongue
no tongue to mother tongue me

Glossary:
languish = strádat, trpět
anguish = muka
modder = mother; feature of Trinidadian
English creole

TEXT 3: “Search For My Tongue” by Sujata Bhatt

I search for my tongue. . . .

You ask me what I mean by saying I have lost my tongue I ask you, what would you do if you had two tongues in your mouth, and lost the first one, the mother tongue, and could not really know the other, the foreign tongue.

You could not use them both together even if you thought that way;

And if you lived in a place where you had to speak a foreign tongue—

your mother tongue would rot, rot and die in your mouth until you had to spit it out.

Literature in focus

Which poem is your favourite? Which of these poems do you find: figurative, experimental, literal, imaginative, playful, repetitive, symbolic, metaphorical? Can you find some poetic devices such as: personification, alliteration, codeswitching, or word play.

Follow-up questions:

- 1) What problems may people have when they live in a foreign country?
- 2) What do you think it may feel like when someone is forced to or decides to leave their home country to live abroad?
- 3) If you had to live in a foreign country, would you like to “blend in” – to speak like a native speaker and accept their cultural values?

Let’s get creative! Homework/ Follow-up class work:

Option 1: Illustrate one of the poems. You can draw, paint, take or download pictures, and/ or create a storyboard.

Option 2: Write a poem (1 or 2 stanzas) about what happens in your mind/head when you speak English or another foreign language. In this poem you can reflect on your relationship to your mother tongue(s), to English, and/or other languages you speak/understand and how they relate to your identity.

Examples: (by Quinn Novotná, Císařová)

Czenglish, Spanglish, dangling, juggling languages, I’m mumbling. Stumbling. Help!

Czech, choking, chiming bells, can’t think of the right word for kaštan, castaña in Spanish. Chestnut!!! Charming brain.

I have a voice in my head which is correcting me. Or is it my teacher? Or both? Error, error! What a terror!!! I want not to worry about how I speak.

If you wish, you can try to write a **haiku** :) (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables)

<p>She came and showed me. That you can be deaf and speak. Nine languages. Wow! - by Quinn Novotná</p>	<p>Creative writing. A different way to English and drinking coffee. - by Kateřina Holubová</p>
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Option 3: Learn one poem by heart and recite it in front of the class.

Option 4: Write a short reflection. You can react to one of the quotations below. Do you agree or disagree?

“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.” - Frank Smith

“The more languages you know, the more you are human.” – Czech proverb

We are all citizens of one world, we are all of one blood. To hate people because they were born in another country, because they speak a different language, or because they take a different view on this subject or that, is a great folly. Desist, I implore you, for we are all equally human. . . . Let us have but one end in view: the welfare of humanity. – John Amos Comenius

or start like this:

- *Last night I dreamt in English...*
- *One day I woke up and spoke English with a Japanese/French accent....*
- *If I spoke English perfectly...*