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Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Incorporating Gender Issues into EFL Lessons

Začleňování genderových témat do výuky anglického jazyka

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Studijní program: Učitelství pro střední školy (N7504)

Studijní obor: N AJ-NJ (7504T213, 7504T222)

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Praha, 15. 4. 2021

Děkuji vedoucímu práce za jeho trpělivost a cenné rady. Děkuji také své rodině a přátelům, kteří mi věřili a podporovali mě. Chtěla bych poděkovat i škole, která mě poskytla možnost pilotovat své hodiny. Studentům a studentkám také děkuji, že mi věnovali svůj čas a pozornost.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to design, implement and evaluate lessons oriented towards gender issues. The theoretical part of this thesis introduces the topic of gender and places it in the school context. It addresses gender-sensitive education and the courses of action by which gender issues can be integrated into teaching. Furthermore, this part deals with the methodology of content-based approaches. Finally, it presents the lesson planning process based on the Six-Ts method and lesson reflection using the ALACT model.

The practical part consists of planning sample lessons and designing students' worksheets, both oriented towards gender issues. The sample lessons were consequently piloted in Business Academy Heroldovy Sady. The evaluation of their progress is also included in this section, together with practical recommendations for similar lessons based on personal teaching experience.

Lastly, the thesis notes that teachers of English and other foreign languages can raise awareness of gender issues in their lessons while developing students' language skills. The thesis is enriching as it finds solutions to integrate gender topics into English language teaching and provides examples of this practice.

KEY WORDS

English as a foreign language, EFL, English language learning, content-based approach, lesson planning, lesson reflection, worksheets, gender, gender roles, gender stereotypes

ABSTRAKT

Cílem této práce je tvorba, realizace a evaluace vyučovacích hodin zabývajících se genderovou problematikou. Teoretická část diplomové práce představuje téma gender a zasazuje ho do kontextu školy. Věnuje se genderově citlivému vzdělávání i postupům, kterým lze genderová témata začlenit do výuky. Dále se tato část práce zabývá metodikou výuky založené na obsahově orientovaném přístupu. Na závěr popisuje plánování výuky pomocí metody Six-Ts a její následné reflexe s využitím modelu ALACT.

Praktická část spočívá v plánování příprav na jednotlivé vyučovací hodiny a tvorbě pracovních listů pro žáky, jejichž obsah se odvíjí od genderových témat. Jednotlivé přípravy byly následně pilotovány na Obchodní Akademii Heroldovy sady. Popis průběhu a zhodnocení těchto hodin jsou rovněž obsahem této části, a to společně s praktickým doporučením pro obdobné hodiny, jenž vychází z pilotáže navržených příprav.

Nakonec práce konstatuje, že učitelé anglického jazyka i jiných cizích jazyků mají možnost poukázat na genderovou problematiku a současně rozvíjet jazykové dovednosti a kompetence svých studentů. Tato práce je přínosná, neboť nalézá řešení, jakým lze genderová témata začlenit do výuky anglického jazyka a nabízí ukázky této praxe.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

angličtina jako cizí jazyk, EFL, výuka anglického jazyka, obsahově orientovaný přístup, plánování výuky, reflexe výuky, pracovní listy, gender, genderové role, genderové stereotypy

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INTRODUCTION

In 1866 John Stuart Mill proposed legalising women's right to vote. At that time, this British philosopher and politician argued that women's inferiority burdens women's individual development as well as fundamentally restrains social progress. Finally, "by the 1930s, most European countries had granted women their right to vote" (Kershaw & Kimyongür, 2007, p. 10). Now 155 year since J. S. Mill's proposal, our society still demands gender equality. Unlike then, today's discrimination is less explicit yet still significant.

Although the word *gender* might appear as trendy these days, gender inequality is a serious concern, not only in developing countries where it is manifested in the most obvious ways, e.g., segregation of education and healthcare but also in our parts of the world where it is rather inconspicuous, e.g., pay gap, uneven representation in the workforce double standards. This issue's gravity is demonstrated by the fact that gender equality has become the fifth of seventeen goals for sustainable development presented by the United Nations. These goals are supposed to serve as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" (*Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals n.d.*).

My personal interest in gender issues has been shaped throughout my life. Not only have I chosen a career path that women dominate, I often wondered if my choice was really my own or steered by the stereotypical beliefs and expectations of our society. Also, I ponder why the industries dominated by women are of lower prestige, which is also reflected in lower salaries. My determination to pursue gender issues as a teacher only strengthens when realising that the school environment is driven by stereotypes more than I expected. To illustrate my point, when assessing a project – creating a political campaign for the election into school parliament, I was shocked to discover one female student would like to segregate education and have female students knit and cook, and male students engage in science

projects and study maths. To my disappointment, her campaign was not meant to be a joke. Furthermore, my colleague, the head and director of our school theatre, repeatedly chooses plays that depict women and men in their stereotypical roles. Moreover, he often attempts to ridicule these roles by inviting other gender stereotypes when interpreting the individual characters' personalities and when advising the students how to act. Lastly, when planning a promo for a new extra-curricular programme, another colleague openly verbalised her wish to choose only boys to present the new programme to their schoolmates, as she believes they would better deliver the message.

Considering language exists through content, I, as an English teacher, believe to have an endless well of topics and themes to integrate into my lessons. For this thesis, I have designed and piloted lessons that focus on gender issues. Firstly, gender issues are of my own interest and secondly, I firmly believe introducing these topics will have positive effects on individuals and our society. Therefore, the function of the lessons is to strengthen the students' language skills and understanding of the language system by simultaneously introducing the students to gender issues. I am well aware gender issues encompass many topics, including the rights of the LGBTQ community. However, in my thesis, I would like to focus solely on gender issues that tackle women and men's unequal position.

This diploma thesis is divided into three parts. The first introduces the topic of gender and its place in the school and educational context. This part aims to assess teachers' opportunities to incorporate gender issues into EFL lessons and provide examples of addressing gender inequality. The second part of this thesis is concerned with language didactics, more explicitly teaching approaches focusing on content, lesson planning and lesson reflection. The intention is to contrast individual approaches and conclude which is the most suitable for incorporating gender issues into EFL lessons and determine the planning process of the lessons and the means of their reflection. The third part is practical

and provides reflections on the designed and piloted lessons. The focus here is on assembling and delivering five sample lessons; moreover, recognising their problematic parts and proposing a solution. The lesson plans, together with the students' handouts, can be found in the appendices.

I hope that the designed lessons and the rest of my thesis will invite conversation among teachers. Hopefully, my colleagues will not hesitate to adopt the lessons, and the lessons will be of any further use to other teachers and students. I consider this thesis to be a modest, however adequate contribution to the problematics of gender as well as English didactics.

1 GENDER AND SCHOOL

The value of the school is unquestionable. From its most obvious functions, such as vocational training, it also ensures the conservation and promotion of culture and social norms. The school contributes significantly to the versatile development of an individual who is socially responsible and holds moral values of life.

We no longer live in a country where school attendance is a privilege of just one gender; however, gender inequality still burdens schools' environment. Educators often address their pupils and students with stereotypical beliefs and expectations (Mizala, Martinez, & Mmatínez, 2015), which affect their communication with the pupils (Jarkovská, 2013; Vaďurová, 2011), their assessment (Drexlerová, 2018) as well as the results of the pupils (Batlha & Reynolds, 2013). Gender stereotypes can be found in coursebooks, study materials, hall decorations, and the official and unapparent curricula (Slavík, 2019).

Schools as institutions are, together with family, the most important institution for socialisation. We can only assume that it is in school where “hegemonic, gendered and sexual identities are constructed and administered.” (Baltacı, 2018, p. 1)

Gender is one of the fundamental aspects of the power hierarchy of our society. Despite the trend of today's Czech school policy to aim for inclusive education, in the eyes of inclusion, gender inequality is often ignored. Furthermore, school generated gender segregation and the reproduction of gender stereotypes. Reinforcing these stereotypes prevents the pupils and students from reaching their full potential. Children are then supported in only a portion of their abilities and skills – those associated with members of the same gender.

One of the most visible results of gendered attitude in the school environment is the fact that girls/women and boys/men choose a different path and apply for different higher

secondary schools, as shown by the Czech Statistical Office, 2020. The students' choice subsequently mirrors their future careers and financial collateral; it determines their future work and family life which cannot be explained simply by natural/biological differences between men and women neither the unbiased choice of children. This is evidence in the available statistical data which further affirms the premise about male and female gender roles. Thus, it is impossible to conclude that all students chose their study fields based on gender stereotypes and not on interests. According to Batalha & Reynolds, 2013 it is necessary to consider the impact of gender stereotypes and historical and social context. Lastly, a choice uninformed of the effects of gender stereotypes cannot be regarded as free and unbiased.

However, the school has the power to challenge these views, which are deep-seated in our society. One way is providing a gender-friendly environment, as will be further examined in chapters 2.2 Gender-Sensitive Education and 2.2.1 Gender Inequality in School. Another way is to openly talk about gender inequality and include gender topics in lessons; this will also be further discussed in chapter 2.4 Gender Issues in EFL Lessons.

How Czech authorities operate with the term gender and which opportunities are provided to teachers to incorporate gender issues into their lessons is explained in chapter 2.2 Gender Represented in Official Documents of the Czech Republic with Focus on Education.

1.1 Terminology

Essentialism

Essentialism, or rather its extreme form of biological determinism, is a view that considers social inequality natural, for women and men are assessed primarily based on biological features – mainly physical features. In the essentialist concept, the basic gender characteristics are determined by sex and, hence, are immutable. It is biological determinism that clearly determines which role a man and a woman should play with regard to their gender. An individual's own interests, values and identity, regardless of gender, have virtually no place in biological determinism. (Babanová, Miškolici, 2007, p. 148) Essentialism is closely connected to iconic intellectuals of the 19th century, one of which was Charles Darwin. In *The Descent of Man* (1871), he wrote, “The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is [shown] by man attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than woman can attain--whether requiring deep thought, reason or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands. (...) Thus man has ultimately become superior to woman.” (from Horgan, 2017)

Constructivism

In stark contrast with essentialism, constructivism stresses that gender, like all other social phenomena, is historically a variable that is constructed by members of society. Constructivism does not deny fundamental biological differences between the sexes. However, it refuses to accept them as the reason for their inequality. Constructivist theory remarks that greater differences could be found between two men than between a woman and a man. Therefore, it is not appropriate to allocate characteristics solely based on sex. Society should indeed provide individuals with the freedom to express and behave at their own discretion, not according to sex. (Babanová, Miškolici, 2007, p. 150)

Feminism

Feminism is a social movement that formed in the 18th century. Its purpose was to draw attention to the unjust position of women in society. The movement raised efforts to change that by demanding equal rights (right to vote, holding public office, owning property, equal pay, receiving education) for women and other discriminated groups. This led to the impeachment of the nature of women's and men's role in society. Numerous feminist movements have developed, such as liberal, socialistic, psychoanalytical and radical feminism. Some have even earned feminism its pejorative meaning in the eyes of the public. Nevertheless, all can agree that women have a lower economic, political and social status. However, their ideas on how to lever out this inequality diverge (Babanová & Miškolci, 2007, p. 148).

Gender

Gender can be viewed from a linguistic point of view. In Merriam-Webster online dictionary, gender is explained as “a subclass within a grammatical class (such as noun, pronoun, adjective, or verb) of a language that is partly arbitrary but also partly based on distinguishable characteristics and that determines agreement with and selection of other words or grammatical forms.” Gender can also be viewed as a socially constructed definition of what it means to be a man and a woman. World Health Organisation (WHO) defines gender as “the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.” (*Gender and health* 2019)

Gender Issues

According to the website of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), “Gender issues include all aspects and concerns related to women's and men's lives and the situation

in society, to the way they interrelate, their differences in access to and use of resources, their activities, and how they react to changes, interventions and policies.” (*gender issue(s) n.d.*) Global Citizen, Human Rights Careers and other movements and international organisations provide a list of gender equality issues, some of which are increase gender representation, violence against women, the wage gap, work-life balance, women’s health (*Gender Equality Issues n.d.*)

Gender Roles

Gender roles are a collection of rules which are often unwritten, informal and set by a particular society. These rules define which behaviour, beliefs, emotions, clothing, or eventually which form of partner relationship is appropriate for members of one or the other gender. An example might be childcare – women are often associated with caring for children. Men are then expected to provide for the family financially. Gender roles are adopted and reproduced through socialisation.

Gender-Sensitive Education

Gender-sensitive education is a pedagogical approach based on the principle that women and men (girls and boys) have equal opportunities. It offers pupils and students educational space that is not limited by traditional gender assumptions and is not bound by stereotypical beliefs about women’s and men’s behaviour standards. It supports pupils and students in their abilities and develops their skills in domains that are not associated with the domain of their gender. Gender-sensitive educators perceive gender-specific behaviour but do not assume them a priori and do not emphasise them. (Babanová & Miškolci, 2007, p. 149).

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are generalised, limited, and biased assumptions concerning women and men's personal traits, beliefs, and roles. Women are believed to be caring and talkative, whereas men are believed to be brave and unorganised. These overgeneralised assumptions

can lead to discrimination of individuals whose personalities or behaviours do not comply with these stereotypes.

Sex

Sex as a noun is often used interchangeably with gender. However, sex refers to „the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.” (*Gender and health 2019*)

Gender mainstreaming

According to EIGE, “Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. (...) It makes public interventions more effective and ensures that inequalities are not perpetuated” (*Gender mainstreaming n.d.*). It intervenes with the county’s legislative work and policy-making. Also, gender mainstreaming analyses gender inequality in specific countries to develop strategies to dispose of the problems and mechanisms that caused them.

Hidden Curriculum

A hidden curriculum could be described as a collection of “implicit academic, social and cultural messages” (*Hidden Curriculum Definition 2015*). It can be considered an unconscious intention, an unwritten rule or an unspoken expectation. These “unofficial norms, behaviours and values that teachers teach and students learn at school” (*Hidden curriculum 2016*) establish how to behave in school and also govern the students’ achievements.

1.2 Gender-Sensitive Education

When speaking about gender and school, gender-sensitive education must be mentioned. The grounds for gender-sensitive education lie in acknowledging that we live in a gendered society, recognising the existence of gender stereotypes, and admitting that many gender differences are the result of society, not biological differences between women and men.

By adopting the principles of gender-sensitive education, schools can contribute to embedding gender equality in the school environment and society in general. The aspects of gender-sensitive education are the willingness to stand up to gender inequality and reflect on one's stereotypical behaviour. Also, gender-sensitive education believes in equal opportunities and supports students in their strengths and abilities even if they are seen as typical for their gender. Furthermore, gender-sensitive education does not use sexist language and learning materials with discriminatory content.

Nevertheless, gender needs to be perceived in context with other categories, such as age, ethnicity, sexuality and health. By realising the connection to other categories, it is clear that there is no universal category of a woman or a man because many other factors influence our lives. It is important to ask not only how our assumptions about women and men are formed but also how assumptions about women and men of different age, nationality, religion are formed. (Lahelma, 2014, from Krišová, 2019, p.35)

In literature concerned with gender, a few terms can be encountered: gender-sensitive, gender-aware and gender-responsive education. Some authors refer to these terms as individual consecutive steps where gender sensitivity is the primary step of identifying a gendered phenomenon. Gender awareness follows the ability to distinguish problems of gender inequality even though they might not be visible *prima facie*. Gender responsiveness

is connected with the ability to actively intervene against gender prejudice and discrimination and accomplish gender equality. (Mlama et al., 2005)

1.2.1 Gender Inequality in School

Gender stereotypes tend to enter the school environment and unknowingly influence the learners inconspicuously. According to research, educators tend to approach students based on stereotypical ideas about girls' and boys' abilities and skills. These ideas then affect students study aspirations and the choice of career path.

Teachers who themselves did not receive education about gender issues are typically unaware of their role in the reproduction of social inequalities. In fact, in our experience, many teachers are simply unaware of the importance of gendered socialisation in schools but resistant to take up the issue and reflect on their practices from a gendered perspective. At the same time, there are teachers who do have an awareness of gendered stereotyping and inequalities in schools but lack methodological knowledge and/or practical tools to help them teach in a gender-sensitive way. (*Gender sensitive education*, 2019)

The following chapter will provide examples of how gender inequality occurs in schools. It also suggests ways to prevent it.

Language

“The relation between gender and language is bi-directional; i.e., gender is reflected by language and language helps to shape gender.” (Aydinoğlu, 2014, p. 233) Teaching a foreign language helps the children not only to learn grammatical rules and acquire speaking skills but also forms their perception of society and different cultures. “Like gender, language is a social institution, and language use is a social practise” (Fairclough, 1989, from

Aydınoglu, 2014, p. 233). English, as an inherently gender-discriminatory language, can only strengthen inequality between men and women.

On the one hand, teachers must face the gender discriminatory tendency of the English language; on the other hand, be aware of gender stereotypes they are often unconsciously reinforcing. Gender discriminatory language is embodied in word order, semantics, as well as lexical formation.

This can be illustrated in the word *man* in the meaning of a person or a human being. Words like *mankind*, *man-made*, *manpower* are illuminating examples. Such words can easily be replaced by synonyms, i.e., humanity, artificial, labour force. As society undergoes changes, there are increasingly more women represented in previously exclusively male-dominated occupations, such as *businessman*, *fireman*, *policeman*, *postman*. Here a simple change in word formation may help by replacing the word *man* with *woman* or even better *person* or *fighter*. Gender-neutral terms can also be used, such as a *doctor*, *teacher*, *professor*, as they are gender-neutral. However, teachers must bear in mind not to use these occupations with exclusively male pronouns as it would set a bad example of which professions are meant for men and which for women.

What is equally important is the use of personal pronouns. For one thing, using male pronouns, i.e., *he*, *him*, *his*, to refer to all genders should be avoided. This can be accomplished by replacing the male pronouns with the third person plural, i.e., *they*, *them*, *their*. For example, '*Everyone is the architect of his own fortune*'. It could be rewritten as '*Everyone is the architect of their own fortune*'. Furthermore, a plural noun can be used and a plural pronoun to accompany it, e.g., *Teachers are responsible for their students*; or both male and female pronouns can be used, e.g., *A teacher is responsible for his and her students*. Reformulating sentences into passive voice will help dispose of pronouns overall.

Teachers, as well as everyone else, should also refrain from using words belittling women, e.g., the *weaker sex*, *timid women*; moreover, using words which are insulting, e.g., *hen*, *hag*. Valdřová (2006, from Smetáčková, 2007, p. 42) mentions several more problems, such as addressing the students. It appears teachers tend to approach girls differently; for instance, they are more likely to be addressed by their first name, moreover, by a diminutive nickname or a familiar variety of their name. This may unintentionally lower the girl's status in the classroom. Calling male students by their last name but female students by the first name implies that women are not on a par with men. Students of both sexes should be addressed in akin terms.

Furthermore, teachers might want to reflect on which examples they provide their students. In language classes especially, teachers ask many questions in order to introduce a topic, activate the students, assess learners' progress etc. It is not unlikely to hear questions and statements, such as '*How often do you help your mother with cooking?*', '*When does your father come from work?*', '*Girls know that....*', '*This will interest the boys...*'. Any classroom examples that show stereotyped assumptions about men's and women's social and professional roles or which reinforce negative views of women's psychological traits, e.g., typically weak and irrational, should be avoided.

Naturally, teachers should refrain from using sexual implications and jokes. Results of questionnaires lead to a disappointing discovery that even pupils in primary and secondary school are aware of sexual subtexts of teachers' behaviour and communication. Sexual implications and jokes are not uncommon. They are shortly discovered and even supported by female students who believe in getting better marks when wearing revealing clothing and male students who tend to flirt with teachers. (Valdřová, 2006, from Smetáčková, 2007, p. 47)

Behaviour

Apart from using language discrimination, Jarkovská (2013) identifies another problem in school communication. Based on her case studies, there are different standards in communication with each gender. Boys are believed to be called on more frequently, they are less interrupted, and their thoughts are more likely to lead to a further discussion. Jarkovská believes it is necessary to create equal opportunities for boys and girls and to devote everyone the same amount of attention and space to express their opinion

The distribution of tasks can also lead to inequality. Girls are assigned tasks requiring reliability, patience, tidiness and aesthetics, which often have a short-term effect, e.g., wiping the desk clean, flowering the plants, writing the microscope observation log. On the other hand, boys are entrusted with tasks of higher prestige, requiring intellect that is not timed and is clearly visible and immediately appreciable. After compulsory education, young people carry into their lives a clear picture of the division of male and female labour. This picture was created partly in their families but was reinforced and legitimised by teachers throughout students' education process.

Assessment of girls and boys

As Smetáčková (2006) mentions, a different treatment occurs when assessing the male and female students. A remarkable difference can be witnessed during an oral examination. It has been found that teachers expect better results from boys than from girls; therefore, they are often confronted with more complicated or detailed questions. On the one hand, boys are encouraged to employ logical thinking; they are offered more time to formulate their answer, whereas, on the other hand, girls are expected to answer promptly; otherwise, it is assumed they do not know the answer. Also, boys are commonly praised for originality and courage; girls are then praised for decency and diligence.

Because most of these actions are believed to be unconscious, teachers may want to develop detailed criteria for assessing the students. This will possibly help them assess students of both genders equally.

Coursebooks and Materials

According to Průcha (1998), coursebooks are not only an instrument for learning and teaching but also a complex construct involved in an interaction with learning subject and functionality equipped for it. Furthermore, beliefs and values may easily be imposed upon learners in childhood regarding what is and is not normal, appropriate as well as how diverse the society is. Coursebooks and materials presented to students have the unique opportunity to contribute to a gender-equal society, present alternative patterns which students can adopt in adulthood.

Many pieces of research have been conducted analysing student's books and coursebooks from various points of view. The connection between gender and coursebooks is an exciting domain to examine. However, it has been slightly ignored in the Czech Republic, unlike in other countries, where it has been stressed since the 20th century when the first studies were conducted on the way gender roles are presented to children through textbooks. Before the 1970s, almost all the coursebooks, according to the research, were biased in favour of men. Favourably, since 2006 coursebooks have to be approved by the Ministry of Education for meeting the requirements of gender correctness.

When analysing a coursebook and focusing on gender, many different points of view should be applied. First, the book should illuminate that everybody is different, with different qualities, regardless of their sexuality, gender, origin or socio-cultural patterns. Secondly, the learners should be provided with moral norms. Next, the language used should not be sexist and should set a gender tolerant attitude. Also, the topics discussed should be

appropriate and interesting for boys as well as girls. Looking closer into gender stereotypes, coursebooks should equally engage male and female characters in household activities, work, leisure and hobbies and integrate them in both personal and professional life.

Based on the information provided in the manual for analysing gender correct coursebooks published by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MŠMT) and devised by Valdřová et al., 2004, gender unbiased visual materials should picture women/girls and men/boys in diverse situations. Women should not be pictured only in roles typically associated with women and vice versa. Boys and girls should be captured alternately in a situation with no knowledge, acquiring knowledge and sharing knowledge with others. The visual material should paint a picture of equally capable, equally important and equally represented boys and girls.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to highlight the importance of the teacher. It is essential that every teacher knows the educational material thoroughly and bears in mind all its advantages and disadvantages, including the matter of gender correctness. An informed and well-prepared teacher can work with sexist and gender discriminatory material by purposefully and intentionally addressing the problem and demonstrating it on the material. If teachers are aware the coursebooks they use lack texts or profiles of famous women, only then can they provide additional material solving the problem of uneven representation of both successful men and women.

A Teachers' Step Towards Gender-Sensitive Education

In the interest of the equal treatment of the sexes, teachers should, according to Valdřová (2001, from Smetáčková 2006, pp. 39 – 44), follow these instructions:

- Address girls directly and individually
- Increase positive comments towards girls

- Ensure a balanced composition of students' group-work
- Do not assign tasks to boys and girls in a gender-laden way
- Call on girls as often as on boys, asking them equally important or difficult questions
- Do not bind boys and girls with stereotypes
- Openly and positively accept when boys or girls behave 'gender unconventionally.'
- Exercise public speaking with both boys and girls
- Recall examples building on the specific life experiences of boys and girls
- Promote contacts and agreements between girls and boys
- Encourage boys to be gentle with others and aware of their own fears and vulnerabilities

Also, the non-profit organisation *Žába na prameni* has formulated 'ten commandments' – fundamental principles – of gender-appropriate behaviour, which are believed to be also the basic steps to gender-sensitive education and thus fair education.

1. Avoid thinking in gender stereotypes.
2. Do not ridicule women/men who behave differently to gender stereotypes.
3. Do not identify women/men who operate in less typical roles as an exception.
4. Do not justify gender stereotypes with sayings and proverbs, references to nature or scientific authorities.
5. Do not appraise differently the same behaviour in women and men.
6. Consider how the female body has been taken advantage of as a beautifying and sexually stimulating object in advertising, etc.
7. Use expressions of both genera where they are meant to denote both women and men.

8. Use feminine profession names, especially where there is a particular woman involved.
9. Consider the diversity that exists among women. Consider the diversity that exists between men.
10. Let us think about what we are laughing at.

1.3 Gender Represented in Official Documents of the Czech Republic with Focus on Education

School has always been, still is and most probably will be regulated by the government and laws, regulations and standards. “According to research studies, gender inequalities are reproduced in education from the earliest stages in multiple ways, including the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum.” (*Gender sensitive education 2019*)

The following chapter will outline how gender issues as such are anchored in official documents of the Czech Republic with a focus on education; it will also offer a viewpoint on how gender is conceptualised in these documents and how gender issues are addressed. In other words, this chapter ponders upon a question of if and how educators receive support and guideline for gender-sensitive education and which opportunities are available for teachers to incorporate gender issues into their lessons. For this purpose, the results of three-year international research Towards Gender Sensitive Education (TGSE) (Rédai & Sáfrány, 2019) will be presented, as well as the author’s own findings.

The TGSE project was realised by five organisations from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria. As a result of this project, a study was conducted in 2018 which analysed the current official documents of school policy conceptualising gender and gender equality, and it focused on primary school students and educators and university students of pedagogical majors. This chapter, however, works only with the results of the analysis of legislative and educational documents in the Czech Republic.

In total, four legislative documents, two strategy frameworks, two curricular document and three handbooks or guidelines were analysed.

1.3.1 Legislative Documents

The legislative documents analysed were the (1) Anti-Discrimination Law, (2) Education Act, (3) Higher Education Act, and (4) Government Regulation on the Educational Areas in Higher Education.

Together with other European countries, the Czech Republic has adopted laws for equal treatment – the Anti-Discrimination Law (Antidiskriminační zákon). This means discrimination against certain gender or sexual orientation is forbidden. Sexual harassment is also considered to be a form of discriminatory behaviour.

A general principle of equal access to education, including equal treatment based on gender, can be found in the Czech Act on Pre-school, Basic, Secondary, Tertiary Professional and Other Education (the Education Act – Školský zákon). The act further defines general principles and goals. The following principle can be found here: “understanding and application of the principle of equality of women and men in society.” (Act No. 561/2004 Sb. § 2, 2020) The act also states that education should be enhanced based on the results achieved in science and research and up-to-date pedagogical approaches and methods. It can therefore be assumed that research in gender studies, as well as the approach of gender-sensitive education, is implied in this point.

Although the Education Act declares equal principle based on gender and refers to the equality of women and men, in the Higher Education Act (Zákon o vysokých školách) and the Government Regulation on the Educational Areas in Higher Education (Nařízení vlády o oblastech vzdělávání ve vysokoém školství), there is no mention of gender, gender equality no gender competencies of future teachers. In other words, Czech legislative documents providing the education of future teachers do not suggest any requirements for implementing gender equality of future educators. (Křišová, 2019, p. 37-38)

1.3.2 Strategic Frameworks

The Czech Republic, as well as other European countries, possesses a strategy paper for promoting gender equality which refers to the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). Gender equality is, however, not thematised here; the obligation to provide equal education opportunities and results to all regardless of gender and other characteristics is however mentioned. The document further mentions the gender disproportion of teaching professions. Gender inequality is not further pursued.

Ministry of Education, youth and Sports addresses gender inequality in the Women and Men Equality Support Plan 2021-2024 (Plán rovnosti MŠMT), which acknowledges the problem of gender inequality in the Czech school system. The paper proposes implementing gender issues as one of the six cross-sectioning topics. It further states the function of cross-sectioning topics, which is to introduce students to present-day problems in order to shape students' attitudes and values. Thus, gender issues would need to become part of all or most education areas and educational disciplines, whether only at the output level or even in the classroom as a subject matter. Compared to the status quo, however, gender issues should be dealt with more specifically, and appropriate terminology should be employed.

1.3.3 Curricular Document

The main instrument of gender socialisation in school is the curriculum. Formal and informal curriculum can be recognised. The former includes subject matter and coursebooks; the latter constitutes the ratios of women and men among teacher, the frequency and content of teacher-student contact and the organisation of school activities. Gender issues are embedded in the objectives and content of education in the Framework Educational Programme (FEP), Rámcový Vzdělávací Program (RVP) in Czech. FEP is a centrally

processed pedagogical document approved and issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. FEP states generally binding requirements for the different levels and disciplines, determines what educational objectives must be met, and determines areas of education. For each field of education, a separate FEP is issued. The following chapter presents how the individual FEPs handle gender issues. Examples from FEP for grammar school and the secondary school of business and economics will be included.

Firstly, the term ‘gender’ does appear in the FEP for grammar school, mainly as a category among others (e.g., “respect differences in age, gender and performance as well as other physical differences” (p. 61) in terms of physical education). Gender issues are then explicitly addressed in the thematic areas of the cross-curricular subject, where they are stated as one of the Global Problems, their causes and effects, i.e., “inequality between men and women in the global context, gender issues” (p. 72). In the educational area of Man and Society, students are guided towards “revealing prejudice in the opinions on various people, events or social phenomena and processes; recognising negative stereotypes of the roles of men and women in society” (p. 39). The cross-curricular subject of Multicultural Education is believed to contribute to the development of the pupil’s character; precisely, the objective is to “understand, respect and defend the idea that each individual is responsible for the elimination of discrimination and prejudice against people of another ethnic group, nationality, skin colour, religion, social origin, gender and sexual orientation actively; recognising negative stereotypes of the roles of men and women in society” (p. 74).

The chapter on physical education contains one remark which may be seen as rather sexist. While it lists the subject matter (e.g., athletics, swimming, gymnastics), the subject matter “conditioning and aesthetic forms of exercise with music and rhythmic accompaniment” includes a note in brackets saying “intended mainly for girls – at least two

forms of exercises according to the conditions and interest of female pupils, or also male pupils if they are interested” (p. 61).

In comparison to previous programmes, the EFP for secondary school of business and economics addresses gender issues only briefly. The only mention of women and men is in the educational area Social Education, more specifically Man in Human Community where students are to study the position of women and men and gender problems. Also, the area of Man and History teaches about the position of women in the 19th century.

It should be noted that all mentioned FEPs address gender issues rather implicitly. Also, all the texts use the masculine expression of the word student (‘žák’), which is commonly used in the Czech Republic to address students of all genders. This custom has often been criticised and is one of the concerns of gender studies.

1.3.4 Handbooks and Guidelines

The majority of handbook and guidelines for gender-sensitive education available in the Czech Republic are published by non-profit organisations. Nevertheless, some have been issued in collaboration with or on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The most recent is a 2010 handbook on gender-balanced language to reduce discrimination against women in language practice and to reduce sexist expressions. In 2019 a handbook on sex education was printed. It includes a chapter dealing directly with gender stereotypes in sex education. A final document is a one-page tool for assessing coursebook by gender correctness, which in the form of questions offers a guide for reflecting the gender stereotypes of teaching materials. (Krišová, 2019, p. 41)

Overall, the Czech Republic has well-developed strategies as well as guidelines but lacks institutional and legislative support. References to gender are of general nature (i.e., not gender-oriented) non-specific, legislative and curricular documents do not

explicitly operate with gender; one of the key strategy papers even uses only the concept of gender instead of gender equality.

Referring to the results of the formerly mentioned TGSE study, the Czech Republic finds itself somewhere in between the two approaches adopted by the two fellow European countries. While Austria has been addressing gender inequality since the late 20th century and actively strives for improvement, the Hungarian government presents itself as anti-gender, anti-feminist while closing faculties of gender studies. Gender equality in the Czech Republic is promoted but not considered a priority. The strategic objectives and proposed measures are not sufficiently achieved, and gender-sensitive education is developed by the non-profit sector, which faces attacks from some political leaders and efforts to limit its funding.

Furthermore, unlike teachers of history, biology or social education, English teachers are not given many opportunities to introduce gender issues into their lessons. As a matter of fact, gender topics can be approached through the thematic areas of cross-curricular subjects, namely Global Problems and Multicultural Education. In the future, more options might be available as gender issues have been proposed as another cross-curricular topic. The analysed documents present the tendency of gender mainstreaming; educators are provided with little yet some guidance in pursuing gender-sensitive education. Incorporating gender issues into lessons might be considered the last of the three consecutive steps of gender-sensitive education – gender-responsiveness – the ability to intervene against gender prejudice and discrimination actively.

Křišová (2019, p.43) believes that establishing a permanent department for gender equality at the Ministry of Education, as is the case in Austria, and the inclusion of the gender competence requirement of teachers in the relevant legislation would help to improve the situation. These requirements would have to be accompanied by further training

of the educators. Courses and schoolings in gender-sensitive education are already available. However, their offer is limited, and they are attended by teachers who already have a particular sensitivity to the subject of gender issues. More detailed and comprehensive integration of the gender perspective into the framework educational programmes would undoubtedly help to ensure a more inclusive environment in Czech schools. This step was suggested as one of the government's priorities for promoting gender equality in 2019-20 and was also developed by the Ministry of Education Strategy Paper. The strategy of the Ministry of Education also proposed to make gender equality one of the cross-section subjects. Neither of the aforementioned steps has been accomplished yet, even though they and the other measures mentioned above have been formulated several times in the past by experts on gender equality in education. The Shadow Report on the state of Gender Equality also mentioned them and recommended including gender equality among the criteria for inclusive education.

1.4 Gender Issues in EFL Lessons

Although it might not be a common practice, referring to Norton and Pavlenko (2004), English language teachers (both ESL and EFL) worldwide address gender issues in their classes in four ways. Firstly, teachers innovate the curriculum by introducing new classes which respond to the needs of their students. An example Norton and Pavlenko provided in their paper was a class developed to serve the needs of immigrant women in New York City. Secondly, teachers adopt “feminist teaching practices, materials, and activities” (p. 505). An example given was an advanced-level writing class where the participants conducted a feminist analysis on soap operas. The third way is managing topics by incorporating them into already existing classes.” (p. 505). This possibility was explored by one teacher, Roxanne, who “used lesbian and gay themes to explore cultural meaning in her grammar-based ESL class in a lesson on modal auxiliaries.” (p. 509) The last way is a classroom management and decision-making practices” which can be achieved by sharing power between student and teachers. To provide an example, teachers can negotiate the curriculum, create mini-projects where teachers cooperate with learners rather than guide them, or open writing centres as free, flexible space.

Czech teachers of the English language may face some obstacles in pursuing most of the above-mentioned ways since they are, among other things, more suitable for ESL classes, mature and advanced speakers. Nevertheless, the teacher may incorporate gender topics into their already existing classes. Although not being administered as one of the cross-section subjects, as requested in the Strategy Paper devised annually by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, gender issues can be considered a cross-sectional topic which entwines many subject matters.

Firstly, teachers might find certain holidays, international days, anniversaries, and latest events suitable for introducing the topic of gender in their lessons. For instance, Czech holidays are a great conversation starter to discussing what Czech women must do in order not to ‘dry out’ or ‘stay single’ and how men assist them with their formidable task, e.g., kissing under the cherry blossom, getting spanked. International Mother’s and Father’s Day is a convenient time to bring up the issue of the roles of men and women within a family. International Women’s Day provides an excellent opportunity to study the achievement of women throughout history, about women’s movement, feminism, or to commemorate an important woman, her life and her legacy. Lastly, an example of the latest news, earlier this year, Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention. This news might provide the grounds for discussing the purpose of this convention, which EU members have ratified, what will change for Turkish women.

Secondly, lessons addressing gender issues can be based on the content of students’ coursebooks. If students are to study personal characteristics, they might also study the characteristic perceived as feminine and masculine and continue with gender stereotypes, i.e., hairy armpits and cosmetic products. When the coursebook guides the students towards advertising and mass media, the teacher might want to talk about the objectification of women’s sexuality. When learning to distinguish between formal and informal language, students might simultaneously learn about gender-inclusive language. Studying jobs and occupations, teachers may want to provide the students with a gender-neutral term for individual occupations and ponder upon why some industries and positions are represented mainly by men. Included might be the topic of the glass ceiling, pay gap or maternal/parental leave. Coming across the topic of the problems of today’s world, gender issues should definitely be mentioned. Opening a lesson about education might be suitable for a discussion about single-sex schools and differences in learning strategies, abilities and

favourite subjects of girls and boys to raise awareness of gender stereotypes. If students are to study a unit about crime and justice, teachers might want to include some statistics of domestic violence, sexual harassment and violence against women. Talking about travelling, tourism and culture might be perfect for introducing students to different cultures and traditions. Students might be interested in what to expect when travelling to countries where men and women have different roles, rights and status than in their country. A unit about sports can raise the question if women are as successful in sport as men and if women's sports teams are funded as much as men's.

To summarise, Czech authorities recognise the term gender and address inequality between women and men. Schools are advised to promote gender equality mainly by adopting principles of gender-sensitive education. English teachers are not provided with any specific guidance in incorporating gender issues into EFL lessons; therefore, the possibility is dependent mainly on the teacher's ambition. Alongside adopting the principles of gender-sensitive education, reflecting on their language use, behaviour, and carefully choosing the material, teachers are not limited in incorporating gender topics into their already existing classes ČR as long as their students meet the learning outcomes and competencies specified in the Framework Educational Programme and the School Educational Programme.

2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Scrivener argues in *Learning Teaching* (2011) that “there is no specific basis yet for writing a description of an ideal teaching methodology. Instead, we can observe teachers and learners at work and take note of strategies and approaches that seem to be more beneficial than others, not necessarily in order to copy them, but to become more aware of what is possible.” (p. 8)

The second part of this thesis provides an explanation of basic terminology and an insight into teaching approaches focusing on content. The aim is to determine which approach is the most suitable for incorporating gender issues into EFL lessons. Attention will also be paid to lesson planning and lesson reflection. To sum up, it provides a fundamental theoretical background on which the designed lessons were developed.

2.1 Terminology

EFL

EFL is an acronym for English as a Foreign Language. It is English teaching and learning as an additional language in a non-English-speaking country. Because English is not an official language in the Czech Republic, Czech students usually learn English as a foreign language. Materials developed for EFL teaching are oriented towards students studying English in their home country or attending a language course in an English-speaking country. EFL learners need more practice, especially oral practice. They also require better motivation since they do not need English for their day-to-day communication.

ESL

ESL stands for English as a second language which means English is taught and learnt in countries where English is primarily spoken and is an official language. For instance, immigrants to an English-speaking country are expected to learn English as a second language. The term ESL can be, however, misleading because it suggests that English is automatically the second language a person acquires. Nevertheless, ESL also covers also language learners who speak several languages, e.g., bilingual speakers. ESL materials likely focus on 'survival English'. ESL learners are also taught cultural norms for better integration into the community.

TESOL

TESOL is an international organisation for teachers of English as a second (or foreign) language. Its name is the abbreviation of its former name – Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. TESOL is sometimes referred to as an umbrella term for TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and TESL – Teaching English as a second language.

Approach

“An approach refers to the general assumptions about what language is and how learning a language occurs” (Richards and Rogers, 2011, p. 21). In other words, it is the philosophy – a system of beliefs and assumptions – examining the linguistic and psycholinguistics aspects. An approach investigates how language competence is acquired and the circumstances that facilitate it.

The approach dominating classrooms all over the world for the last 50 years is the communicative approach, also known as the functional approach. Unlike previous approaches, the communicative approach focuses on communicating the meaning of the message rather than on grammatical fluency. It emphasises the interaction of students; it teaches students strategies to understand a language. Authentic texts are preferred. Communicative language learning adopts the principle of eclecticism, which means various teaching methods are employed depending on the competence of the learners and their needs.

Method

According to Richards and Rogers (2014), “The method concept in teaching is the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language teaching.” (p. 3) A method is an overall plan a teacher follows to present language. It asks, after the practical realisation of teaching, the roles of the teacher, students and material.

Throughout history, innovations in language teaching have occurred based on the latest trends, approaches. The question underlining language methods is “how to improve the quality of teaching and learning in language teaching classroom.” (p.4) The study of methods helps the teachers to understand how teaching has evolved, introduces them to options and principles in planning and developing their lessons and courses. Perhaps one of the first and best known was the Grammar-Translation method.

Technique

A technique (sometimes used interchangeably with procedures) is the teacher's personal strategies and practices in the classroom. Techniques are the specific implementation of a method and approach in a classroom.

Aim

Aims are also called educational goals. They serve the teacher to state what they want to achieve clearly. Aims are very broad and general, often impossible to be achieved. Petty (2009, p. 410) states:

Aims are like compass directions, indicating the general direction in which the teacher wishes to travel. As such, they are vital; but they are not specific enough to help the teacher pick learning activities or assess whether learning has taken place.

Objectives

Objectives, also learning outcomes, are the teachers' short-term intentions described in a detailed way. They need to be testable, achievable and student-oriented. Objectives help teachers plan the lesson and chose the suitable activities. Objectives usually begin with the phrase 'The student should be able to...'. In his taxonomy, B. S. Bloom divides objectives into three domains, i.e., cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain.

2.2 Approaches Focusing on Content

What determines if the learning of a foreign language will succeed or fail is undoubtedly how the target language is delivered. Recent education reform attempts, more specifically, the Czech curricular reform in 2005, encourage a departure from a traditional teacher-centred classroom towards a progressive, student-centred and constructivist approach. Emphasis is on individualisation of learning processes, cognitive activation of students, the introduction of authentic learning tasks requiring the transfer of what has been learned into new contexts, generative problem solving, verbalisation of problem-solving, support of metacognitive processes etc. In other words, instead of passively receiving a collection of facts, students become active in their learning process. Bald memorisation, repetition and recitation were replaced by problem-solving, cooperation, self-directed inquiry. Students have the opportunity to discover a language by exploring the subject matter. Students are viewed as thinkers who are able to perform demanding tasks. Students become responsible for their learning process.

A great number of methods and approaches have been developed so far, as well as a wealth of techniques and procedures, along with language theories and theories of learning, to improve language teaching. Language specialists, linguists and methodologists were and are constantly and unflaggingly seeking the best way of delivering the language to the pupils. (Lišková, 2017, p. 18)

In the following chapter, methods that integrate language instruction and content will be presented. Content is what motivates students in their learning process, all the more if students are able to recognise the value of what they are studying.

2.2.1 Content-Based Instruction

Content-based instruction (CBI) falls into the group of approaches to language education based on proficiency which combines content and language learning. Krahnke defines it as “the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught” (from Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 204). Crandall (1999) summarises this methodology as “learning about something rather than learning about language” (p. 604). Language, therefore, serves as a medium to convey any relevant content; it becomes a vessel for achieving content goals. The content, as Snow (2001) sees it,

is the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes. Subject matter may consist of topics or themes-based interest or need in an adult EFL setting, or it may be very specific, such as the subjects that students are currently studying in their elementary school classes. (p. 303)

This approach can be found in ESP classes (English for Specific Purposes) or EAP classes (English for Academic Purposes), where the content is the subject matter of the course and English is the language in which it is delivered. Students develop academic skills (e.g., note-taking, paraphrasing) as well as thinking skills (e.g., re-evaluating information from different sources). Students are encouraged to work in groups developing their collaborative skills. “The assumption is that students learn the language by using it within the specific context. Rather than learning a language out of context, it is learned within the context of a specific academic subject.” (Jones, 2014, p. 109)

Students might find CBI more interesting and motivating than other principles in which language skills are taught in isolation since language in CBI is used to fulfil a real purpose. This can help students with their learner anxiety and make them more independent. On the other hand, students can feel confused; since there is no explicit focus on the

language, students might feel they are not improving their language skills. The overuse of the mother tongue may also be seen as a disadvantage, particularly in monolingual classes where the students get preoccupied with the task and forget to use the target language.

CBI may employ various teaching methods, both traditional (e.g., grammar-based instruction) and contemporary (e.g., communicative language teaching), but does not prescribe any specific one. In his paper, Bula Villalobos (2014, p.73) summarises principles devised by Richards and Rogers (2001) and additional principles offered by Brinton (2003), which complement them. The principles are as followed:

1. Base instructional decisions on content rather than language
2. Integrate skills
3. Involve students actively in all phases of the learning process
4. Choose content for its relevance to students' lives, interests, and/or academic goals
5. Select authentic texts and tasks
6. Draw attention to language features

“CBI has been very effective in ESL immersion programs; consequently, the interest has expanded to EFL classrooms” (Davies, 2003). Three dominant models of CBI can be distinguished, namely (1) Sheltered Content Instruction, (2) Adjunct Language Instruction, and (3) Theme-based Language instruction. Brown (2001), however, identifies only (1) strong and (2) weak version of content-based teaching. These individual types differ in the degree of integration of language and content (Fig. 4).

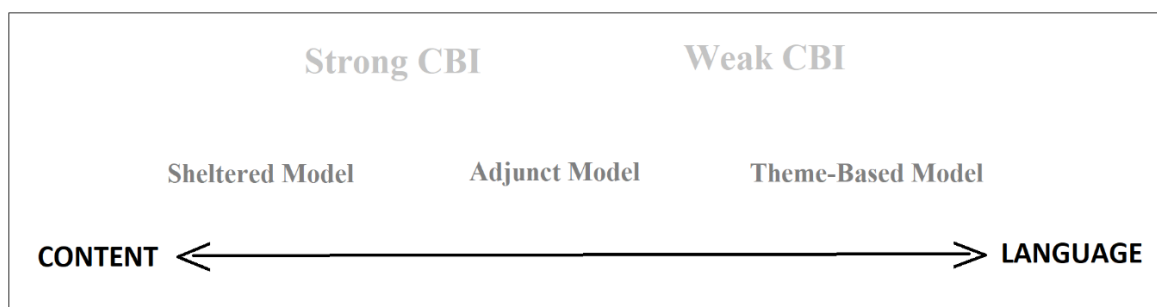


Figure 1. *Types of Content-Based Instruction*

Students in the Sheltered model are given extra guidance to help them understand a standard class. In most cases, two teachers work together, one being the content specialist and the second an ESL specialist. „It has been used successfully at the bilingual University of Ottawa, where classes are taught in English and French.” (Briton, 1989 from Davies, 2003).

In the Adjunct model, students are taught separately from English L1 learners. They are taught by an ESL teacher, and the main emphasis is on acquiring specific vocabulary or skills (e.g., skimming reading, listening). Some classes are taught during the summer break as the primary purpose is to prepare the students to join the ‘mainstream’ class.

While the previous two models focus on ESL and bilingual education, the “Theme-Based model is found in the EFL context” (Davies, 2003). Students are not expected to become bilingual but to develop competence, skill and proficiency in using the language. Thus, content learning is incidental. Students are taught by a language instructor, and the themes are chosen based on their ability to help students improve their language skills.

2.2.2 Theme-Based Instruction

Theme-based instruction was developed as a response to Content-Based Instruction; more specifically, as Brown (2001) contends, it is the weak form of CBI. The idea behind it was that “language education in EFL contexts should be similar to that of ESL to some

extent.” (Yugandhar, 2016, p. 88) However, unlike the content of ESL classes, the teachers of EFL classes can design a syllabus that consists of diverse topics based on the interest of the students. Also, the main objective of this model is to teach both the content of interest and language skills.

Teachers can provide nearly every type of content material that their learners can enjoy. After presenting the material (e.g., various reading sources, supplements from the internet, newspaper, simplified versions of authentic material), comprehension and vocabulary exercises should always follow.

Teacher-compiled content resources, Teacher-generated content resources, Task-generated content resources, and external content resources are the four basic types of texts which are found effective in Theme-based CBI to engage students in improving their content and skills. Texts of various genres, audio, visual materials, Lectures, worksheets, graphic representations, PPT’s, Manuals, Handouts, Student scripts, discussions, activities, student-gathered materials and Guest speakers by the subject experts, Material from the library and websites would be appropriate material as content resources. (Yugandhar, 2016, p. 88)

One of the great advantages of this approach is that it “serves the multiple interests of students in a classroom” (Brown, 2001, p. 236) since there are many topics and themes introduced throughout the whole school year. Students have the chance to associate words and language structures with certain topics, which undoubtedly aids understanding and memory. Students then have the chance to focus on the content while still complying with the curriculum and the institutional requirements. “Theme-Based courses provide a good basis for an integrated skills approach because the topics selected provide coherence and continuity across skill areas and focus on the use of language in connected discourse rather

than in isolated fragments. They seek to integrate knowledge, language, and thinking skills” (Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p. 130)

Yugandhar (2016) points out some important features of Theme-Based Instruction:

1. Students are active
2. Interactive and holistic learning
3. Negotiation
4. Information gathering
5. Co-construction of meaning
6. Improvement of English skills
7. Developing learning strategies
8. Understanding the culture of English-speaking people

Apart from its demands on the teachers – they become somewhat double experts (expert in language teaching and expert in the subject matter) – Theme-Based Instruction is relatively proficiency flexible, economical, convenient and easy to implement. According to Brown (2001, p. 236), “Theme based instruction provides an alternative to what would otherwise be traditional language classes by structuring a course around themes or topics.” Stoller and Grabe (1997) believe that also TESOL methodology, as well as elementary school classrooms are essentially theme-based, as they are organised around thematic units. As Walmsley (1994) states,

the elementary curriculum consists of content-area themes (e.g., themes drawn from social studies, math, health, music), calendar-related themes (e.g., seasons, national holidays, anniversaries of specific events), conceptual themes (e.g., themes that are organised around abstract concepts such as "courage" or "growing up"), biographical themes (e.g., a famous person), current event themes (e.g., local or national issues),

and form themes (e.g., genres such as myths, legends, science fiction). (from Stoller and Grabe, 1997, p. 82)

Indeed, due to its many benefits, Theme-Based Instruction has become the most commonly found model in modern EFL coursebooks also in the Czech Republic.

2.2.3 Content and Language Integrated Learning

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) employs a very similar methodology as Content-Based Instruction (CBI). In fact, the main differences lie in the origin of both approaches. While CLIL originated in Europe, CBI has its roots in North America. Both approaches have features in common, yet they differ in focus. As Richards and Rodgers (2014) put it:

CBI often involves language a language teacher teaching through English, working with a content teacher to co-teach a course, or a content teacher designing and teaching a course for ESL learners. CLIL often involves a content teacher teaching content through a second or foreign language, as does CBI, but also may involve content from subjects used in language classes. That is, the CLIL curriculum may originate in the language class, whereas CBI tends to have as its starting point the goals of a content class. (p. 116)

Another minor difference can be found in the sanction and official proposition. While CBI developed organically over a period of time, CLIL was encouraged to develop and, according to Dalton-Puffer (2007), has become “the core instrument for achieving policy aims directed at creating a multilingual population in Europe” (from Richards and Rodgers, 2014, p. 116). CLIL is, therefore, suitable for those who will use English as a lingua franca.

Focusing on the common ground of both approaches, lexis is essential for delivering content. Often registers are used depending on the subject or content area. Grammar is not taught gradually but rather when it emerges from context; therefore, pragmatics is also of importance. Since CBI, as well as CLIL, are discourse-based, they engage in the study of longer texts in which meaning and information are conveyed. Students are familiarised with various text-types and in different academic disciplines. Both CBI and CLIL are integrative approaches since they involve the development of several skills together, e.g., reading and summarising or listening and notetaking.

Richards and Rodgers (2014, pp 129-133) managed to formulate the key points of the theory of learning, which applies to both CBI and CLIL.

1. Comprehension
 - Teacher should make modifications and simplifications to make the content comprehensible.
2. Negotiation of meaning
 - Both teacher and the students work together, for example, through several exchanges, to understand the content.
3. Corrective feedback
 - Teacher provides corrective feedback to help the students develop language awareness and accuracy.
4. Dialogic talk
 - Teacher facilitates cumulative questioning, guided discussions etc., to help the learning of both language and content.
5. Prior knowledge
 - Background knowledge of the students and world knowledge should be activated to facilitate the content better.

6. Scaffolded learning

- Teacher assists and provides means to the students so they can accomplish a similar task themselves.

Ultimately, the content is a bolt between the teachers teaching and the students learning. It conditions the designing of tasks as well as the cooperation between the students and the teacher in solving them. Content is also what connects the students' activity with the aims which the lesson is seeking to achieve.

Based on the theoretical framework of content-based approaches laid out in this chapter and considering the common principles of the individual approaches, several principles were selected to be applied in the lesson planning process. Also, it was taken into consideration that the sample lessons will be piloted in an online environment. The principles are as followed:

- Meaningful context
- Focus on discussion
- Enhancing students' awareness
- Independent work
- Language support
- Promote student involvement
- Cooperative learning
- Content material is motivating

In conclusion, all the mentioned approaches provide a solid foundation for effective language teaching and would be suitable for the intended purpose. However, it is necessary to understand that they sometimes fail to address all the students' needs, learning styles and

interests. Students of pedagogy might have heard a recommendation to the effect of “teach the students, not the material/method.” Indeed, teachers might consider combining what they find to be the most effective for their learners from each approach and apply it to their own teaching philosophy and teaching style. Only through time, experience and reflection can teachers become aware of what is best for their students and effective for them.

2.3 Lesson Planning

In Chapter 1.2, the general theoretical framework of content-based approaches was laid out. This section focuses on planning for content-based lessons. There are not many frameworks offering a theoretical and methodological foundation for theme-based lessons; however, Stoller and Grabe (1997) suggested Six-T's approach for a better organisation of the theme-based course and building coherence. The Six-Ts are the “common features which any good CBI program would want to incorporate” (p. 3). Since Stoller and Grabe use the two terms *content-based instruction* and *theme-based instruction* interchangeably, this can be successfully adopted in theme-based lesson planning. The components of the Six-T's framework are Themes, Topics, Texts, Tasks, Transitions and Threads.

Themes are “central ideas that organise major curricular units” (p. 5). They need to interest the students, comply with their needs, be appropriate and be relevant in the institution. Usually, classes explore two and more themes in a semester. Themes are an umbrella term and include many topics.

Topics “are the subunits of content which explore more specific aspects of the theme” (p. 5). Topics can be selected based on teacher's preferences, and they should involve larger objectives of the curricular. Topics should be structured coherently and provide space for content and language learning.

Texts as content resources should be the means of presenting language in the classroom. Texts should include a variety of genres and formats. Significant aspects of texts which should be taken into account include the length, coherence, connection to other material, accessibility and availability. The chart illustrates the different types of texts. (Fig. 2)

Types of texts	Examples of content resources
Instructor-compiled content resources	Readings of various genres, videos, audiotapes, maps, tables, graphs, software
Instructor-generated content resources	Lectures, worksheets, graphic representations, bulletin board displays
Task-generated content resources	Student freewrites, discussions, problem-solving activities, graphic representations, library searches, debates, surveys/questionnaires
External content resources	Guest speakers, field trips

Figure 2. *Four basic types of texts used in theme unit.* (Stroller and Grabe, 1997, p. 83)

Tasks “are the instructional activities and techniques utilized for content, language, and strategy instruction in language classrooms” (p. 6). The task should be in accordance with the texts being used.

Transitions are the smooth links between topics in the same theme unit and between tasks within topics. They foster the coherence of the curricular. Stroller and Grabe distinguish between topical and task transitions.

Threads are abstract ideas woven across the curriculum also to provide and sustain greater coherence. Threads are tied to the controlling idea of each theme. They help students synthesize, and they provide “opportunities to integrate information and view both language and content from new perspectives” (p. 6).

Stroller and Grabe also outline the general gradual steps teachers would take to implement the Six-T’s approach. Firstly, a theme should be decided, as well as the topics which are selected based on relevant and interesting texts. The second step involves selecting possible threads as a link between the theme, texts and topics. In the third step, teachers should decide the sequence of content, i.e., themes, topics and texts, which will be based on availability, difficulty and cognitive demands. The length of the unit should also be decided. The fourth is dedicated to teachers’ involvement. They should be committed to expanding

their knowledge of the content and search for additional information. This way, teachers not only finesse their expertise, become invested and motivated to teach the content, gain inspiration for further tasks, and consider multiple perspectives on the content. In the next step, objectives need to be devised for every theme unit. Hence, the appropriate opening and closing tasks are chosen. The sixth step includes the designation of tasks. Apart from content, they should also facilitate language and learning strategies. Tasks are always devised based on the texts. The following step promotes flexibility; on the one hand, teachers should determine transition across topics, and on the other hand, they should be open to variations and resources generated by students. Highlighted is the necessity for the natural and systemic flow of tasks. The eighth step is the final stage which also favours flexibility. It is expected that teachers vary and adapt to the students' needs and interests, therefore devise new topics and seek new resources.

On the whole, Stoller and Grabe have developed an explanatory framework and guidelines for teachers to ensure coherence in their content-based curricular. Also, “the principles organizing the Six-T's approach can be used to reorganize foreign language curricula and assist in adapting EFL instruction into more coherent and interesting formats” (p. 91).

2.4 Means of Reflection

There is no need to highlight how vital a reflection is for teaching practice in order to assure the quality of education. Scrivener (2011) explains that “twenty years of teaching experience can become no more than two years’ experience repeated ten times over.” Reflection has become the key notion of teachers’ education; still, there seems to be a dispute about what reflection is. There is no uniformity in defining reflection, and the term is often used without any particular concept; some even find reflection to be a unique form of ‘thinking’ (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Various definitions relate to different opinions about what is really important in teachers’ training. As Korthagen (2001) views it, the most important principle for Dewey is if the concerned person sees the connection between the situation they are in and the goal they want to achieve. For Zeichner, it is essential to establish relations between action and ethical, moral and political principles. Chruickshank focuses on the relations between the intentions and the means.

In this chapter, some models and frameworks that describe the reflective process will be introduced. From the cognitive psychological perspective, reflection is always focused on influencing the mental structures steering our behaviour. The 3A, for example, is a specific three-step methodology defined by Slavík, Janík and Najvar (2016) for analysing “real-life teaching and learning situations in the classroom captured on video” (p. 672). It consists of (1) annotating, (2) analysing, and (3) alternating a particular situation. The situation is chosen to illustrate a good combination of teachers’ curricular work and its realisation.

A framework looking beyond individual situations and even lessons is Farrell’s (2015) framework for reflecting on practice. His framework includes (1) philosophy – reflection on teachers’ roots of practice and personal values, (2) principles – reflection of

teachers' assumptions, beliefs and conceptions of teaching, (3) theory – reflection of teachers' planning, different activities and methods, (4) practice – a reflection of actions in the classroom during a lesson, (5) beyond practice – teachers “exploring and examining the moral, political and social issues that impact a teacher’s practice both inside and outside the classroom” (p. 87).

Studies have pointed out that a reflection needs to be guided since it is a challenging activity. Scrivener (2011), however, believes teachers can also reflect on their actions themselves. In his book *Learning Teaching*, Scrivener distinguishes between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ feedback. The prior happens immediately after the lesson, and the latter needs the space of at least an hour. Scrivener has also formulated a series of questions for lesson self-assessment (Fig. 3). These questions are further divided into three categories. Questions from the *A* category encourage teachers to recall what happened in the class, while *B* category questions encourage the teachers to reflect on it, and lastly, questions from category *C* help the teachers conclude experience and make plans for future teaching. Continuing in his studies, Scrivener has also developed the experimental learning cycle, which seems to function not only for teachers but also for students. The cycle is very understandable and self-explanatory, consisting of the following stages: (1) Do, (2) Recall, (3) Reflect, (4) Conclude, (5) Prepare; this then leads back to a new *Do* phase. This cycle can facilitate feedback of situations, activities as well as the whole lesson.

A Recalling the lesson

- 1 List a number of things that you did during the lesson.
- 2 List a number of things that the students did during the lesson.
- 3 Note down any comments or feedback that a student gave you during the lesson.
- 4 Note any important personal interaction between you and a student during the lesson.
- 5 Summarise the main stages of the lesson as you remember it.
- 6 What was the balance of 'teacher doing things' compared with 'students doing things' in the lesson?
- 7 List some things that happened approximately as you planned them.
- 8 List some things that happened differently from your plan.
- 9 Recall one moment in the lesson when you had a clear decision to make between one option and another. What were the options you chose and rejected?

B Reflecting on the lesson

- 1 Note several things that you are proud of about the lesson.
- 2 What was the high point of the lesson for you? Why did it feel good?
- 3 Can you answer that same question from the students' point of view?
- 4 Name several specific points in the lesson where you feel the students were learning something.
- 5 At what points could you have been clearer?
- 6 Which part of the lesson involved the students most completely?
- 7 Where were the main challenges for the students?
- 8 Where was time not used efficiently?
- 9 At what point did you feel most awkward or uncomfortable?
- 10 Did you achieve what you wanted to achieve?
- 11 Did the students achieve what you hoped they would achieve?

C Drawing conclusions; making plans

- 1 If you taught the lesson again, what would you do the same?
- 2 If you taught the lesson again, what would you do differently?
- 3 What have you learned about your planning?
- 4 What have you learned about your teaching procedures and techniques?
- 5 What have you learned about your students?
- 6 What have you learned about yourself?
- 7 What have you learned about learning?
- 8 List some intentions or 'action plans' for your future teaching.
- 9 Write a brief description of yourself as a teacher seen from a student's viewpoint. What is it like to be taught by you?

Figure 3. *Questions for lesson self-assessment.* (Scrivener, 2011, p. 388)

2.4.1 The ALACT Model

A reflection is a process often taking a form of a cycle or a spiral. Similar to Scrivener's model is ALACT Model devised by Korthagen and his colleagues (2001) to promote reflection in teacher education and connect theory and praxis. Gore & Zeichner (1991) support the implementation of this so-called realistic model into teachers' training. They argue that it helps to develop a habit of self-monitoring in the early stages of teachers' training. The teachers can then begin their praxis with dispositions and skills, which will allow them to learn from their experience and improve their teaching throughout their whole career.

Perhaps for its straightforwardness, the ALACT Model has become the most popular model of educational programs in the Netherlands and in many other places internationally. ALACT is a five-phase process (Fig. 3) consisting of (1) Action, (2) Looking back on the action, (3) Awareness of essential aspects, (4) Creating alternative methods of actions and (5) Trial of new practices.

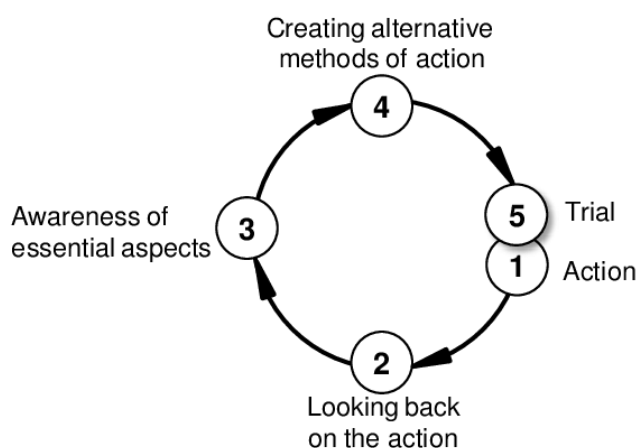


Figure 3. *The ALACT model describing a structured process of reflection.*

One of the reasons the ALATC model is often criticised is that it “describes a structured reflective process, but it does not tell us much about the content of reflection:

what does or should the teacher reflect upon?” (Sööt, & Viskus, 2015, p. 1942). The reflective questions based on the ALACT model (Fig. 4) are a concrete proposition for implementing this model.

<p>Reflection questions</p> <p>Phase 5 of the previous cycle (= phase 1 of the present cycle):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What did I want to achieve?2. What did I want to pay particular attention to?3. What did I want to try out? <p>Phase 2 (looking back):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. What were the concrete events? <p>- What did I want? - What did I do? - What did I think? - How did I feel? - What do I think that the students wanted, did, thought, felt?</p> <p>Phase 3 (awareness of essential aspects):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. What is the connection between the answers to the aspects mentioned in question 4?6. What is the influence of the context/the school as a whole?7. What does that mean for me?8. What is the problem (or the positive discovery)? <p>Phase 4 (alternatives):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. What alternatives do I see? (solutions or ways to make use of my discovery)?10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?11. What do I resolve to do next time?
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Figure 4. *Questions for promoting reflection, based on the ALACT model.* (Korthagen et al., 2001, p. 210)

The cycle begins with **phase 1** described as an action that highlights the importance of having clear goals and means to achieve them. Simultaneously, it represents the beginning of a new cycle and thus **phase 5**. A specific experience conditions both phases. The teachers then ask themselves questions, such as: *What did I want to achieve? What did I want to pay particular attention to? What did I want to try out?*

In **phase 2**, teachers recall the action from their own as well as the students' perspective. This invites further contemplation of how they acted, what they thought, what they wanted or felt. They should also recall any unexpected reactions from the students. Such

moments are usually vital to the teaching experience. This phase is supported by questions:

What did I want, do, think, feel? What do I think the pupils wanted, did, thought, felt?

Phase 3 is used for realising the crucial aspects. This phase is confrontational; the weak and strong points of the action should be defined here. Teachers should realise their ideal and real selves. They also need to specify the problematic situation and generalise this problem – seek if there is any link between them. The example questions are: ***What is the connection between the answers to the aspects mentioned in question 4? What is the influence of the context/the school as a whole? What does that mean for me? What is the problem (or the positive discovery)?***

The purpose of **phase 4** is to create an alternative course of action. The teachers search for a solution ponders individual options. However, they should not settle with the first, which is usually also the most comfortable solution. They are advised to consider the pros and cons even at the cost of engaging in further studies (reading, attending courses, asking for advice etc.) The following questions can be asked: ***What alternatives do I see? (solutions or ways to make use of my discovery)? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? What do I resolve to do next time?***

For reflection on the piloted lessons, Korthagen's realistic ALACT model was employed. The fact that had to be considered during the reflection is that all lessons had to be piloted online and therefore cannot elaborate on students' reactions (other than verbal reactions) and other nuances in a class where both the students and the teacher are physically present.

3 PRACTICAL PART

The purpose of the practical part of this thesis is to assemble and deliver five lessons oriented towards gender issues, recognise the opportunities and obstacles of these lessons and propose a solution to enhance my future teaching skills further. Another crucial aspect observed is whether students are interested in gender topics and whether English classes are suitable for promoting them.

The first chapter describes the planning process which adopted Stoller's and Grabe's Six-T's approach. Secondly, the fact that the lessons had to be piloted online had to be acknowledged. It is further elaborated on the opportunities and obstacles connected with online teaching. Apart from this, lessons are reflected upon using Korthagen's ALACT model with the focus on recognising the problematic parts and offering possible alterations. Finally, the practical part concludes with the overall evaluation of the teaching experience. The lesson plans, together with the students' handouts, can be found in the appendices.

3.1 Stages of Research

The following list reveals the sequence of stages of the research and links the steps to sections of this thesis.

1. Resources on gender were researched to establish the broader theoretical framework (see chapter 2 Gender and School)
2. Resources were researched in order to choose the appropriate teaching method and suitable apparatus for lesson reflection (see chapter 3 English Language Teaching)
3. Lessons were planned, and students' handouts were created (see appendices)
4. The chances and challenges of learning during lockdown were acknowledged (see chapter 4.3 Teaching Online)
5. Lessons were piloted, reflected and alternations were suggested (see chapter 4.4 Lesson Plan Implementation and Reflection)
6. The teaching experience was evaluated (see chapter 4.5 Evaluation of the Teaching Experience)

3.2 Planning the Sample Lessons

The lessons reflected in the practical part of this thesis follow Stroller's and Grabe's Six-T's approach. The theme of the lessons has already been made clear; they all fall into the theme of gender issues. The individual topics are (i) powerful language, (ii) clothes make a man, (iii) stereotypes and gender roles, (iv) women and work, and lastly (v) fairy tale role models.

All types of texts suggested by Stroller and Grabe have been used (viz fig 5), excluding the external content resources, which would have been complicated due to the online form of the lessons. However, a Google Meet call could have been arranged with a student of gender studies from the faculty of humanities of Charles University or a member of the non-profit organisation *Otevřená Společnost* (Open Society). Students could have been invited to participate in an online international conference or workshop organised by UN or HeForShe.

Type of texts	Content resources of the designed lessons
Instructor-compiles content resources	short story, Discord, Kahoot quiz, magazine article, website, Instagram comments, YouTube video, Google Meet, charts and graphs, quotation, puzzle, joke
Instructor-generated content resources	collaborative worksheets, pictures, comics, visual representation of statistics
Task-generated content resources	Discussion, debate, writing a draft, writing a structured paragraph, writing graph description. T-chart completion, listening comprehension
External content resources	-

Figure 5. *Four types of texts used in the designed lessons (theme unit)*

Regarding the second step, a thread should be established. Thus, women's discrimination can be considered the controlling idea of each theme, connecting the theme with the topics and texts.

The third step requires organising the content. The designed lessons can be implemented separately based on their content or language skill/system they embrace. They can also be a part of a theme unit and then sequenced as suggested in the practical part of this thesis, i.e., lesson no. 1, lesson no. 2 etc. The lessons are designed to fit into the Czech school system; therefore, most lessons are granted 45 minutes, two lessons are granted with 90 minutes.

Personal involvement and motivation were naturally expanded when researching gender issues, reading literature and compiling the practical part of the thesis. This fourth step of Stroller's and Grabe's guide would be undeniably beneficial for any teaching approach and lesson planning in general.

Moving on, objectives have been devised for the whole theme unit (viz fig. 6) as well as terminal and enabling objectives for every lesson. Since the lessons are to be implemented into EFL lessons, language objectives are introduced. Besides, cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives were devised to fulfil all the learning domains. The opening tasks ought to activate the students' previous knowledge and motivate them. The closing tasks should review the lesson and confirm if the objectives have been met. The closing tasks take the form of class discussion, writing task or a visual representation.

Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be able to define the term gender, gender stereotype, gender role, inequality, femininity, masculinity, gender-inclusive language - Students will be able to interpret the role of society on the perception of what is considered feminine and masculine and compare those terms - Students will be able to demonstrate examples of gender inequality
Affective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students have the need to oppose discrimination - Students adopt a positive attitude towards gender equality - Students gain a negative view towards gender stereotyping - Students express their opinion and support it with suitable arguments - Students respect the opinion of their classmates - Students cooperate in group work
Psychomotor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students actively participate in class and group discussions - Students work with and process materials on a computer - Students work with online sources

Figure 6. *Learning objectives for the designed lessons (theme unit)*

The next step is the designation of tasks. These can be observed in the lessons plans available in the appendices of this thesis. Indeed, they manage to facilitate learning and language strategies and derive from the chosen texts.

The transition across topics in a theme unit would be necessary. Nevertheless, since the designed lessons were executed in different classes, transitions had to be devised between the students' current subject matter and the designed lesson. These are further described in chapter 4.3. Lesson Plan Implementation and Reflection.

The eighth and last step offers an opportunity for teachers to make changes. The designed lessons have not been devised for any particular class. Nevertheless, when piloting

the lessons, some tasks had to be modified to fit the needs of the students. The scaffolding strategies provided, changes made, as well as the recommended modifications to the lesson plans are also available in chapter 4.3. Lesson Plan Implementation and Reflection. As will be made clear, phase four of the ALACT reflection model adopted in this thesis is particularly open to the creation of alternative courses of action.

3.3 Teaching Online

Since the Czech Republic and, as a matter of fact, the whole world was afflicted by the covid-19 pandemic, schools had to be closed as a safety precaution. It has been almost a year, and teachers still have not seen their students in person. Educators had to adapt to online teaching and re-evaluate their teaching materials, strategies, methods, and assessment methods. Having to teach online paralysed a plentitude of teachers. Some resigned from any attempt at innovation, and some are still learning how to use Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, collaborative documents (Google Docs), online whiteboards (Jamboard), collaborative mindmaps (OrgPad), video calls, shared screens etc. to their full potential. Perhaps adapting was not that dramatic for the younger generation of teachers; on the other hand, these teachers often lack the deep well of teaching activities, experience and, most importantly, perspective. Also, these teachers were more likely to be criticised by the public for not adapting faster or well enough. Overall it is safe to say that most teaching professions at one point or another during the everlasting school closure struggled to meet the demands of ‘modern world teaching’.

Learning a foreign language is challenging as it is. Having to do so without peers, personal contact with friends abroad, and no teacher looking over your shoulder, makes it even more difficult. After announcing the closing of school closure, some students' initial excitement and relief were rapidly replaced by the feeling of exhaustion, overload, disorientation, despair, and sometimes even resignation. Students had to change their learning style, or in fact, they had to develop one. They had to find a system and get organised. Some had to tackle technical troubles as well as problems with motivation. Students had to learn how to concentrate with their sibling and parents in the same room. They had to find a balance between schoolwork and free time. Moreover, while some

managed to do all the above mentioned and became fond of online learning, most are hoping to return to their non-virtual classrooms soon.

Needless to say, the situation is not any easier for the headteachers, managers of educational institutions, parents, or, moreover, single parent-teachers. Everyone had to adjust without any guidelines or previous experience with how to do so. Although many websites offer advice, material and software for teaching online, they are intended as variation, complementing teaching or blended learning. There are no instructions or protocols on transforming the whole institutional education system online or how to regularly teach a class of 30 pupils for an extended period of time. The knowledge of the spectrum of teaching approaches, methods and techniques is convenient but is no salvation.

3.3.1 Planning for Teaching Online

Before planning the content, material, techniques and activities of a lesson, a few factors had to be thought through in order to ensure the success of all the previously mentioned. Firstly, in which program will the lesson take place, will everyone be able to connect? Also, how will the students access the material and handouts? Then, how will the lesson be organised, is teamwork possible, and under which circumstances? Lastly, is the web camera really necessary?

At the beginning of online teaching, companies focusing on education targeted schools to offer their services as well as software to mitigate the transition to distance learning. One of the most commonly used platforms are Microsoft teams and Google classroom; both are cohesive platforms offering a core package of tools to cover classroom essentials and manage student and teacher communication. The school where the concerned sample lessons were piloted uses the latter. Although otherwise a perfect and user-friendly platform, Google Classroom's tool Google Meet does not grant breaking the class into rooms

for teamwork unless a costly licence is purchased. As pair- and teamwork is fundamental to language teaching, alternatives had to be explored. To pilot the sample lessons, Discord was used. It is basically a group-chatting platform initially built for gamers. However, it offers an abundance of voice channels. The teachers have the opportunity to divide their students into groups according to topics or just for teamwork. They can easily monitor their groups by entering and exiting the channels without any difficulty or time lag. Unlike other platforms where grouping students is possible, like Zoom or Gather.town, Discord is not incredibly demanding for internet connection which means even students with lower internet speed or lower data can access Discord and actively participate in the lesson.

Learning materials and handouts can be shared in multiple ways. Google Classroom, however, makes it well organised and easily accessible. The question is, which form these materials should have when used during an online lesson. The teachers can always share their screen allowing the students to view the presentation as passive observers. Also, teachers can provide material everyone can download and adjust according to their needs. Another way is to use the online environment to one's advantage and create shared google documents or collaborative whiteboards in which everyone can work simultaneously during the lesson and download the result of their work after class for further studies.

The easiest way to organise an online lesson is very similar to frontal instruction – teacher talks, the teacher asks, students answer, students present. Still, group work is possible and for language learning even vital. An obstacle can be the length of a lesson which is usually only 45 minutes. Although students need not physically move anywhere or join desks, the time consumed by dividing the students and connection to individual groups and their prolonged communication due time-lag when leaving or taking over the floor almost equals. I find it helpful to set some basic rules at the beginning of the lesson, such as work on your computers (not phones), remember which group you work with, when working in

a group do not turn your microphone off, keep checking the class chat for any crucial messages, adhere to the time set by your teacher. These instructions will provide smooth transitions between activities and improve the overall impression of the lesson.

Malfunctioning web cameras, missing web cameras or web cameras slowing down the internet connection, many teachers have heard these lines over and over again. Seeing their students has somehow become a reward for many teachers. Although language teachers are advised to make themselves visible to the students during an online lesson, there has been a disagreement about whether it is necessary to obsess over turned-off web cameras on the students' side. One of the reasons is that students and teachers often have other documents and web pages opened on their computer throughout the lesson. Without having two screens, it would be almost impossible to keep track of students' faces and the studied material. Another reason is purely personal; it does not seem fair to force students with access to web cameras to have them on while others, who allegedly cannot turn them on, can work without the stress of being recorded, print screened or just observed by the whole class.

3.4 Lesson Plan Implementation and Reflection

The sample lessons aim to raise awareness of gender issues among students as well as to promote their language skill development. By emphasising the content, the common separation of language from the subject matter should be eliminated. Therefore, the lessons adopt principles of content-based approaches, mainly theme-based instruction. All the proposed lessons were piloted in a secondary school of economics and business in Prague. The reflection might evaluate the appeal of the chosen topic and materials and the teaching experience itself.

The lessons were tailored for secondary school students of age 16 – 18. The language proficiency, however, differs from class to class ranging from pre-intermediate to intermediate. By applying various scaffolding techniques or, on the other hand, more complex tasks, these lessons are applicable in classes of any language proficiency. Although there is a tendency to raise awareness of gender issues from a young age, these lesson plans cannot be recommended for younger pupils. The chosen texts and other material require a level of maturity.

The lessons plans were implemented in classes I regularly teach. I could therefore adopt the lesson to thematically or linguistically fit the students' coursebook units or needs. Also, the students are accustomed to my instructions and teaching style. Due to school closure, the lessons were executed online. Before every lesson, students were provided with a handout, which was uploaded on Google Classroom. The handouts were created in Google Documents, and the students were granted access to edit the document to support collaboration during the lesson. Before every lesson, students were introduced to their groups, and they were told where the lessons would take place – usually Discord or Google

Meet. Students are generally advised to work on their computers. Also, they are asked to mind the teachers timing when working in groups or individually.

Whenever teaching a language, a complex system of cultural customs, values and ways of thinking are transmitted. By teaching a topic of gender issues, a topic that is not explicitly a part of the school curricular, one may assume the teacher's personal involvement and interest. However, the purpose of the lessons is not to share personal views, instead provide students with enough input to allow them to form their own beliefs. Instead of verbalising my thoughts, I tried to remain unbiased and ask questions to stimulate the students' own engagement.

3.4.1 Lesson no. 1

(appendix 1 – 2)

The students have just completed a unit in their coursebook on mass media. The sample lesson should indirectly complement the unit in a way that written as well as spoken media may support gender inequality by employing gender-exclusive language.

Group

- **Topic:** Powerful language
- **Class:** 2C (s1)
- **Age:** 16 – 17
- **Number of students:** 16
- **Proficiency level:** B1 – B2
- **Length:** 45 minutes
- **Connection:** Discord
- **Inspiration:** *Gender Lesson Plan* by Teflnet

Phase 1: The lesson's purpose was to explore the grammar and vocabulary of political correctness through gender-inclusive language. I wanted to provide example sentences that have appeared in media or other sources, allowing improvement in terms of gender-inclusive language. Particular attention was paid to developing a set of rules and strategies for gender-inclusive language. Also, students were supposed to realise that we are biased and consider some occupations predominantly women and men. Our cause of favour is affected by gender stereotypes. For this purpose, a short story – puzzle, was chosen from a popular game *Black Stories*.

By the end of the lesson, students were expected to support the idea that language can reinforce gender inequality. Students were also expected to summarise the rules and strategies of achieving political correctness through gender-inclusive language. Furthermore, students were supposed to understand the term political correctness.

Phase 2: The lesson began with a delay due to the internet connection and connection to Discord. In the first activity, students were to interpret a short extract with the support of teachers questions. This seemed to confuse the students since it involved unknown vocabulary. After explaining the key terms, students answered the questions; however, they struggled to provide personal examples of gender inequality. The reason for that could have been the lack of having such experience, but that seems rather unlikely. Most probably, the students were unwilling to share their experience with the class or could not relate the subject matter with their personal life.

During the second activity, students were encouraged to solve the puzzle. After 2 minutes, some students wrote in the class chat that they might know the answer. In the end, only a fraction of the students guessed the answer correctly. This nicely proved the point of the activity – our thinking derives from gender stereotypes and presuppositions.

The presentation part of the lesson seemed to proceed as planned. Students sorted individual words into columns – female, male and both. Students were shocked when presented with the fact that the personal pronouns *he*, *him*, *his* and the word *man* are commonly used to imply both women and men. Surprisingly, some students were instantly able to provide an example sentence. Collaborating, students wrote gender-neutral names for occupations in the fourth exercise.

There proved to be insufficient time for free practice – rewriting the sentences. Students worked in groups of three. Their progress was monitored by entering and exiting the individual groups. A student in one group seemed to be annoyed by the lesson's topic, and he expressed his lack of interest to his peers in the group while unaware of my presence. The follow-up activity – creating guidelines for politically correct / gender-inclusive language – had to be reduced, and the students suggested only a few strategies. The rules which were evident from the sentences were mainly proposed. Also, students suggested using passive voice, perhaps because the passive voice was covered in the unit the students had just completed.

Apart from the incident with one student and his negative comment, the rest seemed to be engaged throughout the whole lesson, asking questions and answering without being called out by names. Some students constantly posted gifs in the class chat, which followed the occurring conversation. Together with the final assessment questions and the positive feedback at the end of the lesson, I was given the impression that the lesson made an impact and sparked the students' interest.

Phase 3: The beginning of the lesson was delayed due to the internet and Discord connection. Using Discord brought the advantage of dividing the class into groups; however, using Discord makes it difficult to monitor the attendance and call out individual students since they used their personal profiles with nicknames from which I cannot recognise the students.

The vital part of the lesson was rewriting the sentences. Here the students often employed the most straightforward option – replacing a masculine pronoun with a plural pronoun. They had to be encouraged to try to apply different means as well. One group of students did not see the problem of using masculine pronouns for referring to all genders; as this was discussed in the exercise before, masculine pronouns are commonly used to address all genders. By this stage of the lesson, I was unintentionally alerted that the lesson is uninteresting for one student.

Not having enough time, the follow-up activity had to be reduced to a minimum. Despite the problems, the answers to the assessment questions at the lesson's end proved that the lesson's objectives were accomplished.

Phase 4: The problem with the lack of time could have been solved by asking the students to connect to Discord on their computers five minutes in advance. Also, students could have been asked to avoid using nicknames in their profiles.

During the activation stage, it is necessary to highlight that although masculine pronouns are commonly used to refer to both women and men, it is not the ideal pronoun to use since it is exclusively masculine in a different context. This way, students will try to rewrite sentences that use masculine pronouns so the sentence is not gender-exclusive.

The purpose of the lesson and its value for students' future writing assignments and future occupation could have been highlighted at the beginning of the lesson so that all students would be engaged and interested.

Students can be encouraged to monitor gender-exclusive language around them in one week for a possible follow-up activity. Their sentences can be rewritten as a part of a warm-up revision activity in one of the following lessons. Students can also be asked to make a simple survey of peoples'/parents'/schoolmates' perception of gender-exclusive language in opposition to gender-inclusive language and analyse its results.

3.4.2 Lesson no. 2

(appendix 3 – 4)

The students have just started a unit in their coursebooks titled ‘*His and Hers*’, which introduces the differences between women and men, family life and personalities. One of the provided texts focused on colours and clothing. The designed lesson, therefore, merges well with the rest of the unit.

Group

- **Topic:** Clothes make a man
- **Class:** 3B (s2)
- **Age:** 17 – 18
- **Number of students:** 13
- **Proficiency level:** B1
- **Length:** 90 minutes
- **Connection:** Google Meet
- **Inspiration:** *debata s pokračováním* from Učitelké noviny

Phase 1: The lesson’s purpose was to raise awareness of the influence of society and social norms on our personal choices (mainly clothing). I wished to convey that gender expectation, as well as clothing choices, are socially constructed. I wanted to provide as many sources as possible to help the students form their own opinion on this topic.

Another objective was to formulate arguments supporting or opposing the idea of cross-dressing regardless of students’ personal opinion. This was supposed to lead the students to look at the issue from a different perspective. For this, I chose an activity ‘debate to be continued’ from the website *Učitelké noviny*, which I had never tried before and was worried about its outcome. At the end of the lesson, the same question was to be asked,

“What influenced your choice of clothing?” and a different, perhaps more learnt, answer – *“Social norms also influence me.”* – was expected.

By the end of the lesson, students were supposed to identify the impact of society on our personal choices, understanding the expectations of our society drive our choices. Students are expected to part in a debate formulating arguments with appropriate language phrases.

Phase 2: The first three activities went as I had planned them (1 – questions about personal dressing style, 2 – brainstorming of what clothes are considered feminine and masculine, 3 – guessing from pictures) and the outcomes were very much expected. This proved that the rest of the lesson would be interesting for the students and perhaps also surprising. I felt very confident to continue the lesson and was sure it would interest the students. Students were asked to browse through Mark Bryan’s Instagram profile, where they encountered controversial pictures. I firmly believe this made them very interested in proceeding to the reading task.

Previously I intended the reading to be an individual task; however, I decided to call out the students to read the text aloud due to the language proficiency. This enabled me to have control over the pronunciation and comprehension by stepping in and explaining some phrases or correcting the student’s pronunciation. After the reading, students were asked to complete the T-chart with an argument supporting Mark Bryan’s clothing and opposing it. Some comments from Instagram were supposed to help them. Because it was not possible to monitor the students’ process, it was not easy to time this task. I felt the students were interested as they were quite engaged. Perhaps they wanted more time to browse through Mark’s Instagram profile which I believe they did after class.

The listening exercise proved helpful since it provided the students with richer argumentation for the following debate. Students were given more time to add to their argumentation T-chart and to employ useful functional phrases.

Although I had to remind the students not to get carried away and use the functional language for expressing an opinion, the debate went well. In the debate, I called out two students, one student to provide only supportive arguments and another to present only opposing arguments. I stopped the debate after 3-4 exchanges and called out another two students to replace their classmates and continue the debate. The debate continued until everyone had the chance to speak.

After the debate, students were asked to think about who determines what women and men wear. By this point of the lesson, students were familiar with the term gender and were able to explain it as they had already encountered it in the reading exercise. They were also asked the same question as at the beginning of the lesson; by alternating their answer, they were supposed to prove their understanding of the lesson's message. Although I am quite sure the students were aware of the lesson's message, only one student (from the four I had called out) changed her initial answer.

Phase 3: The vital part of the lesson was formulating arguments. I feared students would not be able to set their personal opinions aside and search for their arguments in the reading or in the listening exercise. However, this proved not to be an issue. Only one student had problems formulating more than two arguments supporting his stance – the stance he was assigned to.

Due to the noticeable French accent of the speaker in the video, students might have had difficulty understanding. This resulted in the incomplete and straightforward answers the student submitted after the listening.

It can be assumed students had problems relating the lessons content '*Clothes have no gender or do they?*' to their personal choice of clothing. Only one student changed her initial answer to my question, "*What influences your choice of clothing.*" She admitted that she is influenced by people surrounding her and styling tips or the latest trends.

Phase 4: To avoid the lacking student arguments that support the opposite side of their personal beliefs, the teacher should reveal what task will follow - a debate in which students have to support a stance given to them, even if it opposes their viewpoint. The necessity of being able to support and justify any stance can be highlighted.

For promoting better listening comprehension, the listening task could be divided into two parts. Students can be asked to pause the video after a given time and answer part of the questions before listening to the second half of the video. Students may also be asked to listen twice to the video. Also, the video's speed can be adjusted quickly. Following a video with a transcription may also be helpful.

In order to guide the students to realise that their style of clothing is not only dependent on their pure preferences but also on the social norms and expectations, the teacher can ask a straightforward question – "*Do you think social norms influence your dressing style? How?*" Students can then be asked to recall some memories related to clothing and their childhood, e.g., girls wearing exclusively pink clothes and tiaras, boys blue clothes and never skirts.

There is a possibility for a follow-up task. Students can be asked to think of, search and write down other examples of parts of clothing whose popularity with women and men has changed throughout history. High heels are one of the examples.

3.4.3 Lesson no. 3

(appendix 5 – 6)

As in the previous class, students of 3CD have also just started a unit in their coursebooks titled '*His and Hers*', which tackles gender differences, family life and personalities. One of the first texts in this unit deals with the topic of gender roles. Throughout this lesson, students are to revise the common modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, could, should, must) and learn new models and semi-modal auxiliaries (e.g., need to, ought to). The proposed lesson can therefore substitute the introduction of this unit. The sample lesson involves one online lecture and individual work during an offline lesson.

Group

- **Topic:** Stereotypes and gender roles
- **Class:** 3CD (s3)
- **Age:** 17 – 18
- **Number of students:** 12
- **Proficiency level:** B1
- **Length:** 2 x 45 minutes
- **Connection:** Discord
- **Inspiration:** *Gender stereotypes: Primary Lesson Plan* by Curriculum Corporation and *English Conversation – Gender Roles* by English with Jo

Phare 1: This lesson was designed to introduce the concept of gender stereotyping and gender roles. Students will be encouraged to identify gender stereotypes, challenge them, think of their benefits, disadvantages, and effects on a person. Particular focus will be placed on a class and group discussion. Secondly, students ought to activate their prior knowledge of modal auxiliaries. Throughout the lesson, they will be asked to use modal auxiliaries wherever possible.

The teacher is especially interested in trying the final exercise of the lesson which *Curriculum Corporation* developed. The students' task is to interpret information from short texts and explain how it supports stereotypical thinking and other possible ways of thinking that are not shown in the texts. The short texts describe trends in images from newspaper, advertisements, magazines etc., featuring men and women during different activities. I am eager to observe how students view these trends, if they find them stereotypical and if they will be able to suggest any other possible outlook on the trends.

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to provide examples of gender roles by using suitable modal auxiliaries, identify gender stereotypes and symbolic meaning in texts, and explain which affects gender stereotypes and roles can have on a person.

Phase 2: The lesson began with activating the students' prior knowledge and asking them to explain individual words from the headline, i.e., *gender, stereotypes, roles*. It appeared that most of the students had heard of the terms before but had only a vague idea of what they mean.

Many more questions arose when reading the questions to the listening task, mainly dealing with vocabulary or overall understanding. Viewing the video in the listening task once was sufficient for the majority of the students. They did not seem to have a problem choosing the correct answer. After the listening, I asked the students once more to explain the term from the headline. The students I called out were able to do so. I also asked the students some follow-up questions focusing mainly on students' expectations and experience to get them more interested in the topic. At this stage, a few students seemed quite confused; although they agreed with the content of the video, they were not able to think of any examples from their personal life or school environment.

Moving on to the next task – group work, students discussed one of the four provided aspects of gender stereotypes, i.e., personality traits, occupation, domestic behaviour,

physical appearance. The questions in the handout were to help them. Students were encouraged to use modal auxiliaries where possible; they were provided with an example. I monitored the students' progress by entering and exiting their groups' channels. Students did not appear to have problems; however, they did not use modal auxiliaries, only when asked to reformulate their statement. A short class discussion followed. In this phase, I again encountered the students' inability to provide sufficient answers.

The last exercise involved group work. This exercise was the one I was looking forward to trying. Students were asked to interpret information from short texts based on an example read aloud in class. Due to the lack of time, I instructed the students to focus only on one short text of their choice. They mainly chose the last one since it was the shortest. After this, the groups presented their answers to the rest of the class. At this stage, I forgot to insist on using modal auxiliaries as I was too preoccupied with explaining the task once again since most of the called-out students could not provide their answers and claimed not to have understood the instructions.

The lesson concluded with a short review of the key terms and examples of stereotyping and their effects. Finally, students were given instructions for the following offline lesson to expand this lesson – creating posters. I assured the students that I would also upload the instructions on Google Classroom as I usually do.

At the beginning of the following online lesson, students presented their visual representations of stereotypical and non-stereotypical images by sharing their screen with the class. All the students completed the task in digital form by using no more than two images and predominantly from advertisements. Students appeared delighted with the task and asked the presenting student further questions about the source of the image etc. After the previous lesson, I felt pretty desperate and tired. However, the students' posters proved

the students were engaged and interested after all. I would label this exercise as the highlight point of the lesson.

Phase 3: The fact that students could not provide examples from personal experience with stereotypes and provide sufficient answers in the third exercise should satisfy me since it could mean they had not experienced any stereotypical treatment and are not confined by gender roles. However, that seems rather unlikely. Probably, they experience stereotyping on an everyday basis but do not pay any attention to it since stereotypes are strongly connected with inherent beliefs about the roles of males and females in our society. Hence, there is even more reason to incorporate such lessons dealing with gender inequality.

Another factor that might have influenced the students' lack of responses is that all the questions asked required higher-order thinking skills. Despite designing the lesson based on the didactic principle of graduality, i.e., from easy to difficult, and considering Bloom's taxonomy when planning the objectives of individual tasks, this did not seem to matter. As I have been teaching this class for the past two years, I am aware of their occasional confusion, mainly during the morning lessons. Also, despite the student being almost adults, many of them struggle with independent tasks. I suspect this might be due to a lack of some essential learning skills, e.g., critical and computational thinking, prediction, creativity, imagination. Therefore, they perform well in controlled practices and underperform in tasks oriented around free practice.

As far as modal auxiliaries are concerned, the students did not use them as frequently as I would have liked them to. Indeed, the reason is not their unfamiliarity with them, as we frequently tackled this subject matter in the previous semester. The students were probably too busy focusing on the topic and translating the vocabulary. Alternatively, I did not provide the students with enough space and time.

Phase 4: The major issue with unclear tasks and vocabulary can be easily solved by reformulating the instructions on the handout and providing more comprehensible examples. Also, I would not refrain from using Czech as I did in this lesson. At least not when giving or explaining the instructions.

The solution to students' inability to provide examples and link the topic to their experience might be more complex. Firstly, I would provide more examples in pictures, jokes, famous quotes or sayings. The students would become better acquainted with what stereotypes and gender roles are. I would ask them to classify the particular stereotypes instead of having them create their own examples. By asking more specific questions, I would help the student connect the subject matter with their personal life. I would also include more lessons concerning this subject matter.

Focusing on applying modal auxiliaries, I could reformulate the instructions in the second exercise on the students' handout. The students would be asked to take notes during their discussions. Consequently, they would summarise the key points of their discussion in five written sentences using the modal verbs. Sectioning the exercise into smaller tasks might help the students focus only on one thing at a time. Also, it would support their note-taking skills and explicitly promote the use of modal auxiliaries.

In the last exercise, all groups chose the exact sample text to interpret since it was the shortest. This deprived the exercise of its function. Next time I would assign each group one sample texts. This would also help me differentiate between stronger/faster and weaker/lower groups.

3.4.4 Lesson no. 4

(appendix 7 – 8)

Many of the students have outstanding English proficiency and are thinking about taking some international language tests. A part of the IELTS and other international tests, mainly on their academic level, include writing a graph description. That is why the lesson was executed in this particular class. The sample lesson involves one online lecture and individual work during an offline lesson.

Group

- **Topic:** Women and work
- **Class:** 2B (s1)
- **Age:** 16 – 17
- **Number of students:** 16
- **Proficiency level:** B1 – B2
- **Length:** 2 x 45 minutes (1st online, 2nd offline)
- **Connection:** Discord
- **Inspiration:** *Gender and Jobs-Women in the Workforce* by Learning for Justice

Phase 1: The purpose of both lessons was to draw attention to gender inequality by providing graphs and statistics of the unequal representation of women in individual industries, the pay gap between women's and men's earnings and the distribution of household chores. The lesson's focus was also on the ability to read and interpret data from graphs (or other visual representation of statistics) and the use of suitable vocabulary to do so. By the end of the first (online) lesson, students are expected to describe pay inequities between women and men in various industries from the provided graph.

Through the information provided by the graph, students were to obtain tangible proof of gender inequality, which presumably many students thought existed only in the form of gender stereotypes and were not as prominent as systemic sexism in the form

of a considerable pay gap. By the end of the offline lesson, students are expected to write a short text based on visual representations of statistics of their choice on gender inequality using appropriate nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives for graph descriptions.

Phase 2: I connected earlier to the lesson in order to share the handout and post the students' assigned groups. A few students were already connected, which surprised me pleasantly. The lesson, therefore, began with an informal conversation with a few students. After the rest of the students had connected, I introduced the lesson.

In the first part, students were to describe a few terms connected with graphs which I assumed they already knew from other subjects, which proved to be the case, although some students found the terms challenging to explain in English. Through describing the individual terms, we transitioned into the next phase – understanding the graph. By questioning, I hopefully provided a better understanding of the information presented in the graph. It seemed tricky at first since the students did not orient themselves in the graph. However, through many simple questions, we were able to answer the more advanced questions I had prepared before.

After the students proved to be able to analyse the information from the graph on their own, I asked them to connect with their assigned groups and answer the questions on the handout. For this task, students were given ten minutes. Meanwhile, I monitored their progress by entering and exiting their groups' channels. All the groups seemed to have spent the most time talking about how unfair it was for women to earn less than men, which made an impression that the students are very interested in the topic and eager to find out why such inequity occurs. After the students returned to the main channel of the whole class, we engaged in a lively discussion. Only three students were able to reason the existence of the pay gap, two of the reasons were based on gender stereotypes.

To conclude the lesson, I asked students to write one paragraph, including five sentences. The first sentence was supposed to carry the controlling idea. In order to define the controlling idea, students were told to answer the question, “*How do women’s earnings compare to men’s*”. Students then wrote three supporting ideas drawn from the graph’s data and concluded their paragraph in the last sentence. Consequently, I asked the students to write another paragraph and include the first sentence – *There are several reasons for the situation described in the paragraph above*. Their task was to write two hypotheses with a short statement for each, explaining why they think their hypothesis is true. In the final sentence, students were to explain what kind of data they would need to test their hypothesis. Since the lesson was about to end, I asked the students to send their texts before leaving. I pointed out the possibility for extra credit, which was completing the rest of the handout as individual work for the next day’s offline lesson. I assumed students who were interested in taking the international language tests would appreciate this extra work.

Many students were able to send their texts by the end of the lesson, and a few stayed connected five more minutes before sending their texts. Examining the students’ texts, I noticed that most students based their hypothesis on the examples we discussed in the lesson. As the means for testing their analysis, they chose a survey. Also, many students included their personal views and experience instead of drawing exclusively from the graph. This again reassured me the students were engaged and interested.

Phase 3: The crucial part of the lesson was understanding the information presented in the graph and analysing it. Since the students had problems reading the graph, I had to guide them with simple questions to draw their attention to the individual features.

The second problem arose when lacking the grounds for providing the students with the reasons for unequal pay, which seemed to interest and confuse the students more than the unequal representation of women in different industries indicated by the graph. The

majority of students were surprised by the discovery that men and women have different earnings. On the one hand, I anticipated this to happen. The discovery was meant to attract the students' attention and raise their interest in the topic, which fortunately transpired. On the other hand, it made me realise that I had no simple explanation for this occurrence.

Overall, I was happy with how the lesson proceeded. The students were finally able to read the graph and draw some conclusions. They were very active in group work as well as in the class discussion. At the end of the lesson, I referred students to a website where they would find up-to-date statistics of the Czech Republic concerning gender equality. I presume a few students browsed through the website right after class.

Phase 4: To help the students understand the graph better, I should have begun with more straightforward questions before moving on to those intended. Another possibility would be to activate the student's prior and common knowledge by asking them to estimate the pay inequities between women and men in different industries in the US. Students would then have to check their speculation in the graph; this way, they would know what to expect and what to examine when presented the graph.

To sum up, the initial phase of the lesson was too intense. Instead of explaining term like *inequity* and *median*, which the students already knew, I should have dedicated more time activating the students differently.

Although I provided some reasons for the unequal pay of women and men in individual industries, the students did not sound satisfied. An easy solution could have been applied at this moment of the lesson. I could have given the students five minutes to search for the information on the internet. This would also help them formulate a variety of different hypothesis in their writing task.

3.4.5 Lesson no. 5

(appendix 9 – 11)

The students have just finished a unit in their coursebooks where they were introduced to new adjectives and adverbs for describing personality traits and emotions. They also learnt how to relate an experience in a conversation. The piloted lesson, therefore, seemed to fit well into the curricular.

Group

- **Topic:** Challenging gender stereotypes in fairy tales
- **Class:** 2B (s1)
- **Age:** 16 – 17
- **Number of students:** 16
- **Proficiency level:** B1 – B2
- **Length:** 90 minutes
- **Connection:** Discord

Phase 1: The purpose of the lesson was to raise awareness of gender stereotypes, think about the effect they had on our childhood and the effect they continue to have on our lives today. I wanted to pay special attention to interpreting the reading material and the class discussion to follow. First, I wanted to introduce the topic clearly and make sure everyone was familiar with gender stereotypes. The students are expected to list personality traits based on gender stereotypes and those opposing gender stereotypes by using adjectives and adverbs.

By the end of the lesson, I expect the students to identify the text's central idea, recall key details, and clarify how they endorse the main idea. Hopefully, students will develop inner 'expectancy rules' that enable them to predict and anticipate gender stereotypes in stories. Students will prove their understanding of gender stereotypes and the practised vocabulary by writing a draft of a fairy tale that is not burdened by gender stereotypes.

Phase 2: I wanted the students to realise how omnipresent stereotypes are and how they unconsciously influence us. I tried to lead the students toward this result by asking questions during the initial orientation phase of the lesson. I provided students with a picture, a joke and my questions. Perhaps this confused the students, and they lost focus.

In the presentation phase, students were adjectives and adverbs to sort into three categories – female, male, both. They did this promptly, collaborating in the document. A group discussion was to follow. Here students discussed stereotypical statements and tried to think of an example in films, TV shows or stories. Students could not think of as many examples as I would want them to.

Then I asked the students to recall the story of Snow White; for this, I prepared a Kahoot quiz. However, this phase took longer than I anticipated due to problems with the connection. A reading task followed. Students were asked to read the first extract from the short story *The True Story* by Pat Murphy, underline the adjectives, summarise the story in their groups and predict what will happen next in the story. I monitored the students' discussion by entering and exiting their group's channel and helped where I found necessary.

The students then proceeded to the second part of the story. This time, they were asked to focus on the differences between individual characters of the traditional story of Snow White and the interpretation by Pat Murphy. The questions in the handout were to help the students.

We summarised the story together, focusing on the personality traits of the individual characters and how they differ from the traditional story. Students were asked to find some stereotypes. I further asked if it is vital to read stories to children, how stories affect the way we think and act, and how we can be less influenced by stereotypes we hear and see.

At the end of the lesson, students were asked to write a draft of their own fairy tale, which is not burdened by stereotypes. They were provided with guidelines. They were also

encouraged to use as many adjectives and adverbs to describe the characters and their actions.

There was not much focus on the adjectives. I also felt pressured by the time since the individual phases took longer than I had anticipated and therefore could not dedicate as much time to group discussions and the adjectives appearing in the reading material.

Phase 3: In my opinion, the vital part of the lesson was for the students to understand stereotypes fully. I provided many tasks to guide the students inductively. However, this seemed rather long, and I suppose some of the students lost interest or were confused. I could hardly relate to the students since I could not see their reactions. I assume some have stopped paying attention and engaged in other things apart from their English lesson.

The reading exercise was meant to be the highlight of the lesson. It also seemed to gain back the attention of most of the students. Assuming from the lively group discussions, students were curious to find out the ending of the story. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for more extended discussions, and some students with lower proficiency level took longer reading the text and did not engage in a discussion at all.

Phase 4: The lengthy initial exercises seemed not worth the time. The point of them could have been communicated more straightforwardly. If I were to teach the lesson again, I would choose only one exercise as an introduction to the topic, and perhaps deductive instruction would be preferable to an inductive one.

I would have like to have devoted more time to the reading exercises and the discussions. Shortening the initial phase of the lesson would supposedly provide me with the time needed. Some students needed some scaffolding to help them understand the text before interpreting or summarising it. I could have provided the student with a list of questions, asking about the content first before moving to interpretation.

I would also change the order of exercise 3 (Discuss the following statements.) and move it after the reading exercise; this way, the students could find supporting arguments in the text, which would perhaps prompt other examples from pop culture and everyday lives.

Lastly, the adjectives need to be implemented more, perhaps some can be included in the statements in exercise 3, and students can be advised to use them in their discussions.

3.5 Evaluation of the teaching experience

Overall, I am satisfied with the lessons' progress. Considering the problematic nature of gender issues as they related to deep-seated beliefs about women and men's roles in our society, some students found it disturbing to question these roles. However, I did not encounter any negative attitudes or disruptive behaviour. On the contrary, most of the students seemed somewhat interested and engaged. It did not come as a surprise that female students were more invested in discussions, perhaps because they found the topic more relatable. I believe the challenging and sometimes controversial topics stimulated the learning environment and led to achieving the set objectives.

The teaching experience was very beneficial for me as a novice teacher. I used the opportunity of writing a diploma thesis to begin implementing contemporary concerns and relevant topics into my lessons. I learned how to set objectives that focus on achieving language goals and encourage the student to become responsible global citizens equipped with the so-called 21st-century skills, e.g., critical thinking, collaboration, media literacy, communication, social skills, global awareness (*21st Century Skills*, 2016). I am particularly proud of selecting authentic material, and various text types, which I believe increased the students' motivation. On the other hand, I learnt to moderate my ambitions of what I want to achieve in the lessons and to structure my lessons better. Although I try to reflect on my lessons regularly, I was surprised what an asset the ALACT model was in recalling the critical moments of each lesson and exploring alternatives.

Furthermore, learning how to teach online was a demanding task, but it provided me with a different perspective and made me reassess my practices. The school closure limited the students in physical contact but provided them and me with opportunities and tools to cooperate in an online environment. Unavailable to move cards, draw on handouts, roll dice

and mingle around the classroom, students' expressed themselves by posting gifs, creating digital posters, collaborating in an online document. Although I could not witness the student facial expressions have control over their work, I could still monitor their learning process.

A recommendation for further lessons would be to create a student-oriented class, give students control over the content and negotiate the meaning to meet their needs and interests. Also, avoid teacher talking time but rather introduce tasks inviting problem-solving and collaboration. Moreover, teachers ought to make the content relatable to all the students; it goes without saying that gender issues concern everyone – boys and girls. Inviting a discussion may be difficult; therefore, teachers should introduce as many visual aids. Using open questions will not only enrich conversation but involve higher-order cognitive skills. Learning from my mistakes, it is advisable to prepare a plenitude of questions before the lesson to eliminate not being understood clearly during the lesson.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to implement gender issues into the EFL classroom without neglecting students' language skills. The theoretical part was further divided into two parts. Firstly, it focused on gender and its place in the school environment. Gender-sensitive education was briefly introduced together with some key action teachers can take for embedding gender equality. Further, official documents of the Czech Republic we studied to outline how gender issues are conceptualised. Although there is little legislative support for adopting principles of gender-sensitive education, gender topics have a character of a cross-curricular subject and therefore can be approached through the thematic areas on any subject.

The second theoretical part of this thesis dealt with English language teaching. The framework of three content-based approaches was laid out as content is believed to motivate students in their learning process. Several common principles were selected to be applied in the lesson planning process together with Stoller and Grabe's Six-T's approach. Furthermore, Korthagen's ALACT model was chosen to be the suitable tool for reflection of the piloted sample lessons.

In the practical part of the thesis, five content-based lessons were designed focusing on gender issues. These were subsequently implemented in secondary school classes. The lessons were reflected upon afterwards, pointing out the obstacles and suggesting alternatives for other lessons. Lastly, the whole teaching experienced was summarised.

The process of reflection led to the conclusion that gender issues rose the students' curiosity, leading to a higher level of engagement and participation. Natural exploration of content, using authentic material and tackling contemporary concerns increased students'

motivation and inspired them to use English as a tool for gathering knowledge and sharing opinions about relevant matters.

Language teachers should take into consideration that they are equipped with a unique opportunity to foster language learning and take an active social role by introducing topical issues as central themes of EFL classes. Also, English lessons are taught in smaller groups, creating a more intimate atmosphere and more opportunities to engage students in conversation. Therefore, I believe that EFL classes class provides an ideal environment to implement gender issues.

This thesis provided some sample lessons which may be used as a complementary material of EFL lessons since most English coursebooks do not usually cover gender issues. They might be used to diversify the traditional EFL curriculum. However, gender issues are too complex to be covered in a single lesson. Let the sample lessons serve as a part of ongoing work in this subject or lead-in in a related discussion. Dedicating more time to gender topics, perhaps inviting longer projects (project-based learning), would give them the attention they deserve.

According to WHO (*10 key issues in ensuring gender equity in the global health workforce* 2019), “leaving the gender balance to equalize on its own is not an option. Unless specific, targeted measures are taken, gender equality is estimated to take 202 years.” Since Smetáčková (2006) believes, students are the guardians of the gender order, the best way to approach gender inequality is through education. Challenging gender inequality can potentially develop students’ personal and social competencies. Furthermore, it will help them make a personal, real-world connection and an informed decision about their study and career paths.

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