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FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER NATIONS

Abstract: In the framework of modern social tendencies, particularly as a result of integration of European nations into the European Union, mastering foreign languages is often emphasized as highly important, with the focus on learning. Thus, there is a broad discussion regarding the age when teaching foreign language should begin, as well as the most appropriate teaching methods. However, the issue of the need for learning foreign language is seemingly not explained to a sufficient degree; it is often reduced to its mere use value, but other educational values are ignored. From this perspective, several developmental segments can be highlighted, such as perceiving, differentiating what is important and what is unimportant, logical thinking, concluding.... **The purpose of this paper is to discuss one of the educational reasons for learning foreign language, and answer the question how the attitudes towards other nations are affected by learning foreign languages.** In this sense, the results of the research are presented, in which 40 respondents were asked to answer an anonymous questionnaire about their attitudes and knowledge of other nations before beginning to learn a new language, and after one year of learning. The results of this study have clearly shown that respondents have the most positive attitudes towards what they are familiar with, so that the best ranking nations in almost all questions are the British, German, French and Italian, followed by the somewhat lower ranking Greek, with the Finn and Bulgarian being the lowest ranking nations. The survey was repeated after a year of learning a new foreign language (German). Consistent with the expectations, the attitudes towards this language and its speakers, as well as towards the other less familiar languages and nations (Bulgarian and Finnish), were improved. Comparing the

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results of the two surveys the initial assumption was confirmed, i.e. that learning a language is more than merely adopting a useful skill – it also significantly contributes to our "opening" for what is new, facilitating the skill of accepting what was previously unfamiliar or strange, and being one of the prerequisites for the creation of better and more humane society.

Keywords: learning foreign language, German language, attitudes towards other nations.

1. Introduction

As a result of globalization-induced changes, there is a growing interdependence in relations both at international and local level. Interdependence is a sign of concern and cooperation. However, it is also often the cause of tensions and conflicts, making it necessary now more than ever to find ways for reducing the distance and increasing the opportunities and forms of wider cooperation, understanding, and raising the awareness of dangers that lie behind the lack of understanding. Coexistence on the planet has become a clear picture, as well as the need for creating the most acceptable global neighborhood through the acceptance of diversity, the detection of common global interests, etc. Therefore, the possibilities of education to reduce the distance and increase interdependence are perceived as highly important. In today's Europe, there is a growing awareness of inevitable globalization, with the focus increasingly shifted towards the possibilities of education as a specific dimension of pluralism, diversity of national and local identities, cultures and civilization. Therefore, the quality of education in this aspect is particularly important. Interculturalism makes an integral part of the guiding principles of today's world, including Europe. Accepting the liberal political culture, Europe tends to keep the peace and prosperity by fostering common culture and intercultural cooperation, supporting the concept of interculturalism because of its deep humanity and capacity for empathy. Thus, interculturalism is also an ethical option, because it enables people to manage their own activities and values that need to be consistent with people's social conditions. This provides education with an important role in the development of communicative competence between cultures in creating the ability for intercultural communication and cosmopolitan attitudes. The subject of this research is one of the several aspects of education in creating the basis of intercultural communication, focusing on learning foreign language from the

perspective of its contribution to "opening" for what is new and facilitating skills for accepting pluralism, all this from the angle of less known cultures.

2. Theoretical basis and terminological issues

Most social psychologists accept the term "attitudes" as mental willingness of feeling, thinking and tendency to behave positively towards certain issue, phenomenon and the like (Rake, B. and K. Edcock, 1978, p. 25). Attitudes are considered to consist of cognitive, affective and conative components, which in addition to positive feelings and favour, also include positive cognition. Our behaviours and activities are consequences of our attitudes, having a built-in tendency of undertaking actions. The above general features of attitudes are essentially same as the definition suggested by Kreč, Kračfild and Balaki (1962) who believe that attitudes are permanent systems of positive and negative evaluations, emotional feelings and techniques for undertaking *pro et contra* actions toward social objects. The definition of attitudes includes also their dispositional trait, which refers to mental alertness, so that individuals possessing certain attitudes see the society within the framework of specific categories of good and evil. In addition to the above, Osgood (Osgood, according to B. Rake and K. Edcock, op.cit, p. 26.) differentiated the attitudes from the other states of alertness by the fact that they imply also the existence of evaluative responses. The above brief overview of the basic features of attitudes indicates the way attitudes are conceptualized. However, a number of authors are approaching differently to the issues of conceptualization of attitudes. One of these approaches is based on the relationship of these components (cognitive, emotional and conative), but for this study it needs no further explanation. For more on this subjects, see the literature from References. The difference between the values and attitudes is that values are related to standards that govern our behaviour (Rokić, according to B. Rake and K. Edcock, op.cit, p. 17). At this point, it is important to note the issue of measuring the attitudes. As dispositional features, attitudes can be neither observed nor measured in a direct manner. Most measures take into account only one of the above attitude components. Most of the tests rely on verbal statements about the attitudes, while an extreme method of measurement refers to standardized statements that are clearly related to the attitude, so that the respondent indicates his agreed opinion. One of the applied scales is the Likert scale which is used also in this study. The attitude is expressed by the sum of values given by the respondent to all items.

The study was based on the questionnaire as research instrument which was answered by the students twice (once before learning a new foreign language and once after a year of learning German as foreign language) and which consisted of two parts. On one hand, it consisted of art and culture related questions, which were intended to determine the level of knowledge of certain nations. Thus, the study was based on the commonly accepted assumption that what is familiar is also closer, being therefore estimated in a more realistic manner (or inversely, what is unknown, causes fear). The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions about the attitudes toward some specific European nations; for example, regarding the willingness to spend a vacation with a representative of a specific nation or getting married to him/her. In addition, students were asked to rate the languages of these nations according to whether and to what extent (ranging from 1 to 5) they like them, which is supposed to provide an insight into the attitudes towards specific languages, and thus, to some extent, towards nations. This question was intended to verify the existence of common stereotypes, such as those that the German language is rough and heavy, the Italian is catchy and easy and the French is romantic.

As a theoretical basis for this work general views of the socialization of personality were taken, as the main factors in the formation of both personality and attitudes. Thereby also the learning theory was included that provides coherent picture of specific aspects of socialization. Here, the case is learning through the model, with a tendency of reproducing the attitudes of the model (Bandura and Walters, 1969, according to: B. Rake, and K. Edcock, *op.cit*, p.42). Factors of attitude's creation and change are multiple and intertwined, and those that belong to the group of rational factors (messages, communications, implicit conclusion ...) are important for this study. Messages are considered one of the important factors in attitude's creation and change, followed by conclusions (explicit or implicit) drawn by the individual. McGuire (according to: B. Rake and K. Edcock, *op.cit*, p. 63) highlights the importance of implicit conclusions. This is especially true for the sample covered by this study, that is for students for which we think to be part of selected population of solid intellectual potentials, given that McGuire believes that the implicit conclusion is more effective when we are sure that the person can draw a conclusion on his own. The respondents' insufficient motivation or intelligence requires explicit messages. As suggested by the literature consulted for this study, there are several important factors, primarily related to personality. However, this study is not intend to go this far; it will rather discuss the change of attitudes from the educational

perspective. Thus, Osgood discusses the cognitive imbalance as a change-inducing source and motivation. Rosenberg also stresses the importance of cognitive-affective imbalances as a requirement for changing the attitude (ibid, p. 83). The already quoted Rokić highlights the importance of contradictions in new insights and observations as drives of attitude change. He believes that contradictions are easy to perceive and more important given that they cover the self-perception to a high degree. He suggests that the existing inconsistencies in the individual's knowledge are more important when they include his most important values, because the tension is also high, increasing the change of attitudes and behaviour (ibid, p. 85). Rokić, therefore, relates the change of attitude with the change of the value system, and all this is based on changes in cognition. Contradictions on which the change of attitudes is based need to work in a reliable manner, avoiding to act defensively. This is believed to be achieved mainly by providing subjects with information on their own system of beliefs, as well as by providing information on other important systems of beliefs and attitudes. The role of education is selecting the information and presenting them to facilitate the recognition of contradictions instead of inducing adverse effects (ibid, p. 87). There are numerous experiments on this and other theoretical approaches to attitude's change, which may be further investigated by consulting referenced literature.

3. Methodological framework

The *subject* of this research is related to the educational potentials of teaching foreign language, which is one of its functions that is given insufficient attention in research. From this perspective, several developmental segments can be highlighted, such as perceiving, differentiating what is important and what is unimportant, logical thinking, concluding, and the like. In this case, the subject of research is focused on the need for learning foreign language in order to answer the *question* of how the attitudes towards the other nations are affected by learning a new foreign language (in this case German).

The *aim* of research is related to the need for understanding how the attitudes towards the other nations are affected by learning a new foreign language (German). Therefore, the task is defined as follows:

- Determine the statistical significance of differences in students' attitudes and acceptance of other nations before starting to learn German as foreign language and after a year of learning. Thus, the intention is to examine the extent to which learning foreign language contributes to changing the students' attitudes towards other

nations, i.e. the extent to which knowledge of other nations change their attitudes towards the others, with whom they are less familiar.

The initial *assumption* is that learning a language is more than merely adopting a useful skill – it also significantly contributes to students' "opening" for what is new, facilitating their skills of accepting what was previously unfamiliar or strange to them, and being one of the prerequisites for the creation of better and more humane society. Thus, the hypothesis refers to the belief that learning foreign language contributes significantly to changing the attitudes not only towards the speakers of a given language, but also to other nations; to the openness to new cultures that are not close to us. In a word, what is changing is the overall sensitivity for interculturalism and openness to other nations, the acceptance of their culture, diversity, plurality ... The theoretical context and rationale behind this assumption is in the above mentioned importance of information in changing the attitudes, in the educational role of information and its presentation. Education has specific dimension in pluralism, in diversity of national and local identities, cultures and civilizations of Europe and worldwide, which is able to facilitate the establishment of the pattern of a well-arranged order sought by the world today. In this respect, the quality of education is of utmost importance. The European processes of modernization are dependent on the efforts for the imperatives of peace, stability and prosperity achieved by fostering common culture and intercultural cooperation. These processes are based on emancipation, territorialization and legitimacy, while the accompanying principles of these processes are related to citizenship, nationality, and sovereignty. The purpose of all this is to support the concept of interculturalism for the sake of its deep humanism and ethical possibilities, enabling people to manage their own activities and values that need to be complied with the social practices that surround them. In all that, high hopes are invested in education and its human function, and learning foreign language is one of the tools.

For the purposes of the study, a non-probable (deliberate one) sample was selected, consisting of 40 first-year students of The Preschool Teacher Training College "Mihailo Palov" in Vrsac. This was the first time they studied German as a foreign language. Students were asked to answer an anonymous questionnaire about their attitudes and knowledge of other nations. This was done once before learning German as foreign language, and once after a year of learning. The questionnaire was focused on intercultural sensitivity, a sense of tolerance, the anticipation of global interdependence, reducing the differences among nations, the spirit of

openness towards the world, the sense of belonging to the world as a whole ... The questions were directed by the need to see the extent to which information are able to support something more general, a change of attitude, opening towards other nations, to what is less known. The decontextualization was expected through the adoption of information through learning German as a new foreign language. Its transfer into other contexts, was supposed to be detected in two stages of implementation of this questionnaire. Therefore, the transfer was one of the points of observation, and it was associated with decontextualization, which largely depends on reducing the complexity and neglecting the particularities or singularity of the case. In a specific sense, it measured also the adequacy of the curriculum as well as the methodological approach.

The *independent variable* was the curriculum of German as a foreign language, while the dependent variable was related to the students' attitudes towards the other nations. The research was based on the use of the method of systematic non-experimental observation. Variables were not manipulated for their intentional change, except for statistical analyzes that are in some sense substitutes for experimental controls. The relation between the empirical data and the theoretical framework was analyzed by the qualitative interpretation of findings. By data synthesis, a sort of systematic approach has been applied; this was justified by the research subject itself, by the complexity of attitudes and the ways of their change.

Statistical procedure was based on the comparison of the rankings of the European nations in the test and retest – the Mann-Whitney test.

Findings and interpretations

3. RANKING OF EUROPEAN NATIONS AT THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE COURSE

Given that none of the correlations between the rankings of European nations in the test (beginning the course) and retest (finishing the course) failed to prove to be statistically significant, the ranking of European nations in the test and retest was compared according to the Mann-Whitney Test.

3.1 Ranking the European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to the desire to spend the vacation with them

Table 3.1.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest by the desire to spend the vacation with them

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English (desire to spend vacation together)	test	40	33.98	1359.00
	retest	29	36.41	1056.00
	Total	69		
Ranking the Germans (desire to spend vacation together)	test	40	31.71	1268.50
	retest	30	40.55	1216.50
	Total	70		
Ranking the French (desire to spend vacation together)	test	38	37.13	1411.00
	retest	30	31.17	935.00
	Total	68		
Ranking of the Italians (desire to spend vacation together)	test	39	34.90	1361.00
	retest	31	36.26	1124.00
	Total	70		
Ranking the Russians (desire to spend vacation together)	test	39	36.36	1418.00
	retest	29	32.00	928.00
	Total	68		
Ranking the Finns (desire to spend vacation together)	test	39	36.35	1417.50
	retest	28	30.73	860.50
	Total	67		
Ranking the Greeks (desire to spend vacation together)	test	40	34.55	1382.00
	retest	31	37.87	1174.00
	Total	71		
Ranking the Bulgarians (desire to spend vacation together)	test	38	39.53	1502.00
	retest	30	28.13	844.00
	Total	68		

As indicated by the results of ranking in terms of desire to spend the vacation with representatives of these nations, there is a shift in favour of nations that were less popular in the first examination. Unlike the English, Germans, Italians and Greeks, the ranking of which decreased, the ranking of the Russians (from 36.36 to 32.00), Finns (from 36.35 to 30.73) and Bulgarians (with 39, 53 to 28.13) has improved. These results are speaking in favour of the underlying hypothesis of this study (that knowing yet another foreign language leads to open ourselves to others as well) because the shift was not in favour of Germans, as representatives of the

new language; instead, it was in favour of some other nations, nations that are "less popular" in Serbia.

Table 3.1.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Germans (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the French (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Italians (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Russians (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Finns (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Greeks (desire to spend vacation together)	Ranking the Bulgarians (desire to spend vacation together)
The Man-Whitney U	539.000	448.500	470.000	581.000	493.000	454.500	562.000	379.000
(p)	.610	.068	.210	.777	.362	.226	.495	.015

As indicated in Table 3.1.2, the difference between the ranking of Bulgarians in the test and retest is statistically significant, which excludes the possibility of coincidence; therefore, it can be interpreted as confirmation of the initial assumption.

Table 3.1.3: The percentages of ranking the Bulgarians in the test and retest

	Test	Retest	
	Valid %	Valid %	
Ranking the Bulgarians (desire to spend vacation together)	1	7.9%	10.0%
	2	2.6%	13.3%
	3	5.3%	16.7%
	4	5.3%	6.7%
	5	5.3%	6.7%
	6	7.9%	10.0%
	7	18.4%	13.3%
	8	47.4%	23.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

As indicated in Table 3.1.3, in terms of desire to spend vacation together, the Bulgarians were scored much better in the retest than in the test. Namely, the percentage of high rankings (1-3) increased in the retest, while the percentage of very low rankings (7 and 8) decreased, which could be interpreted as a support for the hypothesis that by learning a new language, individuals develop open attitude both towards the familiar and other nations.

3.2 Ranking the European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to the possibility of getting married to them

Table 3.2.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest according to the possibility of getting married

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English (possibility of getting married)	test	37	31.42	1162.50
	retest	31	38.18	1183.50
	Total	68		
Ranking the Germans (possibility of getting married)	test	37	32.34	1196.50
	retest	31	37.08	1149.50
	Total	68		
Ranking the French (possibility of getting married)	test	37	34.32	1270.00
	retest	31	34.71	1076.00
	Total	68		
Ranking the Italians (possibility of getting married)	test	36	34.96	1258.50
	retest	31	32.89	1019.50
	Total	67		
Ranking the Russians (possibility of getting married)	test	38	36.55	1389.00
	retest	29	30.66	889.00
	Total	67		
Ranking the Finns (possibility of getting married)	test	36	36.43	1311.50
	retest	28	27.45	768.50
	Total	64		
Ranking the Greeks (possibility of getting married)	test	37	31.61	1169.50
	retest	30	36.95	1108.50
	Total	67		
Ranking the Bulgarians (possibility of getting married)	test	36	36.11	1300.00
	retest	27	26.52	716.00
	Total	63		

As indicated in Table 3.2.1, the ranking of English, Germans, French and Greeks regarding the possibility of getting married to them is slightly decreased on average in the retest, while the ranking of Russians, Finns, Italians and Bulgarians increased.

Table 3.2.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Germans (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the French (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Italians (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Russians (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Finns (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Greeks (possibility of getting married)	Ranking the Bulgarians (possibility of getting married)
The Man-Whitney U	459.500	493.500	567.000	523.500	454.000	362.500	466.500	338.000
(p)	.153	.316	.935	.658	.212	.050	.259	.035

As indicated in Table 3.2.2, there are statistically significant differences between the average rankings in the test and retest for two nations (Finns and Bulgarians), suggesting that learning foreign language, and inevitable familiarization with native speakers has improved openness towards novelty and willingness to reconsider the previously established attitudes. By returning to Table 3.2.1, it can be seen that the average ranking of Finns and Bulgarians, regarding the possibility of getting marriage to them, increased in the retest.

By analyzing Table 3.2.3, it can be seen to what extent (percentages) the ranking of Finns and Bulgarians have increased in the retest.

Table 3.2.3: Percentages of ranking the Finns and Bulgarians in the test and retest

		Test	Retest
		Valid %	Valid %
Ranking the Finns (possibility of getting married)	1	.0%	7.1%
	2	2.8%	10.7%
	3	.0%	10.7%
	4	5.6%	.0%
	5	13.9%	17.9%
	6	25.0%	17.9%
	7	33.3%	21.4%
	8	19.4%	14.3%
Total		100.0%	100.0%
Ranking the Bulgarians (possibility of getting married)	1	5.6%	14.8%
	2	5.6%	3.7%
	3	5.6%	11.1%

4	0.0%	11.1%
5	5.6%	11.1%
6	13.9%	7.4%
7	22.2%	18.5%
8	41.7%	22.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

As indicated by the percentage of ranking the Finns, there is a significant redistribution in the retest. For example, in the first test they were not ranked at all, while in the retest they were ranked in 7.1% cases. The percentage of second position has also increased (from 2.8 to 10.7%). As compared to zero ranking in the test, they were ranked third in the retest (10.7%). The percentage of last position is reduced accordingly, so that the sixth, seventh and eighth position shifted from 25 to 17.9%, from 33.3 to 21.4% and from 19.4 to 14.3%, respectively. Although not so obvious, a similar shift occurred to the Bulgarians, where the distribution became more balanced with a tendency of shifting towards higher percentage of better position. The fact that the major changes have not occurred with the Germans, whose language was taught, confirms the validity of the initial hypotheses of the study and the attitudes of several other authors promoting the "Banat concept" as the possible model of new multicultural and intercultural Europe and so-called Homo Europeans (e.g. Victor Neumann, 2008; Horst Fassel, 2007).

3.3 Ranking European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to their music

Table 3.3.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest according to their music

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English according to their music	test	36	32.10	1155.50
	retest	31	36.21	1122.50
	Total	67		
Ranking the Germans according to their music	test	35	31.69	1109.00
	retest	30	34.53	1036.00
	Total	65		
Ranking the French according to their music	test	36	36.68	1320.50
	retest	29	28.43	824.50

	Total	65		
Ranking the Italians according to their music	test	36	30.99	1115.50
	retest	30	36.52	1095.50
	Total	66		
Ranking the Russians according to their music	test	35	35.83	1254.00
	retest	29	28.48	826.00
	Total	64		
Ranking the Finns according their music	test	35	34.30	1200.50
	retest	26	26.56	690.50
	Total	61		
Ranking the Greeks according to their music	test	36	31.65	1139.50
	retest	30	35.72	1071.50
	Total	66		
Ranking the Bulgarians according to their music	test	35	33.41	1169.50
	retest	27	29.02	783.50
	Total	62		

Although the questions that follow were aimed to determine the knowledge of the respective nations and their culture, the above shifts can also be observed here Russians (from 35.83 to 28.48), Finns (from 34.30 to 26.56) and Bulgarians (from 33.41 to 29.02). This coincidence in rank shifting suggests that students, probably due to insufficient knowledge of these cultures, have ranked arts according to their attitudes towards the respective nations. These rankings probably can be interpreted as a corroboration of the previous statement.

Table 3.3.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English according to their music	Ranking the Germans according to their music	Ranking the French according to their music	Ranking the Italians according to their music	Ranking the Russians according to their music	Ranking the Finns according to their music	Ranking the Greeks according to their music	Ranking the Bulgarians according to their music
The Man-Vitney U	489.500	479.000	389.500	449.500	391.000	339.500	473.500	405.500
(p)	.366	.541	.074	.236	.111	.086	.384	.335

As indicated in Table 3.3.2, none of the differences between the ranking of nations in terms of music was statistically significant in the test and retest.

3.4 Ranking European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to their painting

Table 3.4.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest according to their painting

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English according to their painting	test	32	28.14	900.50
	retest	27	32.20	869.50
	Total	59		
Ranking the Germans according to their painting	test	32	31.08	994.50
	retest	26	27.56	716.50
	Total	58		
Ranking the French according to their painting	test	32	26.13	836.00
	retest	28	35.50	994.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Italians according to their painting	test	32	29.41	941.00
	retest	28	31.75	889.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Russians according to their painting	test	32	30.13	964.00
	retest	27	29.85	806.00
	Total	59		
Ranking the Finns according to their painting	test	32	33.36	1067.50
	retest	25	23.42	585.50
	Total	57		
Ranking the Greeks according to their painting	test	32	29.91	957.00
	retest	28	31.18	873.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Bulgarians according to their painting	test	32	34.48	1103.50
	retest	26	23.37	607.50
	Total	58		

The ranking of nations according to their painting follows the above tendency of shifting in favour of Russians (from 30.13 to 29.85), Finns (from 33.36 to 23.42) and Bulgarians (from 34.48 to 23.37), with a positive shift of results also in favour of Germans (from 31.08 to 23.42), which was expected as a result of the language being learned. Regarding the other items, this shift failed to occur for the Germans.

Table 3.4.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English according to their painting	Ranking the Germans according to their painting	Ranking the French according to their painting	Ranking the Italians according to their painting	Ranking the Russians according to their painting	Ranking the Finns according to their painting	Ranking the Greeks according to their painting	Ranking the Bulgarians according to their painting
The Man-Whitney U (p)	372.500 .359	365.500 .423	308.000 .035	413.000 .596	428.000 .950	260.500 .022	429.000 .775	256.500 .010

As indicated in Table 3.4.2, there are statistically significant differences between the average ranking in the test and retest for three nations: the French, Finns and Bulgarians.

Returning to Table 3.4.1, it can be seen that on average the French rank lower in the retest when it comes to painting, while the Finns and Bulgarians rank higher in the retest.

Table 3.4.3 shows the extent (in percentages) to which the French ranks lower, and Bulgarians and Finns higher in the retest when it comes to painting.

Table 3.4.3: The percentage of ranking the French, Finns and Bulgarians in the test and retest

		Test	Retest
		Valid %	Valid %
Ranking the French according to their painting	1	34.4%	7.1%
	2	25.0%	28.6%
	3	12.5%	17.9%

	4	6.3%	14.3%
	5	12.5%	17.9%
	6	3.1%	.0%
	7	.0%	10.7%
	8	6.3%	3.6%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%
Ranking the Finns according to their painting	1	.0%	8.0%
	2	.0%	12.0%
	3	12.5%	8.0%
	4	9.4%	20.0%
	5	3.1%	8.0%
	6	31.3%	20.0%
	7	28.1%	16.0%
	8	15.6%	8.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%
Ranking the Bulgarians according to their painting	1	6.3%	23.1%
	2	.0%	15.4%
	3	6.3%	.0%
	4	.0%	11.5%
	5	15.6%	7.7%
	6	9.4%	11.5%
	7	15.6%	3.8%
	8	46.9%	26.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

The above tables are good indicators of the process that is believed to be unfolding in students who learn new foreign language. It is notable that, by familiarizing with the language of the nation which they considered particularly unattractive, but later thought as "normal" and not particularly foreign to us, they have become more sensitive, less rigid and more willing to challenge the common stereotypes and prejudices. This confirms the validity of the ideas of multicultural and intercultural Banat with people tolerant of diversity, which is a model of modern society.

3.5 Ranking European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to their literature

Table 3.5.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest according to their literature

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English according to their literature	test	31	28.65	888.00
	retest	29	32.48	942.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Germans according to their literature	test	31	28.65	888.00
	retest	28	31.50	882.00
	Total	59		
Ranking the French according to their literature	test	31	30.00	930.00
	retest	29	31.03	900.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Italians according to their literature	test	31	29.45	913.00
	retest	28	30.61	857.00
	Total	59		
Ranking the Russians according to their literature	test	31	32.13	996.00
	retest	29	28.76	834.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Finns according to their literature	test	31	33.15	1027.50
	retest	26	24.06	625.50
	Total	57		
Ranking the Greeks according to their literature	test	31	31.37	972.50
	retest	28	28.48	797.50
	Total	59		
Ranking the Bulgarians according to their literature	test	31	31.97	991.00
	retest	26	25.46	662.00
	Total	57		

The ranking according to nation's literature has also shown a positive shift for the Russians (from 32.13 to 28.76), Finns (from 33.14 to 24.06) and Bulgarians (from 31.97 to 25.46), verifying the above facts.

Table 3.5.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English according to their literature	Ranking the Germans according to their literature	Ranking the French according to their literature	Ranking the Italians according to their literature	Ranking the Russians according to their literature	Ranking the Finns according to their literature	Ranking the Greeks according to their literature	Ranking the Bulgarians according to their literature
The Man-Whitney U	392.000	392.000	434.000	417.000	399.000	274.500	391.500	311.000
(p)	.381	.518	.812	.793	.449	.035	.514	.122

As seen from Table 3.5.2, there are statistically significant differences between the test and retest ranking only for the Finns regarding the nation's literature.

Returning to Table 3.5.1, we notice that the ranking of Finns is improved in the retest when it comes to literature.

Table 3.5.3: The percentage of rankings of Finns rank in the test and retest

		Test	Retest
		Valid %	Valid %
Ranking the Finns according to their literature	1	.0%	7.7%
	2	3.2%	7.7%
	3	9.7%	11.5%
	4	6.5%	7.7%
	5	3.2%	15.4%
	6	25.8%	26.9%
	7	41.9%	11.5%
	8	9.7%	11.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3.5.3 shows the extent (in percentages) to which Finns were ranked by the respondents higher in retest when it comes to literature.

This table is particularly good indicator of shifts in attitudes, because the Finnish literature was completely unknown to students, both in the first and in the second test, given the absence of corresponding content. Therefore, this shift from lower to higher rankings can be interpreted only as the students' opening to what is new and unknown, which is a confirmation of our hypothesis.

3.6 Ranking European nations at the beginning and the end of the course according to their cuisine

Table 3.6.1: The average ranking of European nations in the test and retest according to their cuisine

	Test-retest	N	Average ranking	Sum of the rankings
Ranking the English according to their cuisine	test	35	30.99	1084.50
	retest	26	31.02	806.50
	Total	61		
Ranking the Germans according to their cuisine	test	35	32.90	1151.50
	retest	26	28.44	739.50
	Total	61		
Ranking the French according to their cuisine	test	35	29.60	1036.00
	retest	25	31.76	794.00
	Total	60		
Ranking the Italians according to their cuisine	test	37	31.99	1183.50
	retest	26	32.02	832.50
	Total	63		
Ranking the Russians according to their cuisine	test	35	30.81	1078.50
	retest	23	27.50	632.50
	Total	58		
Ranking the Finns according to their cuisine	test	35	32.11	1124.00
	retest	24	26.92	646.00
	Total	59		
Ranking the Greeks according to their cuisine	test	35	26.33	921.50
	retest	24	35.35	848.50
	Total	59		
Ranking the Bulgarians	test	35	31.67	1108.50

	retest	22	24.75	544.50
	Total	57		

Regarding national cuisine, there was also a positive shift in ranking for the Russians (from 30.81 to 27.50), Finns (from 32.11 to 26.92) and Bulgarians (from 31.67 to 24.75), which confirms the above statements, that in the course of the year national cuisines was inaccessible to students.

Table 3.6.2: The Man-Whitney U statistics and its significance (p)

	Ranking the English according to their cuisine	Ranking the Germans according to their cuisine	Ranking the French according to their cuisine	Ranking the Italians according to their cuisine	Ranking the Russians according to their cuisine	Ranking the Finns according to their cuisine	Ranking the Greeks according to their cuisine	Ranking the Bulgarians according to their cuisine
The Man-Whitney U	454.500	388.500	406.000	480.500	356.500	346.000	291.500	291.500
(p)	.994	.324	.629	.993	.457	.240	.041	.104

As seen from Table 3.6.2, there are statistically significant differences between the test and retest ranking only for the Greeks regarding national cuisine.

Returning to Table 3.6.1, it can be seen that according to their cuisine, the Greeks rank lower on average in the retest. This further confirms the initial assumption, that the Greeks and their cuisine are initially closer to our students than anyone else in the study, since large number of our people spending their holidays in Greece, as well as there are many Greek restaurant in our country.

Table 3.6.3: The percentage of ranking the Greeks in the test and retest

	Test	Retest
	Valid %	Valid %
Ranking the Greeks according to their cuisine 1	14.3%	4.2%
2	40.0%	29.2%

	3	11.4%	12.5%
	4	1.0%	4.2%
	5	20.0%	12.5%
	6	8.6%	12.5%
	7	2.9%	20.8%
	8	2.9%	4.2%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3.6.3 provides a detailed insight into how the ranking of Greeks declined in the retest regarding their cuisine

Conclusion

The first test has shown that the English culture and nation appeared to students as the closest and the most familiar. Here, the author avoids studying further this question, having in mind the fact that the authority of this nation and its widespread language is highly complex task. This was accompanied by students' surprising ignorance regarding art and culture of other nations, since they were unable to name any piece of music, or literature as well as a painting of great European nations (failing even to mention Beethoven or Mozart, Bach, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Dostoevsky, Šolohov, Tolstoy, Stravinsky, Bizet, Baudelaire, Hugo ...). As expected, the English were ranked the best on all the items, and the usual stereotypes have also been expressed, as those of the passionate Italians and Frenchmen as imaginative lovers and skillful chefs. In the first test, nations and cultures that are closer and more familiar to us (as the Greeks) were ranked higher, while the others, equally close regarding their geographic position (as the Bulgarians), proved to be almost totally unknown and unattractive. The change regarding all the items was clearly indicated by the second test. In addition to the expected change (that knowledge leads to positive attitude), it was the change assumed at the outset of the research, i.e. opening to the less known and attractive people. Somewhat surprising is the absence of positive change in attitudes towards the Germans as people whose language is learned. This could be explained perhaps by the previous knowledge of this nation and culture (many of the students have someone in German speaking countries) or, as seems more likely, by their existing positive attitude towards the language and nation that prompted them to learn their language. Therefore, it could be concluded that results have confirmed the initial hypothesis that the learning foreign languages, which is accompanied by the familiarization

with respective nations and cultures, makes people more receptive to novelties and more tolerant of diversity, and thus, more willing to accept living in both multicultural and intercultural world, which has become our reality. This also confirms the need for learning and familiarizing with foreign languages as early as the youngest age, as well as for the introduction of several foreign languages, creating thereby an open and tolerant society.

As suggested by the findings of this exploratory study, there is a need for further investigations based on a stronger research design in order to verify the hypotheses and the results. These findings are highly indicative and it is worthwhile undertaking further research.

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