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DÁNSKO OČIMA MEZINÁRODNÍHO STUDENTA**

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**LEARNING ENGLISH IN DANISH CULTURE:
DENMARK THROUGH THE EYES OF AN
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT**

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Markéta Čechurová

ABSTRACT

Markéta Čechurová. University of West Bohemia. April, 2020. Learning English in Danish Culture: Denmark through the Eyes of an International Student.

Supervisor: William Bradley Vice, Ph.D.

This undergraduate thesis will explore Danish and Czech cultures to find out if they are similar in some aspects. For instance both are individualist cultures, but they are also very different for example in power distance. In Denmark the power distance is low but in the Czech Republic the power distance is high. That means that the Czech Republic is more hierarchical and is more respectful toward authorities and people of a certain age, jobs or social status, whereas the Danes prefer when all people are completely equal. Here we will describe and compare the Danish and Czech education system. What is similar, what is different, what works well and what can be improved. We will also look at the position of English in both of those countries to discover if Denmark and Danish schools are more internationalised than the Czech ones, and why Denmark ranks much higher in English proficiency index than the Czech Republic. We will explore where the Czech education is lacking and where it can get inspired by innovative Danish methods and approaches. We will look at some Danish education methods, which are typical for Denmark, such as the Danish attitude towards teaching and learning English, projects with international students, using cultural intelligence in practice, the relationships between teachers and students, individual approach to the pupils and students, learning through teamwork and projects and healthy lifestyle in schools and universities. We will discuss how those methods and approaches can be implemented in Czech schools and universities. What could help the Czech education to improve in teaching and how can the Czech pupils learn more effectively and be more comfortable about going to school and how can the Czech teachers create a good learning environment. We will use cultural intelligence to see if Danish methods can work in the Czech Republic.

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INTRODUCTION

Danish education methods can be used in the Czech Republic. They can improve Czech schools and universities, especially the Danish teaching approach in teaching English. But cultural adjustments are required. Denmark and the Czech Republic are two different countries, with different cultures and education systems. If we are to implement the Danish system to the Czech environment, we have to be aware, there are slight adjustments to be done. Danish and Czech cultures are not identical, therefore we have to identify the differences and similarities between these two and see what could work the same and what should be altered. To discover what education methods can be implemented well, we will use cultural intelligence (CQ) to find if Denmark and the Czech Republic have a lot in common.

Through cultural intelligence we will analyze how Danish culture works and why, we will compare it to the Czech culture, and then we will focus on the Danish education system, especially on teaching English and make comparisons to the Czech Republic again. The primary text used for this information will be *The Danish Education System: Primary And Secondary Education, Higher Education, Lifelong Learning*, a document published in 2016 by The Ministry of Higher Education and Science, The Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality and The Ministry of Culture in Denmark. This document describes the notion of the Danish education system and how this system is beneficial to students.

According to statistics, the Danish are quite high in the charts when it comes to English language ability and according to EF English Proficiency Index 2019 Denmark ranks fourth as very high. High English language skills are in today's world of globalization and internationalization very important and it would be useful for the Czech Republic to change their teaching attitude a little. Czech Republic ranks in English Proficiency Index 2019 as 23rd, only six places above moderate proficiency. Czechia can change the teaching attitude to English by getting inspired from Denmark, and not only when it comes to English.

Czech education is based on a long tradition and it could be improved by innovations which are now highly valued in Danish schools, such as an individual approach to pupils, learning through teamwork and projects rather than lectures and tests, and focusing the classes on information and knowledge the students can later use on the work market. Danish

education pursues the idea of a healthy lifestyle and since it is something Czech education seems to be struggling with, trying out the Danish techniques and using different methods could be helpful. The learning process of the Czech pupils is now too passive. If teachers and pupils both become active participants of the learning process, the impact of education will be more effective. Another Danish approach in teaching is friendly relationships between teachers and students, where we can clearly see the difference between the power distance and risk tolerance of the Czech and Danish culture. The Danish methods cannot work exactly the same in the Czech Republic as they do in Denmark, but they have to be culturally altered.

I want to pursue those ideas because I think the Danish system has a lot to offer and I think this system and methods could be appreciated in the Czech Republic as well. I have spent five months in Denmark as an international student, so I had a chance to observe a Danish university, teachers, and students and think about how this could be implemented in my native country.

I. ANALYSIS OF THE DANISH AND THE CZECH SOCIETY THROUGH CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Cultural competence can be understood as a sensitivity and effectiveness in an intercultural context, however, it is a skill that can be taught, learned, and developed. It is a personal capability based on an individual's motivation, thinking, consciousness, and adaptability, therefore some people have more advantages when learning how to use cultural intelligence (CQ). Four capabilities of culturally intelligent leaders are: CQ Drive, which means showing interest, confidence, and drive to adapt cross-culturally, CQ Knowledge, that is understanding intercultural issues and differences, CQ Strategy, which means making sense of culturally diverse experiences and planning accordingly, and lastly, CQ Action, which describes changing verbal and nonverbal actions appropriately when interacting cross-culturally (Livermore, 2009, p. 4-5).

Cultural Intelligence has many definitions. Here are some of the most relevant examples: One of the definitions by Christopher Earley and Soon Ang (2003) suggests that Cultural Intelligence refers to a "person's capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to cultural context" (Earley & Ang, 2003, p.9). Peterson (2004, p. 89) refers to CQ as an ability to engage in a set of behaviors, and this ability includes skills, such as language or interpersonal skills, and qualities, for example, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts. David Livermore (2009) in his book *Leading with Cultural Intelligence* integrates the concept of global leadership and Cultural Intelligence and describes how to apply the principles of cultural intelligence to leadership challenges in a global environment that constantly changes (Bijedic, 2015, p. 9).

Denmark is a European country, often considered a Nordic or Scandinavian country. It borders with Germany and Sweden, therefore it can be seen as a transition between Nordic and Germanic culture. This encounter of two old cultures is especially noticeable in the Danish language. Many people consider Denmark one of the best places to study and to live. Denmark is often quite high in the ranking of citizens' happiness. People agree that Danish schools and universities are of a higher quality than those in the world because the education system is of a great quality itself. Danish people claim so themselves. There are multiple

commonly known reasons such as that the Danish government is, in general, considering the health of citizens a high priority, mental health included. For example in Denmark people have one of the longest vacation times, most of the shops close around three in the afternoon, and in general the working environment is very liberal, because the employers want employees who can work well. According to Danes, people cannot work effectively, when they are feeling tired or overworked. They need to rest properly, spend quality time with their family and with themselves and their hobbies. The same goes for the students. The students are not supposed to be overwhelmed or overworked with their studies. They need to rest properly to be able to study effectively. To understand the Danish education system, one needs to see first, what is the structure of this culture built on, how it works, what people expect from the others, and what are their priorities.

A Danish anthropologist Dennis Nørmark in his book *Cultural Intelligence for Stone-Age Brains: How to Work with Danes and Beyond* says that people are fundamentally the same, the differences are just our values and preferences, or as we call it – cultural differences. He focuses on Danish cultural values and explains them. He points out, how often Denmark is misunderstood by people from abroad. For example, foreigners perceive Danes as lacking leadership and structure, whereas the Danish see themselves as independent thinkers and decision-makers. In Denmark, people highly value freedom and openness. When it comes to openness, privacy and individualism, Danish belong to a category of collectively-oriented individualism. That is a kind of individualism where people have complete freedom in their actions when alone in private, but this freedom is limited when in public because they have to consider other people. They value individualism, but they prefer making decisions collectively with everybody's contribution. On the other side, they deeply respect each other's privacy. Danes rarely come into conflict, because they are not very explicit and they anticipate everyone to understand. Generally, Danish are not fearful people, but they dislike the unknown. They do not like white lies and they usually cannot see the real meaning behind polite answers. Titles and differential expressions of politeness are meaningless in Denmark – in the workplace as well as in schools. The Danish can therefore easily be perceived as rude and disrespectful for people from abroad, but for them this is a question of being equal to each other (Nørmark, p. 58, 2013). That is very different from the Czech Republic, where titles and polite expressions are highly important. Czech people feel that they worked hard to achieve academic titles, so they think their accomplished

education should be acknowledged. Polite expressions are important as well, because the Czech Republic is a high power distance society (more on that later).

The Danish are punctual, arrive on time and they dislike spontaneous changes and social events – a Dane would not reschedule a bank appointment to meet an old friend. The Danish like their social events planned and appointments kept, and they are reciprocally tolerant and considerate about it. Danes have a monochronic perception of time, similarly like other Northern European countries, where time is precious and everything is to be planned ahead (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 54-56*).

Danish and Czech societies are both individualist societies. That means the citizens are expected to take care of themselves and their relatives, but there is no need to create close relationships in the workplace, for instance. On the other side, Denmark and Czech Republic differ a lot in the category of uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance is a category that examines to what extent a society is uncomfortable with ambiguous and unknown situations and how much are the members of this society trying to avoid those situations. Czech people have a high preference for avoiding uncertain situations. There is a great need for rules, that create security – security is more important than innovations. Time is money and people feel the need to work hard, be punctual and busy. In contrast to that, Denmark is a low uncertainty avoidance culture. They are comfortable with not knowing or others not knowing something at a workplace and they welcome new innovations (*Hofstede Insights, 2020*).

Danish people highly value their homogeneity and unity. They trust other Danish citizens similarly like they trust their own family – because they as a nation create one big family of equal value of every member. That is why the Danish can sell fruit on the street just with a box for money there, without anyone watching over it – and it works perfectly. Danish people can trust each other's honesty because they are similar to each other culturally and financially. Many foreigners consider this trust naive, but in reality there is little reason for it to be called this way. On the other hand, the Danish view foreigners as controlling and overly suspicious. For instance, in Denmark one can withdraw money from their husband's/wife's account just by they are married and providing their social security number; if there's a price tag missing, the cashier will ask the customer if they remember the price and trust them without checking (this happened to me personally); one can call in sick to work without providing a doctor's note (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 51-52*).

Denmark is a low power distance culture and one of the world's most equal societies. Danish people value equality greatly. Instead of dividing people according to their age, position, or gender, they prefer to live in an equal community where everyone is the same of identical value. This has many bright sides, like the trust mentioned above. On the other side, many problems can occur, especially interculturally. For example, after the Øresund Bridge was built between Denmark and Sweden, the statistics showed, there were twice as many accidents on the Danish side than on the Swedish one. The problem was in the culture. Even though Danish and Swedish cultures can seem very similar, Swedes have more respect for the authority than the Danish do. When there was a sign on the road with a strict order of doing or not doing something, the Danish would just do the opposite on purpose to explore the situation themselves, so that they could decide for themselves what is the best solution for the situation. Swedes would just follow the orders, since they believe the authority is making these orders for a good reason. Danes are independent of authorities and when they are told to do something, they do it their own way anyway, because they are taught to think initiatively of themselves. For them, not listening to authority, is not a sign of rudeness or disrespect – they just have to see and decide things for themselves (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 52-53*).

In contrast to low power distance Denmark, the Czech Republic is a high power distance country. This means that people, who are in a higher social status (at work or in the family) are aware they have more power than some other people and they are an authority for them (*Hofstede Insights, 2020*).

Denmark is known for its specific and convenient welfare system. Danish society is from this point of view described as a prosperous society with a high income. It is a democratic society with active public participation in government decisions. The government operates and supports a free market economy and provides social security for its citizens. That is the Danish model of social welfare. It is based on a universal principle of coverage for all citizens, where the funding is provided by taxes, which usually are 40 % of the citizen's income. This system is trying to ensure, that all individuals have an equal access to health care and education, that they don't have to face uncertainties in old age, illness, or unemployment. Through these factors they have been able to strengthen domestic peace and security (*Hastrup, 2011, p. 76-95*).

That is why, if one comes to Denmark, it is rare to spot a homeless person, especially outside of the capital city. Spending five whole months in Denmark, never have I had anyone ask me for money, saw a person sleeping on a park bench, or met a homeless drunk person. The system works well for people to feel secure. They do not fear not having enough money or opportunities for a proper life. They have universal safety. Simply, the rule if it's not yours, don't touch it, works well there. If you find something, give it to a responsible person. This was proven to me in practice many times when walking alone in the city or a park at midnight hours having met no one slightly suspicious. There were two cases of people to have lost their keys, and after putting up a note, having the keys returned to the university's information desk. I do not want to underestimate Czech people, but I personally would never expect this to happen. This all helps to create the "trust". By researching through interviewing Danish people themselves, I happened to understand that Danish people feel very secure in their country. They are sure, they can trust a stranger, if they are Danish, they can trust the bank teller, they can trust the shop. On a train or bus, rarely one meets a person to check their ticket. "Why?" laughed my Danish teacher. "Because for Danes it is normal to buy a ticket. They consider it obvious that everybody bought their ticket, so they do not need to check people's tickets on every train ride." What is surprising about this trust as well, is that people are willing to give their personal information, such as name, date of birth and bank account to an English speaking stranger standing on a street, just because they have a name tag with a charity organization logo. They trust each other, and the reason is social capital.

Social capital is where the Danish community strength comes from. It is the reason for their trust. Danes are said to behave more like a tribe rather to act like a regular nation, which increases their social capital. This dates back to the Viking times and Danish being culturally homogeneous, with very limited immigration (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 17*). According to Statistics Denmark (2017) 86.9 % of Denmark's population has Danish origin. 13.1 % of the population are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, most commonly from Poland, Turkey, Germany, Iraq, Romania, Syria, Somalia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Yugoslavia. According to The Migration Policy Institute (2006), immigrants are included in Danish society by acculturating into Danish life and accepting Danish cultural values and habits.

Denmark is often at the top of the countries that contain the happiest nation/citizens in the world. In a contrast to that, just like in other Nordic countries, Danish people struggle

with mental health problems such as depression, caused by the inappropriate amount of darkness in the winter days, or rainy gray days in other seasons. Due to that, Denmark has a high suicide rate. Employers especially are aware of this problem and try to provide as good a workplace as possible, with a high salary, many holidays and giving people enough time to spend with their families. As Danish people explained, they want strong, energetic and healthy employees, because that is the highest quality employee they can have.

Being happy as a nation is often typical for countries with low uncertainty avoidance, like Denmark. People are happier because they are more willing to believe in a system that protects them. This is usual for religious countries (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 141*). The Danes understand religion as a part of their culture. According to the Danish Kirkeministeriet (The Ministry of Church, 2019) 74.3 % of the Danish citizens are members of the Danish official national church (Den Danske Folkekirke). Danish society has a great respect for old traditions, including religious traditions (*Hofstede Insights, 2020*).

In the World Happiness Report 2019 published by UN Denmark ranked second, whereas the Czech Republic ranked 20th. This report examines the countries GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom of citizens to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption. Those factors mentioned create a score by which are the countries ranked in the report. In the previous years, Denmark always ranked among the first four places in the chart.

A great part of a culture is also an education system and learning because it is a part of people's upbringing. Teachers in Denmark usually teach two or three subjects. Teaching practice involves teaching competence, classroom management and relations and cooperation. The last two are strongly emphasized because Danes consider the relationship between teacher and student very important. The teacher must be able to see things from the view of children, work out his or her own personal authority, and to be able to master the classroom. Before this, the teaching in Denmark was curriculum-based (like the Czech education still is now). That means, the most important thing about teaching was to explain, to analyse, act pedagogically, to reflect, evaluate and demand. Later on there appeared a project called *The Relational Competence Project* which is now used by many schools and universities, such as VIA University College, one of the biggest universities in Denmark. This project points out the importance of the teacher-student relationship. It says that good relations, which previously were underestimated, are the basis for a high-quality learning

environment. The project explains that teaching is essentially about communicative human interaction, which covers three dimensions: academic, personal and pedagogical dimension. Both teachers and students need to feel empathy for each other, pay attention and be mentally present during the communication and be able to appreciate one another's efforts (*Jensen, 2015, p. 203-207*).

Danish schools focus a lot on the content of what students learn about. The education programmes must be of high quality. They need to be suitable and relevant to the work market so that the education students get is fully usable in their future career. Educational institutions (schools, universities) should prepare students for work life and for facing the challenges of globalisation and should create a strong academic environment of high quality that meets the needs of the labour market and can attract researchers and talented students. The population of Denmark is 5.7 million. According to data from 2014 93 % of a year group completed a youth education programme, and 62 % completed a higher education programme. When it comes to genders, 69 % of a year group of women completed a high education programme, when it comes to men it was approximately 55 %. Denmark in total spends on education (including state grants) 15.2 % of national expenditure: "At governmental level, Denmark is an active partner in the educational cooperation of the EU, the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNESCO and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Furthermore, Denmark is a member of the ENIC Network (European Network of Information Centres) and the NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres)," (*The Ministry Of Higher Education And Science, 2016, p. 20*). The Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science in its document about the Danish education system further says:

Provision of high quality education at all levels is essential to ensure competitiveness in today's global society. Thus, Danish education aims to ensure that all young people acquire knowledge and competencies which will qualify them to take an active part in society and contribute to its further development. Education is open to all and generally free of charge. Other characteristic features of the Danish education system include high standards, that means: the quality of Danish education is assured in many ways. It is mainly regulated and financed by the State, and all public educational institutions are approved and evaluated on an ongoing basis. It further includes relevance: Danish educational institutions must provide their students with knowledge

and competencies for them to use in their future job and in life in general. Institutions therefore seek to ensure education programmes are of a high quality, are of relevance to society and are oriented towards the needs of the labour market. Important part is also lifelong learning: Lifelong learning is a key principle in Denmark. The idea goes back all the way to the 19th century Danish clergyman and philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig, who argued that a prerequisite for active participation in a democratic society is education for all citizens on a lifelong basis. Further the education system includes active participation: Treating pupils and students as independent people with a right to form their own opinion and a duty to participate actively in discussions is a matter of course in Danish education. Lastly, the Danish education system includes project work: At all levels of the education system, pupils and students attend classes, however, they also carry out project work, either on an individual basis or in small groups. Interdisciplinary activities are also an integrated part of Danish education, (*The Ministry Of Higher Education And Science, 2016, p. 20*).

In contrast to innovative Denmark, Czech education is based on a long tradition from 1774, when the mandatory school attendance was established. Currently the literacy rate of the Czech Republic is 99 %. Most universities offer accredited bachelor's, master's, and engineering degrees (*Embassy of the Czech Republic in Washington, D. C.*). The Czech education system is curriculum-based and it focuses on analysing, demanding, and evaluating. Therefore the Czech schools and universities base their systems on curricular documents and framework education programmes rather than teaching approaches. The teachers pass their theoretical knowledge on students through lectures. Students and pupils are mostly just passive listeners rather than active participants of the class. The pupils are evaluated usually through written tests and oral exams.

Recently Danish schools and universities are focusing on making the pupils as creative as possible, which is a process that can already start in the preschool age. There is an interesting idea by Mitchel Resnick (2017) called *Lifelong Kindergarten*. He recognizes two types of excellent students: *A students* and *X students*. *A students* always have the best grades and study results, so they are mostly considered the smartest. *X students* are not considered the best ones according to their exam results but they have creative minds and can think in innovative ways. Lifelong Kindergarten is a process that starts in kindergarten, by giving children creative tasks, that make them think, create, think in a different way and through

this all find a solution for a given problem. The process work according to a *Learning spiral*, which initiates with imagining, continues to create, play, share, reflect, and then imagine again. This is a process that can start at an early age and be used again in elementary school, high school and even university and a workplace by creating interesting projects, where the participants are the makers of things, who learn through making and develop their thinking, voice, and identity (*Resnick, 2017, p. 2-14*).

In the Czech Republic, children learn through creative tasks in kindergarten, but hardly ever in high schools or at universities. Czech education is still based on a curriculum and uses a transmissive way of learning. The grading system is strongly in favor of the above mentioned *A students*. This approach is traditional. The teachers present their knowledge to students and they are about to remember this knowledge, to learn theory. But recently some schools and universities are slowly trying to adapt to the constructivist teaching model, where the teacher works just like a coordinator and discusses a lot with the students and they build the knowledge together (*Tonucci, 1994, p. 5-62*). The constructivist approach is used in Denmark and it is proven to be better for the development of pupils, their collaboration and communication skills, but in the Czech Republic, it is not always popular because sometimes there is just too much theory that (according to the Ministry of Education) has to be taught.

Czech education (just like Danish education) focuses on how students can use their reached knowledge on the labor market and if the students are reaching good and high scores in the exams or national or international contests. According to the Czech Ministry of Education, a school (or university) should work as a good social group - the teachers should be organized and cooperate like a team. More attention needs to be paid to the medically or socially disadvantaged students. It is very important for the school to know the opinions of parents and students but also the opinions of the public. Now there is an aim of the high schools to improve competencies of their pupils in cooperation and communication, because the employers consider the high school absolvents lacking in independent working, responsibility and social skills (*Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, 2012*). Therefore it would be useful for Czech schools to get inspired by Denmark, where the education is focused on collaboration and teamwork, which develops communication and social skills. When I personally worked in teams with the Danish students most of them were greatly collaborative. Even though they preferred talking to other Danes rather than to the

international students, most of the Danish students were able to get the work done and work hard on the project through discussing with each team member and finding solutions and ways of working together. Nobody was ever excluded from the group's decision about the project, but I did feel Danish students had a harder time working with foreigners than with other Danes.

The relationship between students and teachers in Denmark was surprising for me as a foreigner. Here in the Czech Republic, teachers are authorities, and students should treat them with high respect. In Denmark, teachers are on the same social level as their students or pupils. Because as mentioned above, Danes highly value equality. Pupils treat their teachers as friends, which creates a comfortable and friendly environment in the class, which according to Danes is a way for effective learning. Grading is more effective and objective as well in Denmark because the pupils are not graded only for the final projects but also for the whole working process.

I (a Czech student) and my Romanian classmate had an opportunity to have an internship for two weeks in a Danish elementary school Låsby Skole, where we got to know a lot about the Danish education system and upbringing of children in general through interviewing the Danish teachers. Låsby Skole in particular is a small-town school, where teachers know the pupils personally, they know their parents and overall they have a very close relationship, which according to them helps the individual approach to children the most. Teachers often use the help of *pedagogs* or as often translated *social educators*, who are in school to look after children and their behaviour, to help maintain a calm and positive atmosphere in the class, so that the teacher can stay focused on teaching and is not interrupted by behavioral issues. The school has special classes for children with special needs, but many of those special needs pupils were in regular classes because there were not enough teachers, who were qualified to teach special classes. That is why it was often difficult for teachers and *pedagogs* to handle the class. Once we witnessed a pedagog taking a pupil out of the classroom because he would not stop interrupting the class. The school cares about pupils' mental health, so they pay a lot of attention to special needs children, who (if they prefer) can get individual study plans and individual private lessons from teachers, who believe that they can include them in the class eventually, step by step. An English teacher, who we interviewed about this matter, in particular, confessed, it can be exhausting to take care of such a high number of pupils individually, but she believes it is for the good of the children.

When asked, why are there not more qualified teachers, she revealed the school does not have enough finances.

Danish schools, in general, are focused on a healthy lifestyle, so children are not allowed to eat sweets in school, they have to spend their breaks outside on the playground and they have obligatory physical activity classes. If the teachers notice children eating sweets, they are obliged to take the sweets away from the children and throw the sweets away. When I asked, if parents resent that teachers take the sweets away from their children, the Danish teachers all said, that parents agree with this procedure. Those parents who give sweets to their children are not seen as good parents in Denmark, because sweets can harm children's health. That only supports the fact that in Denmark teachers and parents work as a team. They discuss with parents what is best for the pupils and as they share the same values and create the same rules for the children (for instance forbidding children to eat unhealthy food), they work as a good upbringing team.

It could be useful for the Czech Republic to attempt to create more friendly and less authoritative relationships between teachers and pupils. Children are often worried or stressed when they talk to the teachers because they are aware of how much power do the teachers have. On the other side, sometimes teachers feel nervous about children because they are afraid of their parents. In the Czech Republic some parents confront the teachers with almost any kind of violation against children's freedom. For example, they would probably not tolerate teachers taking away their children's food, no matter how unhealthy the food was. It seems to me that in the Czech Republic, either teachers are nervous about children and their parents, or children are nervous about teachers, and there are only a few of those friendly teachers and friendly pupils, who cooperate comfortably. In children's minds the insecurity usually comes from the fear of answering wrong or of saying something incorrect. Children are aware they are expected to answer correctly and that making mistakes is uncomfortable. They know they are expected to be *A students*. If children were brought up in a less authoritative environment and were to study in a more friendly environment, they would not be so insecure when communicating or collaborating. They would feel more comfortable and then would be more free to develop themselves and their individual thinking, which could lead to more independent, secure, and responsible adults.

As mentioned above Denmark is a low power distance culture, therefore such a friendly attitude in schools and universities feels more natural than in the Czech Republic.

Experiencing this attitude as an exchange student coming from a high power distance culture could feel quite strange. It was unnatural for me, a Czech student, but even for other students, for example from Romania, Japan, or Taiwan (also high power distance cultures). In the first week it felt wrong to me to call the teachers by their first names instead of Mr/Ms and their surname. Because I have never called a Czech teacher this way. Besides, the Danish students felt completely comfortable to hug their teacher or pat their shoulders for no obvious reason. It was just a friendly gesture. For us, Czech and foreign students, it was strange and we could not understand why the teachers allowed students to touch them, since in our culture it would be highly inappropriate. Due to Denmark being low power distance culture and Danish being all about equality, international students often find Danish people rude, but the Danish do not see themselves as rude. In Denmark it is polite to consider each other equal. The discomfort between low and high power distance culture mindsets was mutual. Since most of the international students came from high power distance countries, they were taught since childhood to treat teachers like an authority. Therefore, when the teacher came into the room, the students stopped talking immediately and paid attention to the teacher. After a few days, the teacher asked the students if they disliked each other since they never talked to each other during the class. The students had to explain that in their home countries they should become silent once the teacher enters the room. The students had many difficulties breaking this learned habit when asked to do so. The students were happy to be given such freedom of speech, but it was hard to break the cultural habit, that was so deep in their minds, that the habit worked just like an automatic reaction. That is why it is so important to start implementing new methods in early childhood, in kindergarten and elementary schools, not only in high schools and universities as well. I do not say that the Czech Republic should try to transform from a high power distance culture to a low power distance one. I do not think the Danish methods can work exactly the same in the Czech Republic – copy-pasting a culture is never possible. I believe that the best solution for the Czech Republic would be to combine the Czech traditional teaching methods, which are still being used nowadays, with the innovative Danish teaching attitude.

II. IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH IN EDUCATION IN DENMARK AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

According to the linguist David Crystal, "there has never been a language so widely spread, or spoken by so many people than English," (*Crystal, 2003, p. 189*) The capability of speaking English on a sufficient level is nowadays very beneficial. Communication skills in English are also often required in the work market because it is a language actively spoken on a global level. About this matter, Markku Fippula and his colleagues in their book *Changing English: Global and Local Perspectives* assert:

The English language has in the last couple of centuries reached a status as the world language of our day that is used as a regular means of communication by hundreds of millions of people representing very different ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. As can be seen, the World Language System has a very broad base, namely thousands of peripheral languages, but little room at the top. There are no more than 100 to 150 central languages, around a dozen super-central ones, and only one hyper-central one: English, which functions as the single "hub" of the system today. In other words, while English is not the only language of power in the world, there is no truly global power without English. This almost exclusive association of English with global power is historically new (*Filppula, 2017, p. 11*).

English has developed a special role in the world, which is recognized in every country. English has become a priority in foreign-language teaching in many countries. English has become an international language because of the political and cultural power of its speakers. Therefore English is an internationally dominant language, which is only supported by the new communication technologies, multicultural organizations and industries, or international business and advertising. Thanks to technology, the international entertainment industries now have a worldwide impact. There was and still is a need for a global language and nowadays this global language is English. It is a language appreciated by international academics and business communities, but even by individuals, who nowadays can make contacts all over the globe every day (*Crystal, 2003, p. 13*).

There are more widely spread languages that have the role of *lingua franca*, for example Russian in eastern Europe or Spanish in South and Central America. Chinese is the most spoken language by its native speakers but it is too unfamiliar in the west to become

a global language. Therefore, the global status remains to English language (*Crystal, 2007, p. 427*).

People from different linguistic backgrounds usually communicate through English. English is widely spread in social phenomena in contemporary interactions and the concept of English as a *lingua franca* opens up many new opportunities for everybody. Teaching English as a *lingua franca* has a huge potential and is filled with possibilities because it not only focuses on the standard grammar rules but leaves space for negotiating diverse grammatical and linguacultural collections that emerge from communicative encounters in English too (*Gimenez, 2008, p. 58*).

It is important to start learning English at an early age. Learning a new language is a difficult task and people must learn it sufficiently and fluently. Getting to know a foreign language at an early age has a huge benefit because children learn easier than adults. In both the Czech Republic and Denmark pupils usually start learning English in the first grade.

Making education and teacher training in Denmark has become very important. The goal is to prepare pupils and students for being challenged in the future by the globalized world. This is provided by including international and intercultural understanding and competencies in their entire education system. The internationalisation of education is highly important. The Danish Agency for Higher Education promotes internationalisation at all levels of education (*The Ministry Of Higher Education And Science, 2016, p. 19*).

The use of English in research and higher education in Denmark is increasingly a topic for debates in many Danish universities because internationalisation is an ongoing process in Denmark. Most people agree it has both positive and negative effects. Generally younger lecturers and lecturers with higher teaching load in English are more positive towards English being increasingly the medium of instruction in lectures. Studies in Scandinavia based on questionnaires, interviews, and investigations found out, that the native language (Danish) can be negatively affected by the increasing use of English. Teachers also confess, even though they consider their English competencies sufficient, they need more time for preparation than for a class in the Danish language, and they are unable to make the English class as interactive as the one held in the native language. Students have good skills for following the lecture, but they are not excellent in writing papers and giving presentations. Teachers are mostly excellent in reading, writing, and listening, but they need to develop their oral skills more. In the current situation, the teaching style becomes

monologic and less interactive in English, so the students tend to change their study habits in the English classes (*Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011. p. 13-30*).

English is a global language and *lingua franca* for the academic field, but the rhetorical construction of English as global can be decontextualized and therefore problematic. The dominating role of English is narrowing down the combined knowledge of the world because people are mostly writing in English and being published in the UK or the USA. The University of Copenhagen, the largest University in Scandinavia, holds more and more courses and programmes in English, as a result of the European Bologna Process, the aim of which is to standardize higher education for European citizens - it requires teaching in English and using it as a common academic language. A quarter of the University programmes in Denmark are taught in English in order to have a higher chance of attracting top students from abroad as well as to retain and challenge the very best students in Denmark. 15 % of the students at the University of Copenhagen are international, but many of them are from Scandinavia and do not require teaching in English (*Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011, p. 17-19*). The Bologna process implemented in 1999 helped better recognition and integration of the international dimension in higher education, but it also indirectly created tension and problems. The main reason for this is that there is no single model for the implementation of internationalisation, hence there were no concrete measures to accommodate a balance between the local, regional and international dimension (*Carroll-Boegh, 2006*).

There is another reason for focusing on internationalisation of university programmes, and that is to make sure the graduates are oriented towards an international job market. To ensure that, the courses need to be internationalised in order for students to be familiar with English as a global academic language. This process raises the quality of a university. It attracts international students and teachers, which brings many economic benefits because it increases the university's share of the market (*Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011, p. 17*). Therefore, Danish higher education institutions offer more than 700 programmes and over 1,300 individual modules taught entirely in English, therefore suitable for international students (*The Ministry Of Higher Education And Science, 2016, p. 21*).

A point to keep in mind is, that the international students are not a homogeneous group and they cannot be treated as one. These students come from different parts of the world, different cultures with different motivations and reactions to studying in Denmark.

General overviews of developments in Europe do not pay sufficient attention to the complexity of Europe. Europe is a diverse place, therefore the impacts of internationalisation are different, and despite some similarities, they are not always parallel (*Carroll-Boegh, 2006, p. 20*).

Generally, because the English classes are starting earlier and earlier, English shapes the competencies and attitudes among the younger generation. Hence younger lecturers have a more positive attitude towards English and its increasing use, as well as teachers with a higher teaching load in English, because of their already high contact with the language. The results of a survey taken at Danish universities conclude that overall people agree researchers should disseminate their findings in Danish (as well), so that Danish can develop as an academic language. Most people also agree, that not all lecturers are fully prepared to teach in English, hence the students learn more effectively in their native language. On the other hand it is necessary and desirable to increase the number of English courses on Danish universities to maintain higher academic standards and to improve competitive capacities internationally. Therefore this topic remains problematic with people with split opinions because there are both positive and negative effects (*Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011, p. 22-23*).

As mentioned above, thanks to an internship in the Danish elementary school Låsby skole I had an opportunity to observe some English classes in Denmark, specifically sixth and eighth grade. There were some differences between those two classes. In the sixth grade the children worked a lot with a textbook. The book contained articles and questions about those particular articles. The teacher talked mostly in Danish, but also gave the pupils a listening practice in English through a CD. Later the pupils were assigned to write a short essay concerning the class's reading and listening. In the eighth grade, pupils were sitting in groups in the classroom and they did not have any text-books. They watched a video projected on the whiteboard. The teacher would stop the video at certain times and would ask the pupils questions to see if they understood what was going on in the video. The pupils were always asked to support their answers with arguments. The class worked like an open discussion. After finishing the video, the teacher would write up on the whiteboard important vocabulary related to the projected video, and the pupils were assigned to explain meanings of the written vocabulary. In the eighth-grade class the teacher mostly talked in English when asking questions and made sure she asked everyone in the class at least one question. Some of the pupils answered in English. Some of the pupils did not feel comfortable talking in

English, but when the teacher encouraged them or helped them, they managed to answer in English. There were two or three pupils who did not want to speak English, so they would just answer in Danish and the teacher would repeat their answer in English. Here we could observe the individual approach to children. In Denmark, the pupils are not forced to do something they do not want to do or are not comfortable with. The teacher herself confirmed that there are pupils, who do not want to speak English, so they only speak Danish in the English classes. It is not because they lack English skills, they either lack confidence or have a shy personality. The teacher would encourage them, but if they insist on speaking Danish, she would just accept it and wait for them to feel comfortable talking in a foreign language. Overall, the Låsby skole led us to a conclusion, that at an earlier age, pupils work mostly with books. They learn grammar and how to use English theoretically, and then in higher grades, their English education is focused more on learning through discussion, through speaking. And in all grades they train writing by short essays in class. When learning a foreign language, people often feel more comfortable writing in a foreign language, rather than speaking it. Pupils also have freedom in their participation in class. If they do not feel comfortable speaking in English, teachers do not force them. One of the English teachers in Låsby skole said, that even when some pupils do not speak English in the English classes at all, she still can evaluate their English skills in written tests, written assignments and essays or in a private oral exam or a private meeting with the pupil or/and the pupil's parents. Låsby skole pays much attention to communication with pupils' parents and the individual friendly approach to pupils adjusted to their personal needs and capabilities.

English language in everyday life in Denmark is a little different from the English used in Czechia. In the Czech Republic, usually, it is young people, who are more able to speak English at a high level. The younger Czech people are, the more likely are they to speak English. It is because young people have better opportunities than the middle-aged or older ones. Older people usually studied Russian or German instead of English (due to the politics at those times). In Denmark, one cannot predict people's English language skills by their age. They are equal in the English knowledge. Generally, the Danish people have English skills at a high level. In the EF English Proficiency Index 2019 of cities, the capital city of Denmark, Copenhagen, ranks third, whereas the capital city of the Czech Republic, Prague, ranks 24th. Due to the EF English Proficiency Index 2019, Denmark also is one of the countries that are the highest in the graph of English and International Engagement. In

Denmark one can see projects on the streets that are in English only (for example fundraising organized by UNICEF). Danish televisions also broadcast English speaking movies and TV series in original sound (in English) with Danish subtitles, which helps the Danish society to accommodate to the sound of English and it allows English to be more integrated into Danish life. Czech televisions always dub the sound to the Czech language. Generally, the Czech public does not have as many opportunities to accommodate to the usage of English as people have in Denmark.

III. IMPLEMENTING DANISH EDUCATION METHODS IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Currently the Czech education system is longing for a change. In the pedagogy classes, they teach us, pedagogy students, that the Czech education is looking for new innovations, such as new creative attitudes, changing of relationships between students and teachers at schools as well as changing of the old mindset that is used in schools. School has become a negative word and learning has become something boring and forced, for many pupils and students. Many teachers want to change this. The Czech education is slowly changing from the transmissive education attitude to the constructivist attitude (both attitudes mentioned in the previous chapters). The education system stays curriculum-based. There are complaints from students that the grading system is unfair and that their grades do not reflect their skills and knowledge. Students and pupils complain that they are evaluated on mechanical learning and not by creativity or their actual skills.

Many books were written in the Czech Republic about teaching and appreciating the approach of alternative schools. Alternative schools in the Czech Republic focus on individual approaches to children and accommodate the learning to children's needs and skills, not vice versa. It appears that many Czech teachers and students do want a change. The Danish methods could meet their needs and expectations. Mainly I want to focus on projects with international students and cultural intelligence, the relationships between teachers and students, individual approach, learning through teamwork and projects, and a healthy lifestyle supported by schools. I chose those aspects because I think they are typical for Denmark, they work well and have good results in Denmark and I also think that with some cultural adjustments they could work well in the Czech Republic too and they could improve the pupils' learning. I also want to focus on learning English in schools and internationalisation of school because the more internationally engaged the school is, the easier and more accessible it is for the pupils to absorb English.

The Danish education and the school system are highly focused on team-work, cooperation, and collaboration. The students in universities and colleges are trained to work interprofessionally on school projects, where they collaborate with fellow students, with students from different fields of study, as well as they are taught how to respect others and how to work in an international and intercultural environment. For example VIA University college, campus Viborg, annually organizes a project called VIA Challenge, where the

Danish students are set in teams with international (exchange) students. The study fields are diverse, such as nursing, social education, creative learning and animation, social entrepreneurship et cetera. The theme of this project is to create a product inspired by 17 UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The results are always interesting to see. Here students learn to lead and cooperate in the international and cross-professional team, which is the learning purpose of this project. Using cultural intelligence when leading a diverse group of people in a workplace or a project is sometimes overlooked, but having knowledge and skills related to cultural intelligence can highly improve the efficiency of the team. I think it would be good if there were projects like VIA Challenge in Czech universities as well. Exchange students are usually having different schedules than the local students, which narrows down the chances of those two groups of students to work together. Having a week-long project, where local and international students work together on an idea or a product would be good. They would spend more time together and get to know each other and each others' cultures better. Such a project would improve their relationships with each other and it could also lead to many interesting project results, because working cross-professionally and internationally has the advantage of more ideas and more ways of thinking. Such projects can improve students' communicative and collaborating skills, their cultural intelligence, but also their English knowledge, because they would not be able to use their native language. This project would be the most effective in universities and faculties, where English is either an obligatory subject or a field of study, such as faculties of education for the future teachers because for students of those faculties such projects would be the most relevant. Those projects should be organized by the university, faculty, department, or teachers. Teachers or people in charge of organizing those projects must be culturally intelligent to be able to lead those international groups well, because many things can go wrong. Leading with cultural intelligence is very important when organizing an intercultural project.

Through intercultural school projects, the students practice crosscultural relational skills such as tolerance for uncertainty (tolerance for being unfamiliar with someone's culture and behaviour and accepting the ambiguity about interaction with such person), empathy, and adaptability to a different culture (*Thomas & Inkson, 2009, p. 60*). Those in charge (teachers organizing the project) should already be capable of those relational skills, so that they can pass their knowledge on the students. It is crucial nowadays to be culturally intelligent, because those skills are important in many workplaces now, because business is

becoming international, so the work is getting culturally diverse and people need to develop global leadership capabilities. Cultural intelligence is important for managers working abroad and in multinational organizations, which creates distance between practical realities, where academic management is being detached from practice. That means, that we cannot use the same theory when practically working with different people or in a different environment. For global leadership, multiple intelligences are required: that is IQ, EQ (which is a foundation for CQ), and CQ on an individual as well as on the organizational level (*Bijedic, 2015, p. 8*).

Concerning the matter of leadership, cultural intelligence has four key components: motivation, meta-cognition, cognition, and behaviour. Motivation is the most important and it expresses individuals interest in cross-cultural interaction. Meta-cognition is an individual's mental ability to gain and develop strategies to cope with culturally ambiguous situations and ability and willingness to change their own cultural behaviour, to be able to define what is a personality and what is a culture. Cognition is about knowledge about different cultures. Behaviour is then the actual ability to act effectively in more ambiguous environments. Cultural intelligence also involves three facets: knowledge, mindfulness, and behavioral skills. Cultural awareness and understanding is a soft skill. It is an ability to function across various contexts (*Bijedic, 2015, p. 12*). Language teachers should be capable of basic intercultural leading and communication at least.

As long as those in charge as well as students are capable of avoiding intercultural failures, international projects can work well. It is important not to let intercultural failures happen because they have negative effects on intercultural collaborations. The local students attending such a project should be taught about cultural intelligence in order to avoid intercultural misunderstandings. It is important to be aware of our own culture and do not bias it. We have to accept that our culture can seem odd to others, just like their culture can seem unusual to us. We also should not feel threatened or uneasy about communication and interaction with people who come from a different culture, because it would make the atmosphere uncomfortable. We also have to be able to understand the behaviour of those who are culturally different, so we should learn about their culture first, if we know in advance with what person will we interact. Then, we should be able to apply this knowledge in practice. We should also recognize the influence of our own cultural background – we should realize what is us, what is our family in particular, and what is our culture. We should

be able to recognize if the way we react comes from our personality or our cultural habits. We should be able to adjust working with people from different cultures and accept they might be doing things differently than us instead of trying to persuade them that our way is better. It is also good to be open to interpersonal relationships with people from other cultures. Such friendships lead to personal growth and more opportunities in the future. And also a better workplace, if working with people from a different culture. Those were the main points of things we should do in order to avoid the most occurring intercultural failures (*Thomas & Inkson, 2017, p. 10*). It is then necessary that students and teachers are well prepared to undertake an international project. Such preparations and experiences are something the students can benefit from in their future life as well, in their careers. Today's world is a globalized world where people without any knowledge about CQ can feel lost or confused.

When educating and teaching, we must take into consideration that we are living in a global world. Globalization is a process important to our lives, because it affects everybody and everybody's life. It also affects business because of the growth of international trade and multicultural corporations. Even small companies now have the opportunity to expand abroad, until recently it was only a few of the biggest ones. David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson in their book *Cultural Intelligence: Living and Working Globally* (2009), say about globalisation: "Because of globalization, the environment of business is now more complex, more dynamic, more uncertain, and more competitive than ever before" (*Thomas, Inkson, 2009, p. 7-8*).

People are crossing traditional boundaries more and more every year. It is also because of the increased human migration in the world. There are many nations with a great percentage of the population, that were born in other countries or were culturally influenced by their parents who were themselves immigrants. Globalization is part of our lives and therefore we should prepare young people for living in a global intercultural world. Thanks to modern information and communication technology, people can cross distances easier than before and they can participate in life in the whole world and change the outcomes there (*Thomas & Inkson, 2009, p. 8*).

There are schools and universities in the Czech Republic, that are starting to adapt their pupils and students to an international environment by organizing international projects or employing foreign teachers. There is a project called the Edison project (organized by an

organization Aiesec), which is very popular among students in high schools. The Edison project consists of one week of foreign students from all over the globe introducing their home country to the Czech pupils and students in English. The Czech students enjoy this project, because it is interesting and fun for them to be part of. But because there is not always enough time, most of the students do not get to see presentations of all of the international students. The Czech students often express they would like it, if there was more time so that they could see all presentations, or if the project could be at school more often than just once a year. There is definitely a desire from the students to take part in international projects and interactions, but they usually would not initiate such things themselves. Therefore it must be the teachers who organize more than just one annual project. Students could become better at intercultural communication as well as they could improve their English language in practice. The international projects in English are a learning process, that the students want to experience, so the schools and English teachers should take that into consideration and work with the students' excitement for learning.

It is essential to make the pupils excited about the subject before teaching it to them. During my stay in Denmark, we visited an elementary school in Langå. The children were very excited to meet international students. Most of the children had only a minimal knowledge of English, but they were excited to hear every student's introduction in English. Then the children tried to guess where that student was from and his or her name and age, based on how much they understood from the English sentences. The pupils were also very interested in hearing those introductions in each student's native language. The teachers talked with an excited tone to the children, made them interested and every time showed them on a map, where was Denmark and how far the home countries of the international students were. It was a nice example of how teachers can build the first basics of cultural intelligence in children. The teachers were able to motivate children to be interested in other cultures as well as to be interested in learning English.

When teaching a second language, especially English, it is important to enunciate carefully, repeat important points using different words, use active verbs and avoid long compound sentences, use pictures, hand out written summaries of oral presentation. It is important to give students frequent breaks and allow them more time to think. Teachers should check if their students understood well by encouraging them to repeat concepts back

to them. Students should be encouraged to participate in the class (*Thomas & Inkson, 2017, p. 84*).

As mentioned in previous chapters, in Denmark there is a noticeable difference between teaching English to younger and to older pupils. Whereas younger pupils use most of the time books, the older pupils learn through discussion. In the Czech Republic it would be beneficial if the older pupils and students learned English through discussion as well, rather than focusing on grammar. For communication and interaction it is much more important for people to be able to express themselves in English, to describe their thoughts, talk about their feelings and ideas. For the students' future life in the global world, where communication in English is required, it is beneficial to be able to speak English comfortably, even on a basic level with basic grammar. Because knowing grammar but not being able to use it in practice can turn out useless. Learning through discussion could highly improve the English skills of the Czech students, who often lack in speaking in English. Discussing is an active way of learning, because none of the participants are passive and the teacher works together with the students.

Close collaboration between students and teachers is very important for efficient learning in Denmark (*The Ministry of Higher Education and Science, n.d.*). This is something that could be taken more seriously in the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, some teachers are already focusing on their relationships with pupils and students and on how to respect them, some teachers are very formal and some teachers feel like a great authority to the students. Being an authority as a teacher is good, but it has to be kept healthy. Teachers and students should not feel like enemies. Obviously, the Czech Republic and Denmark are quite different in power distance, so naturally, Czech schools cannot undertake the Danish friendly equal attitude as it is in Danish schools because Czech culture is quite hierarchical. Also, Denmark and the Czech Republic differ in risk tolerance, which is connected to the power distance difference. Completely equal and friendly relationship would feel unnatural for the Czech teachers and students. For Czech people, teachers should be respected authorities. But a teacher can be an authority and can also be friendly and make students and pupils feel comfortable, not nervous or stressed.

According to a research done by Veronika Kovaříková (2012), Czech pupils appreciate the most, when the teachers are able to make the class entertaining, the teachers can explain the theory well, the teachers are friendly and have a sense of humor and also are

fair. Teachers should also be good role models for the pupils and students. In other words, teachers should be respected but they should deserve respect through their behaviour, not only through their hierarchic position. Kopřiva (2008) in his book *Respektovat a být respektován (To Respect and to Be Respected)* says that the teacher should be very considerate of pupils' feelings and mental health. A teacher should create a healthy and equal relationship, where the teacher treats the pupils with respect and does not use his or her authority to threaten them. Teachers should allow pupils to make choices by themselves and make them feel like they are not less than the teacher. The pupils must be aware, that they need to treat teachers with respect, but they do not have to feel nervous around them. Communication is a circular process. If the pupils are uneasy and teachers solve it with being uneasy too, it is no solution. But if the teachers find a positive approach, the pupils will become positive too (*Kopřiva, 2008, p. 27*).

I think the Danish approach can be implemented in the Czech Republic because it is something the Czech teachers and students aspire to. It only would have to be changed a little, due to the cultural differences. Power distance is something, we cannot suddenly change, but the Czech people can start to be more tolerant of risks. The teachers are sometimes afraid, that they will lose their authority status, if they are informal or friendly to the pupils. But it is possible to be friendly and still remain an authority. Teachers should communicate with students more actively. The student is not less of a human than the teacher, but the teacher has to be respected by students and not treated like a friend or an enemy. Teachers are there to help the students, not to make them feel afraid. Teachers should be respected, but they should gain respect by being good role models and by being good teachers, not by making students feel less than them. A good teacher is someone, who makes the pupils want to learn and attend the classes. Nørmark (2013) says, students should be comfortable about asking questions when in doubt and show independent thinking for themselves, not just wait for the teacher's instructions (*Nørmark, 2013, p. 215*).

The Danish teaching style is characterised by student-centered learning (*The Ministry of Higher Education and Science, n.d.*). That means that the individual needs of each student are considered during the students' learning process. Teachers are in charge of the teaching but are also required to work with the individual pupils and with the entire group of pupils at the same time. This way, the learning process becomes more active and effective. In Denmark, teachers use the approach called differentiated teaching, which means, that the

teachers organize classes in such a way, that all pupils are challenged optimally in all subjects. The learning should be adjusted to each student's skills and needs. Teachers should ask questions and give feedback. Learning should be content and interactive, therefore teachers should have a communicative approach to the subject of learning. The pupils are expected to cooperate, ask questions, answer questions, give ideas, and develop their conceptual understanding (*Løw, 2019, p. 16-47*).

Student-centered learning and differentiated teaching can for Czech teachers sound demanding, but I believe a part of those Danish methods can work well in the Czech Republic. Teachers' preparation for classes and observation skills while teaching in a class are the key factors to manage effective student-centered learning. Teachers must be well prepared for their classes and they should accommodate their teaching to the abilities of the students. When students are struggling, teachers should find another way of explaining the task to them until they together find a solution. This could seem impossible in the Czech Republic because sometimes there is hardly enough time to go through all the theory that has to be taught in a semester or a school year, so it does not seem possible that there could be any time left for an individual approach to every student or a pupil. But it is very easy.

Individual approach is the most important especially in the first school years when children need to understand the school subjects well and then have good study results. The first school years are the basis for any further education, so there is no room for mistakes. If the pupils lack something from the early education, they will be lacking in their future education as well. If teachers see that pupils are struggling, they should explain the matter differently, or ask their parents to help, until they see the pupils really understand the task or the theory. This approach can be well used even in later school years and universities. Student-centered learning supports good teacher-student relationships because the teachers try to help students instead of asking them why do they not do as well as others. This way the students feel more comfortable and less frustrated in the class as well as the teachers.

Could differentiated learning work well in the Czech Republic? To a certain extent it already exists here, but not all teachers use it. For instance, if some pupils are faster in completing assignments, teachers give them some extra tasks, ask them to help the other pupils, or give them a more difficult assignment next time. Math teachers, in particular, can use differentiated learning well. The problem in the Czech Republic is, ironically, the

individual approach is very dependent on an individual teacher, because modifying students' learning is not a requirement yet.

An individual approach is not only about making sure every pupil understands well, but it is also about not generalising and not making assumptions about pupils. For instance, if a pupil hands in an empty test or a very bad assignment, teachers should not assume that the pupil is just lazy or wants to provoke. Teachers should try to find out why the pupil could not complete the assignment. Did he or she not understand the assignment? Was there not enough time to learn? Does he or she have problems at home or at school? Teachers should discuss this with the pupils and try to find a solution together. It is also good to discuss those matters with parents. After all, in the Czech Republic, the parents are more influential to their children than teachers. The key is good communication and active participation in the class, by both teachers and pupils. The individual approach is recently popular in the Czech Republic. The alternative schools for the early school years are highly appreciated by the Czech teachers because they focus on each pupil individually and they concentrate on accommodating the learning process to each pupil's needs. The Czech alternative schools prove, that the individual approach and student-centered learning are possible in the Czech education. The individual approach is however not only a matter of alternative schools. The regular schools should provide good education with effective learning too.

In Denmark the teacher should give ongoing feedback to the pupils, not only a few times for tests or exams. I think the Czech schools and universities should consider changing their grading system. There is no way that the current grading system with 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 is fair. Five labels to evaluate the pupils are not enough. There can be a one-point difference between the tests of two pupils and each of them can have a different grade. But no one is going to ask that question when seeing their grades later. No one is going to consider if a 1 were always perfect test scores or if it was just half of a point above 2. Those grades are just numbers and give a very ambiguous idea about students' actual skills. The ongoing verbal feedback could be a better way of evaluating students. It is also a part of an individual approach to the students.

In Denmark, the traditional theoretical lectures are combined with creative projects. Students work on projects individually or in groups. Teachers are in the roles of consultants. Those projects usually challenge students to think freely, to be creative, and to be initiative. Those projects provide students an opportunity to use their knowledge they gained during

lectures. Students should take active participation in their learning process, rather than just being passive listeners in the lectures and projects help them to do this. The students are encouraged to actively participate in open discussions with teachers and fellow students (*The Ministry of Higher Education and Science, n.d.*). Project work is usually not popular among Czech students because it usually means a lot of extra work at home. But the difference between the Czech Republic and Denmark is, that in Denmark the students can work on their projects during classes as well. They show their knowledge through the project work and they get evaluated for the whole working process and not only the result. The Danish teachers often use project work instead of tests and exams. Czech students must spend time at home preparing for an exam anyway, but it would probably be more effective if they sometimes invested that time and energy into project work. This way it would be a more active and entertaining way of learning, but also more effective because the students remember the information easier through project work, where they use the theory in practice. They will also probably remember what they have studied for a longer time because they actually use the theory in practical thinking rather than just stuffing the theory in their heads. I do not think it would be possible to suddenly replace all exams and tests with projects, but Czech teachers themselves should consider whether it would not be more effective to let students learn through creative project work instead of studying for written tests. I think it would be possible in some subjects at least.

Last of the Danish methods I want to discuss is a healthy lifestyle. A few years ago, the Czech Republic attempted to promote a healthy lifestyle by forbidding schools to sell unhealthy food to underage pupils. This rule proved too strict, therefore the underage pupils could not buy almost anything and some school snack bars even shut down because of that. Later on the law was made less strict. I agree that schools should care about the health of the pupils but this goal must be about something more than restrictions and bans. As mentioned in previous chapters, Denmark is generally concerned about its citizens' health and the same goes for schools. Schools do not sell sweets, sweets are forbidden in schools. Forbidding selling unhealthy food in Czech schools met a lot of disagreements and complaints, mostly because it was very strict and very sudden. If the law was made less strict and if the schools were just selling fewer sweets at first, it would be better. Also, the school should have been given time or ideas for preparing healthy alternatives of the food they were selling, because generally, the variety of the food approved by the law was very narrow.

In Denmark, the pupils are obliged to spend their breaks outside on the school playground or garden, where they can play or just breathe fresh air. This is possible in Denmark because the Danish classes are longer than the Czech ones and then the breaks are longer as well. In Denmark the breaks are usually twenty minutes, which is quite enough to spend some time outside and get ready for the next class as well. This is again something we cannot fully implement in the Czech Republic, because most of the Czech schools have ten-minute breaks, some are only five-minute breaks (for example at Gymnázium in Pilsen), which is not enough of time to go out. I noticed that if a school has a nice garden or place for students to stay outside, they spend time there voluntarily during snack breaks or lunch breaks, which are longer than regular breaks. Schools should promote outside activities during breaks and make sure that there is a decent place for the pupils to stay at, for instance sports playgrounds, garden with seats and tables, or organize outside activities or trips. The Danish elementary school Låsby skole annually organizes a week of outside activities for the sixth grade. During this week the regular teaching is replaced with games in a forest, sport activities or sport games. That is a good way to promote outside activities, because it shows the variety of things, that can be done outside instead of indoors. In the Czech Republic, the teachers sometimes take the pupils outside for a class in spring or summer. I think it is a very entertaining way to learn, even if it is still a regular lecture or a seminar taking place in a park instead of a classroom. It always made the class more interesting and less forgettable. Learning outside is something the pupils like and therefore the schools should pay more attention to it.

By undertaking these Danish methods the learning process can become more effective and entertaining for the Czech pupils. They can improve communication and interpersonal skills. They can become more creative in solving tasks. The students can become more independent and effective as team members, because they will practice team projects at schools and universities. Students can improve their intercultural skills and English skills as well. Those improvements mentioned create a very good foundation for future careers and future life. Students can use their knowledge gained in schools in their workplace and that is important. Schools should prepare students well for their future lives, and if the students learn effectively, there is nothing that can prepare them better.

CONCLUSION

The Czech and the Danish culture differ in many aspects, for instance in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and risk tolerance. Besides other things, those differences affect the education system as well. Because there are not only differences but also similarities, the Czech education system can find inspiration in the Danish education system. Czech education is based on outdated traditions and needs innovation. Denmark uses innovative approaches effectively, so it is a good place to get inspiration. Danish schools focus on an individual approach, which is something the Czech education is currently attempting to implement in education institutions. The Czech teachers should attach more importance to the individual pupils and be aware that each pupil is different and they cannot approach each pupil the same. The individual approach can help improve teacher-student relationships, which is another approach typical of Danish education. In Denmark, students and teachers have friendly relationships, because all Danish people are socially equal to each other and therefore the formalities are not necessary. The Czech Republic is a high power distance, hierarchical culture, where formalities and social status are culturally important. The Czech education can probably never be as friendly and formality-free as Denmark, but the Czech teachers can cooperate with pupils and their parents more, so that the atmosphere between them becomes less tense and more comfortable.

Danish education focuses on teamwork and projects, rather than exams or tests. Danish people value creativity and they encourage the pupils to work individually or in groups on projects, that teach them how to think effectively, collaborate with each other, and find new creative ideas. This is an effective way of learning, which could be implemented in Czech schools as well. It would improve the pupils' learning as well as their collaborative and communicative skills. Such projects make learning more valuable, so the Czech teachers should consider, whether they could sometimes take a risk and assign to the pupils a project instead of a test.

Danish schools attach much importance to internationalization, therefore Danish universities organize international projects, where exchange students work in groups together with the Danish ones. There the students can practice their English as well as cultural intelligence in practice. Czech schools and universities should get more international, because not only it would be beneficial to the pupils' and students' future life,

but it is also something the Czech students and pupils want, since they express the desire to interact with people from abroad. Cultural intelligence has a great value in today's globalized world and it is only beneficial to practice it at school or a university. It is important to learn English from an early age. In Denmark, in the first grades, the pupils learn mostly through textbooks, where they practice English grammar, reading, and writing. Later in the higher grades, they are mostly learning through discussions, where the teacher is in the role of a moderator. Some Czech teachers teach through discussions as well, but they are still obliged to use textbooks in their classes. On the other hand, there is no obligation about teaching pupils to discuss in a foreign language. I believe that the Danish way of using mostly books at first and then mostly speaking and discussing is very effective when learning a foreign language and it would be beneficial as well as possible for the Czech schools to implement this method. English has become a global language, that is widely spread and it is now important in every business and international communication. Hence it is important for people to study English, preferably in the most effective way.

The Danish government pays much attention to the health and security of Danish citizens. Danish schools therefore focus on pupils' mental health, hence the individual approach and friendly attitude. The Danish society also pursues focus on physical health, and so do the Danish schools. The schools promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging students to eat healthy food and to spend their school breaks outside. The schools organize activities outside such as games or sports, to make pupils interested in staying outside. The Czech education cannot implement this fully, because the school breaks are shorter than the Danish school breaks, but they can still promote healthy lifestyle more. For example the school canteens can provide more variety of healthy food or the schools can create a decent place outside of the school for the children to stay during snack or lunch breaks, for instance a garden or a playground.

The Danish teaching methods and approaches are applicable in the Czech Republic, where they can be very beneficial and can make the student learning more effective. The Czech education system can be improved if it undertakes Danish innovative approaches. Those methods can work well in the Czech Republic.

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SHRNUTÍ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá dánskou a českou kulturou, jejich rozdíly, podobnostmi a jejich porovnáním pomocí interkulturní inteligence, se zaměřením na školství a výuku angličtiny. Práce pojednává o tom, že se dánské výukové metody dají aplikovat i v českém prostředí a zároveň by tak mohly být pozitivním přínosem českému školství.

Bakalářská práce je rozdělena do tří kapitol. V první kapitole je popisována dánská kultura v porovnání s českou kulturou za pomoci interkulturní inteligence, zároveň jsou stanoveny hlavní rozdíly a podobnosti těchto dvou kultur. Na základě těchto poznatků je porovnáváno dánské a české školství s důrazem na internacionalizaci a výuku angličtiny a jsou vyzdvížena pozitiva dánského vzdělávacího systému. Ve druhé kapitole se práce zabývá důležitostí anglického jazyka v dnešním světě a postavením angličtiny v dánském a českém školství. Poslední část zkoumá, které z dánských výukových metod by se daly aplikovat v českém školství a jak by musely být kulturně upraveny, aby efektivně fungovaly i v českém prostředí. Tyto dánské přístupy k výuce by potenciálně mohly zlepšit podmínky na českých školách a zvýšit tak kvalitu a efektivitu výuky. Začlenění dánských výukových metod by tak mohlo být přínosné jak pro učitele, tak pro žáky a studenty, kteří by pak mohli nabyté schopnosti lépe využít ve svém budoucím profesním životě.