



Cross-Linguistic Lacunarity: Integration of Theoretical Linguo-Cultural Knowledge and L2 & C2 Competence Development

Lacunaritat interlingüística: integració de coneixements lingüístico-culturals teòrics i desenvolupament de competències L2 & C2

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language involves not only being faced with another language, but also with a different culture. Therefore, adopting a linguo-cultural perspective is a prerequisite to proper developing a learner's competence foreign language (L2) and foreign culture (C2). The L2 and C2 aspects not represented in one's own language (L1) and one's own culture (C1) create the sphere of lacunarity (linguistic and cultural gaps) in L2 learners, observed on various planes, e.g. in lexis, syntax, genres, gestures etc. From a teaching perspective, the introduction of the notion of lacunae increases the learner's linguo-cultural awareness, preparing the student to expect lacunae in L2 and C2 and to be conscious of gaps in L1 and C1 from the perspective of L2 and C2 users. The presentation of the notion of lacunarity broadens learners' theoretical knowledge with vital practical implications since it enables students to develop strategies how to deal with lacunae.

Keywords: Foreign language teaching/learning; Language competence; Intercultural competence; Lacunarity; Metalinguistic awareness

Resum

Aprendre una llengua estrangera implica no només enfrontar-se a una altra llengua, sinó també a una cultura diferent. Per tant, adoptar una perspectiva lingüístico-cultural és un requisit previ per desenvolupar adequadament la competència de l'aprenent en llengua estrangera (L2) i cultura estrangera (C2). Els aspectes L2 i C2 no representats en la llengua pròpia (L1) i la cultura pròpia (C1) creen l'esfera de lacunaritat (buits lingüístics i culturals) en els aprenents de L2, observada en diversos plans, p. en lèxic, sintaxi, gèneres, gestos, etc. Des d'una perspectiva pedagògica, la introducció de la noció de llacunes augmenta la consciència lingüístico-cultural de l'alumne, preparant-lo per esperar llacunes en L2 i C2 i per ser conscient de les llacunes en L1 i C1. des de la perspectiva dels usuaris de L2 i C2. La presentació de la noció de lacunaritat amplia els coneixements teòrics de l'alumnat amb implicacions pràctiques vitals, ja que permet als estudiants desenvolupar estratègies per fer front a les llacunes.

Palabras clave: Ensenyament/aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres; Competència lingüística; Competència intercultural; Lacunaritat; Consciència metalingüística

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is a complex process which requires from the learner not only acquiring knowledge of a given language and being able to use it in practice, but also becoming familiar with new culture. Therefore, it can be assumed that during studies, the learner will be exposed to both similarities and differences in the sphere of language and culture. In the case of the former, one can expect that in many cases, because of positive interference, their occurrence will facilitate the learning process.

As for the latter, differences may manifest themselves in two ways: for instance, a particular item of language or culture is present in the learner's linguo-cultural reality, but it has different features, connotations etc. This mechanism is observed in the relation between the Polish formula "Jak się masz?" and its English equivalent "How are you?". In terms of cross-linguistic equivalence, these two expressions can be viewed as counterparts; yet they differ greatly in their pragmatic value. Although many factors may influence the actual repertoire of responses (e.g. interlocutors' familiarity, the degree of formality of the situation etc.), the Polish question allows various responses, including those of high truth value, whereas its English equivalent functions as a pragmatic idiom, requiring a positive answer ("I'm fine").

The differences can also be encountered by the learner when one element of one's own language (L1) or own culture (C1) does not have an equivalent in the foreign language (L2) or foreign culture (C2). The existence of such a gap, also called *lacuna*, is a manifestation of differences between LC1 and LC2 which may pose problems on various planes, including the cognitive one. Many interlingual and intercultural lacunae are created by units vital for communication, stylistically specific and/or deeply rooted in C2, thus constituting important elements in foreign language teaching (FLT), especially at the advanced level. That is why the inclusion of theoretical knowledge of the nature of lacunae is advocated. The presentation of lacunae as a linguo-cultural phenomena should be combined with competence development, since it broadens the learner's theoretical knowledge and metalinguistic awareness, preparing them for determining gaps and dealing with them, which contributes to the enhancement of general language and intercultural skills (cf. Szerszunowicz, 2015).

The general aim of the paper is to discuss how to integrate the theoretical introduction of the notion of lacunae with competence development in FLT on the example of lexical gaps. The specific objectives are fourfold: offer an insight into

the specificity of lacunae; outline the state-of-the art in this research area; view gaps from a didactic perspective, highlighting the importance of drawing the learner's attention to gaps; indicate how to integrate theory in the EFL process, offering practical solutions that can be applied in the teaching environment, primarily at the advance level and, with some modifications, also at lower ones. The considerations will be exemplified with items which are lacunary from the perspective of the learner whose L1 is Polish and whose L2 is English.

MULTIASPECTUALITY OF RESEARCH ON LACUNARITY

From a broad perspective, lacunarity is an umbrella term used to refer to various linguo-cultural items of LC1 which do not have equivalents in LC2. Due to its complex nature, the phenomenon is analysed by scholars representing different disciplines, with many studies of interdisciplinary character.

First, lacunarity is the object of studies conducted within the framework of cultural studies and linguistics (Anokhina, 2013). Systematic studies in these fields followed Hale's work (1975) in which lacunae are viewed as a linguo-cultural phenomenon. The focal issue of several papers are lexical gaps (Lehrer, 1970; Bykova, 1999). In the more recent works, they are presented from the perspective of corpus linguistics (Bentivogli & Pianta, 2000). Some researchers propose a system of classification of linguistic and cultural lacunae (Panasiuk & Schröder, 2006; Szerszunowicz, 2016).

The lacunae are also discussed from a lexicographic viewpoint with a focus on their description in bi- or multilingual dictionaries, on their surrogative equivalents (Gouws & Prinsloo, 2008; Szerszunowicz, 2013). Moreover, gaps are also analysed in selected forms of discourse and/or kinds of genres, for instance, Myles and Grodzki (2006) focus on cultural lacunae in international magazine design, while Grodzki and Rehman (2006) consider utilizing the lacuna theory in research on advertising.

Furthermore, lacunarity is the object of translation studies (Pym, 1993). Panasiuk (2005) investigates the ethnopsycholinguistic lacuna model in the analysis and translation of literary texts. In turn, Szerszunowicz (2011; 2014; 2018) offers an insight into lacunary jokes, lacunary complex notions and idiolectal features from a translational perspective.

Lacunae are also studied with a view to discussing their importance for FLT. For example, Turuunen (2006) analyses the presentation of lacunae in teaching

Russian as a FL in Finland and Szerszunowicz (2015) discusses the integration of lacuna theory and dictionary skills. Undeniably, lacunarity deserves more scholarly attention as an important phenomenon in the FLT process, especially taking into consideration the need to develop learners' intercultural competence.

LACUNAE FROM A LINGUO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Lacunarity is a specific kind of difference occurring in the gradual comparison of two languages which can be detected in various spheres of the two compared linguo-cultural realities. Lacunarity manifests itself in all language subsystems, including phonological, morphemic, lexical, and grammatical planes. All kinds of gaps are important in terms of FLT: for instance, at the very beginning of English L2 education, a native Polish learner of English is exposed to the sounds [ð] and [θ] which are lacunary from the Polish-English perspective. Furthermore, the definite and indefinite articles (the, a, an) belong to the sphere of English-Polish lacunarity.

As for lexical gaps, Dagut (1981, pp. 61-71) distinguishes two main types of lacunary units: the first is conditioned by language-related factors and the second results from culture-bound phenomena. Linguistic gaps occur when the meaning of a L2 unit is known to L1 users, but the L2 item does not have a corresponding one in L1. L2 referential lacunary units have meanings unknown to L1 users. They are represented in various areas, for instance: cuisine (for the English-Polish directionality: Eng. haggis → Pol. *potrawa z podróbek baranich*) or customs (Eng. maypole → Pol. *drzewko majowe*), and their counterparts tend to be explanatory phrases. Following Dagut (1981), the gaps occurring in the lexicon, i.e. words and polylexical expressions, can be further subdivided into several categories (Szerszunowicz, 2016), as enumerated below:

1. semantic lacunary units – semantic proper lacunae: L2 items whose meaning is unknown to L1 learners (Eng. blue-rinse brigade → Pol. *starsze panie o tradycyjnych, konserwatywnych poglądach*); semantic-formal lacunae: different formally L2 items whose meaning can be paraphrased to express the same meaning, at least to some extent (Eng. pink-collar workers → Pol. *typowo kobiece zawody*);
2. stylistic lacunary units – L2 items which have unique stylistic properties (Eng. butcher's hook 'to look' → Pol. *patrzeć*);
3. connotative lacunary units – L2 units which are carriers of culture-bound connotations (Eng. the Barboury brigade → Pol. *osoby należące do*

brytyjskiej klasy wyższej, spędzające dużo czasu na łonie natury, na przykład na polowaniach);

4. axiological lacunary units – L2 units which carry axiological load (Eng. an Essex girl → Pol. *stereotyp dziewczyny o małej inteligencji i prowokacyjnym wyglądzie*);
5. pragmatic lacunary units – L2 units which are verbalisations used in given contexts and which do not have L1 equivalents (Eng. Say when → Pol. *Powiedz, ile ci nalać*);
6. referential lacunary units – L2 units naming broadly understood elements of L2 linguistic and extralinguistic reality, material, and non-material culture, which do not have L1 counterparts (Eng. “U” and “non-U” usage → Pol. *preferencje językowe typowe dla klasy wyższej i aspirującej klasy średniej*);
7. complex lacunary units – L2 units which cannot be classified into one category because of lacunarity occurring in several spheres (Eng. marmite → Pol. *brytyjska pasta do chleba na bazie drożdży*).

Other lacunarity spheres include grammar, for example, from an English-Polish perspective, the causative *have*, a construction of Latin origin, is a lacunary element for Poles. Furthermore, gaps may be observed in the repertoires of genres in two cultures, as exemplified by the Anglo-American *knock-knock jokes* and *shaggy dog stories* in comparisons with Polish humour genres like the Polish series *Przychodzi baba do lekarza* [lit. A *baba* comes to the doctor] viewed by the representatives of the Anglo-American culture.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NOTION OF LACUNAE IN FLT

As already mentioned, a person who learns a foreign language is bound to observe both similarities and differences occurring between L1 and L2. As for the former relation, whose analysis falls out of scope of the present study the common features or elements of two languages may facilitate the learning process (e.g. true cognates), but in some cases the similarity can be apparent, thus misleading for the learner, as it is the case of false friends or calquing grammatical structures (cf. Borecka, 2019). It can be assumed that differences tend to be problematic for L2 learners, as they require from the person more effort, time, and attention, thus, in brief, non-equivalent items generate special difficulty.

In the FLT environment, the sphere of non-equivalence is important for several reasons. The main factors are as follows:

1. Lacunae are part of the lexicon and cultural stock of LC2, thus they should be taught and learnt as any other items. In the sphere of education, the theoretical knowledge on phenomena such as false friends, cognates, and collocations are a prerequisite to proper understanding, learning, decoding, and producing them. Undeniably, lacunarity belongs to this category. Up to now, unlike false friends, it has been greatly neglected in FLT.
2. Lacunary units are ubiquitous: learners are bound to be exposed to them in the process. To some extent, they tend to be included in coursebooks, with much richer exemplification in semi-authentic and authentic texts, for instance, films, press texts, and memes. Although it can be argued that the more advanced learners are the ones who should be familiarized with the notion of gaps, it can be expected that at all levels some kind of cross-linguistic lacunae may appear. It can be an occasion to show the phenomenon with less complicated examples at lower level of advancement.
3. From a linguo-cultural perspective, lacunary units are important, since they tend to be carriers of so-called concrete foreignness, which evokes the linguistic and/or cultural specificity of another ethnos. Students need to develop awareness of lacunae and sensitivity to such items as carriers of different viewpoints and conceptualizations of phenomena in LC2 as compared to LC1. Thus, from learners' perspective, becoming familiar with them is important for cognitive reasons.
4. Non-equivalent units or non-equivalent elements of culture must be acquired in a more complex process, in many cases because of comprehensive studies. An illustrative example is a complex culture-bound notion which cannot be explained by a word or a short descriptive phrase due to their cultural significance and connotations. Students must develop habits how to deal with such items in the process of learning a foreign language and in the act of using the language.

As can be seen, the introduction of basic linguo-cultural knowledge on lacunae is beneficial since it enhances learners' awareness. As a result, they are prepared for encountering gaps and become more autonomous, developing the researcher attitude to language learning. If the theoretical introduction is set in a meaningful context, it can stimulate learners and foster their motivation. One of

ways that allow for achieving this aim is combining theoretical knowledge on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural gaps with the development of learners' skills.

On the other hand, the introduction of lacunarity may also pose some difficulties. One of them is learners' perception of studying lacunarity: being faced with a great amount of material to learn, they may have been negatively disposed towards learning theory. The presentation of the notion is crucial: providing that learners become interested in it, their attitude may be positive or at least neutral. This problem may also be solved by showing students that this phenomenon is relevant in practice, i.e. in the process of communication. Presenting attractive examples may also be helpful. From the teacher's viewpoint, time factor is important: the introduction of lacunarity may be time-consuming and difficult to organize successfully, especially in a mixed-ability group.

To ensure that the inclusion of lacunarity theory is conducted successfully, certain guidelines will be presented in the next section. It is proposed that the linguo-cultural aspects should be combined with competence development. Nowadays, FLT is communication-oriented, which is also recognized by learners who tend to consider language skills as important from a practical, communicative perspective for their future. From the teaching perspective, it means that emphasizing communicative benefits of possessing theoretical knowledge is of great importance.

TOWARDS COMBINING ACADEMIC RESEARCH AND TEACHING PRACTICE: THE NOTION OF LACUNARITY AND THE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

The volume titled *Cognition and Language Learning* edited by Belkhir (2020) contains a selection of papers which discuss the connection between cognition and language from various perspectives, showing how academic research can be combined and applied in teaching foreign languages. The present proposal complies with this approach and assumes that the results of the research can foster the FLT process by introducing the elements of theoretical studies into teaching practice in order to increase the linguistic knowledge and develop linguo-cultural sensitivity and awareness (cf. Awier, 2021). The research study on lacunarity (Dagut, 1981; Panasiuk & Schröder, 2006; Szerszunowicz, 2016) is the starting point for elaborating FLT guidelines to be further discussed in detail. The examples given address the advanced learner, but all of them can be modified accordingly.

To follow the proposed guidelines, one needs to make several assumptions which concern the teacher and the learner. They are related to knowledge (K), awareness (A), motivation (M), skills and techniques (S/T) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Main assumptions for combining the introduction of lacunarity and the development of learners' language and intercultural competence.

Assumptions	
The teacher	The learner
Has sufficient knowledge concerning lacunae (K) Is aware of their importance for foreign language learning. Is motivated to introduce lacunarity in the educational environment (M). Can introduce the notion in an appropriate way (S/T). Can combine the theory with practice (S/T).	Has sufficiently advanced language skills (K/S). Is familiar with basic linguistic notions (K). Has sufficient intercultural competence (S). Develops motivation to study lacunae as a theoretical phenomenon (M). Understands why it is important to be aware of them (A). Is willing to use their theoretical knowledge in practice (M). Is given the opportunity to do it in an appropriate way (S/T).

What is of great importance is the fact that not only hard skills should be taken into consideration, but also awareness and motivation. The introduction of additional knowledge should be conducted in such a way that students would perceive it as both attractive and beneficial in the learning process.

The integration of lacuna theory and competence development has several objectives. The goals can be expressed as responses to the following question: Why should learners be familiarized with the notion of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural lacunae? The main explanations are as follows:

1. To understand the notion of lacunarity.
2. To know the main kinds of gaps.
3. To be aware of the existence of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural gaps in LC1 and LC2.
4. To be able to identify cross-linguistic and cross-cultural lacunae.
5. To develop strategy to deal with the lacunae encountered in various situations.
6. To learn how to independently find comprehensive information on lacunae and how to evaluate them.
7. To develop awareness of lacunae and their role in communication as well as sensitivity to them as carriers of other linguo- and ethnospecificity.

The above-mentioned goals can be achieved through a three-stage procedure: introduction of theoretical knowledge, combination with competence development, and reinforcement. It can be assumed that in FLT, the theoretical knowledge on cross-linguistic equivalents tends to be implied rather than given explicitly. Learners can easily observe their various kinds and intuitively evaluate the degree of interlingual correspondence. As already mentioned, the items with no equivalents are likely to pose more difficulty than those possessing close or approximate equivalence in L2 and C2.

The introduction of theory consists in providing learners with enough information. It ought to arouse curiosity in students, i.e. learners, should become interested in this phenomenon and its versatility as well as its importance for communication. These aims can be achieved in several ways (cf. Szerszunowicz, 2015). The introduction can be either done by the teacher or by the student/students. In the former case, the following options can be considered:

1. The teacher prepares a short PowerPoint presentation which includes the definition, the basic classification (linguistic gaps and cultural lacunae) and their LC2 examples in the LC1-LC2 perspective.
2. The teacher prepares a short text on lacunae divided into sections with the following subtitles: *Historical aspects of lacunae*, *Kinds of gaps*, *Examples of linguistic lacunae*, *Examples of cultural lacunae*. Additional titles might include *Importance of lacunae*, *Lacuna in Communication*, *Lacunae in dictionaries* (Szerszunowicz 2015). The class is divided into groups, each of them reads one passage and reports on it, so that students share new knowledge.
3. The teacher introduces the notion by having a discussion with students based on structured questions. Several examples of interrogative statements include: *Are you familiar with the term lacuna?* *Can you give an example?* *Can you think of the difference between (an example of a linguistic lacunae) and (an example of a cultural lacunae)?* *Are such items important from the perspective of FLT?*
4. The teacher prepares a short, informative text on lacunae and gives it to students to be read as homework. The text can be organized in several ways, as a gap-fill activity, it can be followed by questions or statements which can be used as a warm-up during the lacuna lesson. A separate activity sheet can accompany the text.

If the notion of lacuna is presented by the student or a group of learners, they must be provided with the clear guidelines on the contents and the sources. Some suggestions include:

1. The students prepare a presentation which covers three main aspects: the definition of a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural lacuna, the classification, and examples.
2. The notion is presented based on several posters prepared by students. Their contents can correspond with the titles mentioned in Task 2 conducted by the teacher.
3. The student prepares a short text followed by a quiz, true/false statements, or open questions.
4. Students prepare a film in which they present the notion and ask interviewers about lacunae they have encountered.

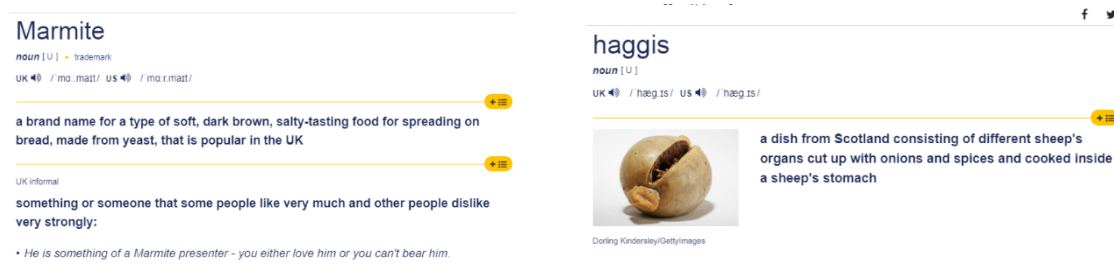
The choice of the introduction of the notion in question is conditioned by many factors. Among the most important are the following ones: the level of the group and its specific character, students' preferences concerning learning styles, their abilities, the skills to be practised and the overall balance of various kinds of activities in each period (Szerszunowicz, 2015). Whichever technique is chosen, its implementation should ensure that learners understand the notion of lacunae and their nature, are familiar with the classification into two main kinds, i.e. linguistic and cultural gaps, and can give examples of lacunary units from LC1 and LC2.

At the second stage, the theoretical knowledge on lacunae, i.e. the awareness of their existence and nature, is combined with the development of learners' language competence. As already mentioned, many lacunae are of linguo-cultural nature, thus the process involves simultaneous enhancement of learners' intercultural competence.

The first proposal concerns its implementation in reading and speaking practice. First, a domain rich in lacunary terms is chosen, for example, cuisine. One of possible ways of developing learners' reading skills is to present them with lacunary lexical items so that each person or a pair has one. Their first task is to find the information concerning these words using indicated textual sources available on the Internet, with the possibility of adding more. Learners should have an access to the Internet: students are supposed to read the texts and to take notes that will be used for an oral presentation. They are advised not to write whole sentences,

rather to create a mind map with words, pictures, symbols etc. One of the sources suggested for this task is a monolingual English dictionary offering the following explanations of the words *marmite* and *haggis* (see Figure 1):

Figure 1. Entries for “marmite” and “haggis” (Source: Cambridge University Press, n/d, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>)



The length and difficulty of the texts to be read is graded. Students begin with short explanations which give them sufficient information to understand the lexeme meaning. Another source to be consulted by learners is Wikipedia offering more comprehensive information as exemplified below:

Marmite (/ˈmɑːrmaɪt/ *MAR-myte*) is a food spread made from yeast extract invented by German scientist Justus von Liebig and originally made in the United Kingdom. It is a by-product of beer brewing and is produced by Anglo-Dutch company Unilever. [...] Marmite is a sticky, dark brown paste with a distinctive, salty, powerful flavour. This distinctive taste is represented in the marketing slogan: “Love it or hate it.” Such is its prominence in British popular culture that the product's name is often used as a metaphor for something that is an acquired taste or tends to polarise opinion. (“Marmite”, 2020)

Haggis (Scottish Gaelic: *taigeis*) is a savoury pudding containing sheep's pluck (heart, liver, and lungs), minced with onion, oatmeal, suet, spices, and salt, mixed with stock, and cooked while traditionally encased in the animal's stomach. (“Haggis”, 2020)

The additional information can be relevant from a linguo-cultural perspective. For example, although from a Polish-English perspective, marmite constitutes a lacuna, it has its counterparts in other cultures: “Similar products include the Australian Vegemite [...], the Swiss Cenovis, the Brazilian Cenovit and the German Vitam-R. Marmite has been manufactured in New Zealand since 1919 under license, but with a different recipe, see *Marmite (New Zealand)*” (“Marmite”, 2020). In the case of haggis, the students can learn that nowadays, its modern version tends to be prepared “in an artificial casing” (“Haggis”, 2020).

It is also advisable to include modern texts, for instance memes generated in the Internet environment – the sphere familiar to learners. In the case of marmite,

the meme allows for learning the phrasematic pattern *X is like marmite – you either hate X or love X*. The other meme conveys an element shared knowledge: you cannot be indifferent about marmite because of its specific taste. The memes about haggis contain information on ingredients. Moreover, the term *bangers & mash* appears contrasted with haggis, which must be interpreted by the student to decode the meme. Apart from the lexemes *haggis* and *marmite*, further examples of culinary terms such as *custard*, *pudding*, and *toffee apple* can be used. These tasks show how complex lacunae are.

Other spheres rich in lacunae comprise British traditions and customs, with lexical items such as *Maypole dance*, *Morris dances*, *trooping the colours*, *cheese rolling*, *bog snorkelling*, *Cornish hurling*, and *Burns night supper*. Furthermore, attention should be paid to labels reflecting social or national stereotypes: *Essex girl*, *Mondeo man*, *Paddy*, *Chicano*, *wetback*, *Valley girl*, *Trixie*, *Ah Beng/Ah Lian*. In FLT, these terms are of great importance because of their stylistic markedness: they are often offensive. They ought to be dealt with in an appropriate way, so that students could learn how to treat them in the process of communication. The existence of such terms cannot be denied since they appear in various texts. Their proper presentation is vital, as it should provide students with comprehensive pragmatic information.

On reading the texts, students share their oral presentation with other lesson participants. They present the lacunary items using their notes. This task is devised to encourage free speaking, developing students' fluency. The stress level is reduced because of the preparation and having notes on which their speeches are based. A discussion may accompany and/or follow the presentations.

Another proposal combines the lacuna theory with the development of listening and writing skills. On the theoretical presentation, students are asked about Barbour. It can be assumed that some of them might be familiar with the term as a brand name. If possible, they can use Google graphics to see related images. Then, they are shown a video *Barbour: A jacket for life* (Barbour, 2012) which serves an introduction. YouTube offers a plethora of listening material that can be used, for instance, *Barbour: Celebrating 125 Years and Five Generations* (Barbour, 2019) presents the history of the family company. A range of possible activities include true/false tasks, with exemplary statement like *Duncan Barbour never married; It is still a family-owned business; Barbour is typically British and related to nature; Some Barbour branches are in Sweden and Germany*.

To make students aware of the connotative potential of the term, the film *Barbour Way of Life: Spring and Summer 2020* (Barbour, 2020) can be shown in which three persons speak on Barbour lifestyle. The task is to write down each person's associations in the spaces provided. Apart from offering listening practice, this activity shows how connotations pertain to the sphere of lacunarity and how important it is from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective. Another task involves watching a video and taking notes which will later serve as a basis of writing a step-by-step description: *How to re-wax your Barbour jacket. Waterproofing wax thornproof dressing for wax jackets* (e-OUTDOOR, 2019) can be employed for this purpose.

The third stage is consolidation and reinforcement. A possible follow-up task to be done individually is to choose one lacuna from an English-Polish perspective, i.e. a Polish item lacunary for the native speaker of English, and to provide its comprehensive description in English. The presentation can take various forms: an essay, a bilingual dictionary entry, a poster. It can be administered as a written task, an oral task, or a combination of both. This activity offers the possibility of combining theoretical knowledge and linguo-cultural practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural lacunae constitute a complex phenomenon in FLT. Providing students with the information on lacunarity broadens their linguistic knowledge and enhances their language awareness. It also contributes to the development of their competence, since many lacunary items verbalize culture-specific concepts deeply rooted in LC2 with no equivalents in LC1. Thus, they are important from a linguo-cultural and communicative perspective.

It can be assumed that LC1 learners will be faced with lacunary units in LC2 in the process of learning L2. Thus, they should be equipped with sufficient knowledge of their nature. The inclusion of theoretical knowledge is vital since it is the foundation for developing the ways of dealing with lacunae. It should comprise the following components: identifying an element as lacunary; determining its meaning, stylistic value, pragmatic properties; analysing its cultural status; acquiring the lacunary unit.

Lacunae should be presented in a meaningful context, which can be achieved thanks to combining the presentation of theory with the development of other FLT aspects. Thanks to it, students can develop language and intercultural competence as well as their research skills by collecting information on selected lacunae from

various sources. The notion of lacunarity can also be perceived as an element of novelty that is attractive from the point of view of learners.

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