Sensitivity of translation and interpreting students to cultural phenomena in literary texts

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Abstract

The paper presents the results of research aimed at testing the ability of a selected sample of translation and interpreting (T&I) students to identify, classify and explain cultural phenomena (realia, precedent phenomena) represented in a literary text. The theoretical part provides a definition and classification of two types of culturally determined phenomena – realia and precedent phenomena – drawing mainly on the works of international scholars (Krasnykh 2003; Vlakhov – Florin 2009; Cuéllar Lázaro 2013) and also building on our research focusing on the dimension of interculturality in translation communication (Zahorák 2019, 2022). This paper presents a quantitative evaluation of research aimed at testing third-year undergraduate students of translation and interpreting (T&I) at the Department of Translation Studies at Constaine the Philosopher University (CPU) in Nitra, focusing on the criterion of students' success rate in identifying cultural phenomena in a literary text, adequately specifying their context (historical, political, social, cultural, etc.), and explaining their ethnosocial background.

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1. Introduction

Identification and reception of cultural phenomena in translation communication are inevitably connected with intercultural competence, representing one of the central factors involved in the optimal transfer of interculturally determined specifics into the target linguocultural space. It is important to realize that the intercultural competence is a broad term, far from being limited only to the knowledge of intercultural differences within specific countries, nations or linguocultural spaces, although their importance cannot be underestimated (Madej 2020). The intercultural competence is aptly defined by S. Kupsch-Losereit (2002) who asserts that the translator's intercultural competence is based on the knowledge of culture that, in an ideal scenario, includes the entire regional, civilizational and sociocultural background of the source and target communities, the totality of socially determined actions and ideas relevant in the communication process, cultural differences manifested in various areas of everyday life, social interaction, as well as culturally conditioned factual and denotative knowledge. In this regard, culture can be seen as the totality of social actions (art, religion, science, ethics), meanings and ideas, understood as a system of shared forms and symbols.

In the Slovak context, there is only a limited number of works focused on improving the intercultural competence of future translators in the teaching process (Koželová – Drengubiak 2022; Koželová 2017), while highly specialised works and research aimed at investigating the sensitivity of T&I students to culturally conditioned phenomena and their subsequent transfer (translation procedures and strategies) in the translation communication of literary and audiovisual texts are, in Slovak academic context, virtually non-existent. The sensitivity to cultural phenomena itself is an extremely important factor in the translation process since their adequate transfer is conditioned by the identification of the cultural phenomenon linked to the knowledge of its ethnosocial background (placing in context, knowledge of its meaning in a particular linguocultural community or awareness of the degree of its possible updating).

In light of the above, we decided to carry out multi-stage research aimed at testing and improving the intercultural competence of T&I students at the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts at CPU in Nitra. This paper presents the findings from the first stage – the ability of the selected sample of students to identify and adequately classify (explain) cultural phenomena represented in a literary text.

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2. Cultural phenomena: definition and specifics

Cultural phenomena have been researched by many domestic and foreign scholars from various perspectives (structuralist, functionalist or even pragmatic). Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that in domestic and foreign translation schools, as well as approaches of prominent translation scholars or linguoculturologists, cultural phenomena – which in our understanding represent a general, umbrella term not reflecting the specific differences of particular types of interculturally conditioned phenomena in the reception and translation process –, are designated by various names, e. g., cultureme (Nord), linguocultureme (Maslova, Sipko), cultural references (Granada School, Koželová), realia (Soviet School, Leipzig School), precedent phenomena (Krasnykh), etc.

Our previous research on the reception and translation of interculturally conditioned phenomena (Zahorák 2019, 2020, 2022) shows that not all of the above terms can be seen as synonymous. In the theoretical part of this paper, we define and briefly explain two main groups of cultural phenomena that were also represented in the testing of T&I students: realia and precedent phenomena.

The term **realia** appears as early as the 1960s in the work of O. Kadde (1964), an important representative of the Leipzig School of Translation (cf. Cuéllar Lázaro 2013). Kadde uses the term realia to denote socio-economic and cultural phenomena and institutions in the broadest sense, which are characteristic for a certain socio-economic order or cultural space. A more precise definition of realia is put forward by E. Markstein (1998, 288), who understands realia as "elements of everyday life, history, culture, politics of a particular nation, country, place that have no equivalent in other nations, other countries, other places."

In more recent translation and linguocultural researches reflecting the Russian and also Russian-Slovak linguistic context (Vlakhov – Florin 2009; Dekanova – Lekareva 2012), realia are understood as facts and phenomena of everyday life, extensive knowledge of geography, literature, art, science or technology, or all entities that together form and represent the culture of a certain country and nation. The above definitions imply that realia are ethno-cultural units linked to a particular linguocultural space from a diachronic or synchronic point of view. The rate of their correct identification in the literary text that represents the main object of our research interest may be facilitated by the fact that they usually occur in an explicit form and denote a specific object, phenomenon or event.

Realia can be classified from various points of view, and for the purposes of our research we will focus on two selected aspects - time and subject matter (Vlakhov – Florin 2009), which are illustrated by specific examples from the questionnaire filled out by T&I students of the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra. We note that the temporal perspective, i.e., realia from the synchronic or diachronic

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perspective, can also be applied when classifying realia in terms of subject matter.

From the temporal point of view, realia may be classified as follows:
- **realia reflecting the past** – *Som tu ako sprievodca desaťdňového zájazdu rekreantov **z NDR** [...]*[1] (Rankov, Stalo sa prvého septembra, 2008, 249);
- **realia reflecting the present** – *Znel som ako vokodér starého **Daft Punku** a chrčal ako smrteľne poranený **Darth Vader** [...]*[2] (Hvorecký, Trol, 2017, 21).

In terms of subject matter, we can distinguish the following types of realia:
- **ethnographic -** *V rohu stál **mixér Pragomix** a na dlážke **vysávač ETA 402**. To všetko, aj balíčky nezomletých brazílskych zŕn nakúpené v **Tuzexe**, nám zanechali mamy.*[3] (Hvorecký, Naum, 2013, 120); *Svoj jediný týždenník **Bravo**, vlastne nečitateľný zdrap, som opatroval s nehou celé dva roky [...]*[4] (Hvorecký, Eskorta, 2007, 25);
- **socio-political:** *Riaditeľstvo **zotavovní ROH** sa nachádzalo na strmom kopci nad nábrežím.*[5] (Rankov, Stalo sa prvého septembra, 2008, 242);
- **personal -** *„Ale dobre, isto si vravíte, že a čo taký **Štefan Banič**? No, tak si na to spomeňte, keď budete núdzovo opúšťať dopravné lietadlo a okolitým pasažierom sa pred skokom nezabudnite pochváliť: To sme vynašli my, Slováci!"*[6] (Cabala, Spomenieš si na Trenčín?, 2023, 107); ***Péter, János a Gábor** práve dopili fľašu barack pálenky, ktorú im dal Péterov starší brat **Karsci** [...]*[7] (Rankov, Stalo sa prvého septembra, 2008, 22);

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[1] *I am here as a guide for a ten-day tour of holidaymakers from the **GDR** [...].*

[2] *I sounded like an old **Daft Punk** vocoder and rasped like a mortally wounded **Darth Vader** [...].*

[3] *There was a **Pragomix blender** in the corner and an **ETA 402 vacuum cleaner** on the floor. All this, and packets of unground Brazilian beans bought at **Tuzex**, had been left for us by our mothers.*

[4] *I guarded my only **Bravo** weekly journal, in truth an unreadable scrap, with tenderness for two years [...].*

[5] *The headquarters of the **ROH convalescent homes** was located on a steep hill above the waterfront.*

[6] *"But well, you must be thinking, what about **Štefan Banič**? Well then, remember it when you're making an emergency exit from a passenger plane and don't forget to boast to the surrounding passengers before you jump: We Slovaks invented that!"*

[7] ***Péter, János** and **Gábor** had just finished a bottle of Barack (brandy) given to them by Péter's older brother **Karsci** [...].*

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- **geographic;**
- **military.**

We will briefly present the above-mentioned examples of realia that students of T&I had to identify in the texts, specify their context (historical, political, social, cultural – literary, film, music, etc.) and explain them. The historical context in the examples above is represented by the following realia: *GDR* (German Democratic Republic) – the name of the socialist state in the territory of today's Germany in the years 1949 – 1990; products reflecting the socialist Czechoslovak space – the *Pragomix* mixer, the *ETA* vacuum cleaner, *Tuzex* - a network of retail shops in Czechoslovakia where it was possible to buy foreign, mainly western goods for special vouchers; the *Bravo* magazine bringing information from the field of music and media, which was popular among the younger generation of Slovak readers in the past; *ROH convalescent homes* (ROH standing for Revolutionary Trade Union Movement) – recreational facilities in socialist Czechoslovakia, which could be visited by supporters of the regime with their family members. Personal realities are represented by the name of Slovak inventor of the parachute, *Štefan Banič*, and the names *Péter, János, Gábor*, which are associated with Hungarian nationality or with the Hungarian context. The French music band *Daft Punk*, which can be considered a pioneer of electronic dance music, or the fictional film character *Darth Vader* from the popular Star Wars franchise, were among the realia reflecting the present.

Precedent phenomena, theoretically anchored in linguoculturology or the theory of intertextuality and precedence, represent specific types of cultural phenomena with ethno-cultural meaning and strong associative potential in a particular linguocultural space. Unlike realia, they often appear in the text in an updated form and are capable of fulfilling a variety of functions – from evaluative, encoding, and language play functions, to euphemistic or dysphemistic functions. Their identification is conditioned not only by the knowledge of their ethnosocial background (placing the precedent phenomenon in the historical, political, literary context, etc.), but also by the awareness of the degree of a precedent unit's updating in a particular communicative situation.

D. Bagayeva, D. Gudkov, I. Zakharenko and V. Krasnykh (1997) perceive precedent phenomena as phenomena (both linguistic and extralinguistic) which are well-known to the representatives of a certain linguocultural community and enter into the collective cognitive space of communication participants. Precedent phenomena are aptly defined by V. Krasnykh (2003, 170), who understands them as events, phenomena, objects, names or statements that are:

- well known to all representatives of a national-linguocultural community (they have a suprapersonal character);
- up-to-date from the cognitive point of view;

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o constantly renewed in the discourse of the representatives of a particular linguocultural community by means of references.

In light of the definitions discussed above, which are based on the findings of linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, as well as on our previous research (Zahorák 2019, 2022), it can be claimed that precedentness or precedent phenomena, carry cognitive meaning with emotional value for an individual or a linguistic community, while being constantly renewed in language and sign systems and being able to represent the view and attitudes of a particular linguocultural community (in the case of precedent phenomena belonging to a particular nation).

Precedent phenomena can be classified according to several criteria. Based on the source of precedentness, V. V. Krasnykh (2003) distinguishes:

- **precedent texts –** *Študenti nič nečítali a obsahy kníh si sťahovali z netu. Väčšina z nich si myslela, že **Pani Bovaryová** je americký film, **Sartre** značka plesnivého syra [...]*[8] (Hvorecký, Naum, 2013, 6)
- **precedent names** – *S vycerenými zubami si v Európe želám ešte viac miliónov utečencov. S nasprostastým výrazom podporujem útok Islamského štátu na Viedeň a Varšavu. So vzrušenými očami volám po premene všetkých spoluobčanov na gejov a lesby a prajem si, **aby vyzerali ako Conchita Wurst.**[9]* (Hvorecký, Trol, 2017, 16); **Štefánik** *urobil tri veľké okruhy nad ostrovmi, obletel **Tahiti Liptavi** aj **Tahiti Tatrai** a dlhšie plachtil nad oceánom [...]*[10] (Hvorecký, Tahiti, 2019, 16)
- **precedent statements** – *Špičky tenisiek kmitajú v divokom rytme a ona vie, že stačí málo a odlepí sa od zeme. Odlepí sa od špinavého asfaltu Trenčína. **Wingardium leviosa!**[11]* (Cabala, Satori v Trenčíne, 2020, 81)

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[8] *The students did not read anything and downloaded the summaries of the books from the Internet. Most of them thought **Madame Bovary** was an American film, **Sartre** a brand of mouldy cheese [...].*

[9] *With bared teeth, I wish for millions more refugees in Europe. With a dumb look, I support the Islamic State's attack on Vienna and Warsaw. With excitement in eyes, I call for all fellow citizens to turn gays and lesbians and wish **they looked like Conchita Wurst**.*

[10] **Štefánik** *made three great circuits over the islands, flew around **Tahiti Liptavi** and **Tahiti Tatrai** [...] and continued to glide over the ocean [...].*

[11] *The tips of her sneakers flutter with a wild rhythm, and she knows that it would only take a little and she'll lift off the ground. She'll lift off the dirty asphalt of Trenčín. **Wingardium leviosa**!*

- **precedent situations** – *Kvôli* **teniskám s troma pásikmi** *som ochotne mesiac zbieral starý papier. [...]*[12] (Hvorecký, Eskorta, 2007, 25).

Again, we provide a brief overview of the ethnosocial background and connotative potential of the above examples of precedent phenomena represented in the questionnaire survey. The first example presents a precedent text in the form of the title of the novel written by the French author Gustave Flaubert – *Madame Bovary*, including the precedent name of the French writer, philosopher and the main representative of existentialism – Jean-Paul Sartre. The precedent phenomena mentioned above fulfil an evaluative, hyperbolic function in the excerpt – the author criticizes the current young generation's knowledge of world literature and the way of reading or rather not reading world classics.

In the second example, precedentness can be identified in connection with the name *Conchita Wurst*, a pseudonym of the contemporary Austrian travesty artist Thomas Neuwirth, who rose to fame thanks to his victory at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2014. The optimal reception of the precedent unit is determined by general information about the singer and his appearance – he wears feminine clothes, has long hair (femininity) which is in sharp contrast with his thick moustache (masculinity). The narrator hyperbolically wishes that everyone looked like Conchita Wurst - that all homosexuals were easily recognizable. The precedent names *Štefánik*, *Tahiti Liptavi*, *Tahiti Tatrai* are associated with a key figure of Slovak history – diplomat, aviator and astronomer M. R. Štefánik. The author's new names *Tahiti Liptavi* and *Tahiti Tatrai*, which do not designate real islands, have strong ethnocultural associations – the name *Tatrai* symbolizes a mountain range in the territory of Slovakia - *the High Tatras*, the name *Liptavi* is associated with one of the regions of Slovakia – Liptov.

The precedent statement *Wingardium leviosa*, which also makes a reference to the precedent text - the Harry Potter book series by the English author J. K. Rowling, represents a universal precedent phenomenon associated with the literary work as well as with the film based on this book. It is a spell cast by one of the main heroines of the series, Hermione Granger, that makes objects levitate. The updating motif of the precedent phenomenon consists in combining a national motive – the protagonist comes from Trenčín, a town in Western Slovakia, and wishes to take off – with a universal phenomenon referring to a well-known precedent text.

The last example reflects the historical context referring to the socialism period in Czechoslovakia. *Sneakers with three stripes*, implicitly naming the Adidas brand, symbolise a product from the West that had great value for the people of Czechoslovakia, and especially for the young generation. For

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[12] *I willingly collected old paper for a month for the* **sneakers with three stripes** *[...].*

an optimal reception of a nationally conditioned precedent unit, the aforementioned knowledge of the historical context reflecting the Czechoslovak context is of vital importance.

3. Testing of T&I students' sensitivity to and reception of cultural phenomena in a literary text

3.1. Research methodology

Testing of students' sensitivity to and reception of cultural phenomena (realia and precedent phenomena) in a literary text was carried out by means of a questionnaire form. The questionnaire was drawn by the research team of the KEGA project entitled *Precedentness as a Tool in Testing and Improving the Intercultural Competence of Students of Translation Studies,* while its actual distribution among students was preceded by a pilot phase with a group of T&I graduates of the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra (n=4), in which we verified the adequacy of the form and the clarity of phrasing of individual questions.

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions focused on students' ability to identify intercultural phenomena, specify their context (historical, political, social, literary, musical, cinematographic, etc.) and explain them briefly. The questionnaire contained short excerpts of works by contemporary Slovak authors – Michal Hvorecký, Lukáš Cabala, Pavol Rankov and Ivana Dobrakovová, in which two types of interculturally conditioned phenomena were represented – realia and precedent phenomena. Cultural phenomena were primarily associated with the Slovak linguocultural space, and universal, i.e., commonly known intercultural units reflecting the present and the past were also represented (illustrative examples were provided in the classification of realia and precedent phenomena).

The research sample consisted of 19 participants (n=19), third-year undergraduate T&I students in the study programmes Slovak language and culture, English language and culture, Russian language and culture, German language and culture, and Hungarian language and culture at the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra. It can be assumed that third-year T&I students have sufficient theoretical knowledge of interculturally conditioned units in literary and translation communication, as they acquired theoretical knowledge on this issue during their undergraduate studies in compulsory courses *Introduction to Translation Studies*, *Translation and Interpreting Methodology 1* and *Translation and Interpreting Methodology 2*. These are the courses taken by all T&I students during their studies, regardless of the studied language.

The sample was chosen with the intention to observe and analyse the development of students' intercultural competence in the following years of

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their studies not only in terms of the reception of cultural phenomena itself, but also in the ways and strategies of their transfer in literary and audiovisual texts. 18 women and 1 man took part in the questionnaire. As to native languages, Slovak was the most represented (11), followed by Hungarian (5) and Russian or Ukrainian (3). We are aware that, from the viewpoint of their mother tongue, the sample of students is not homogeneous, which may have an influence on the research results (for this reason we also evaluate and graphically represent a criterion aimed at comparing the number of identified and adequately explained intercultural units according to the mother tongue of the participants, see Figure 4). At the same time, however, it should be noted that T&I undergraduate students at the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra should have (apart from their mother tongue and the language studied) a command of the Slovak language at least at the B2 level according to the recommendations of the admission procedure, while the profile of the graduate presupposes not only knowledge of grammar, lexicology and stylistics, but also knowledge of the realia, history and literature of the languages studied.

Each student was assigned an anonymized identification number in order to be able to compare their results in the future and assess the degree of development of their intercultural competence.

The questionnaire was filled out by students in the winter semester 2023/2024 in the course *Translation and Interpreting Methodology 2*, as distributing the questionnaire in an online form could carry the risk of a low return rate. In addition, we considered it necessary to provide students with additional instructions, if necessary. Students had a total of 60 minutes to complete the questionnaire. As this is the initial phase of the research, which focuses solely on testing students' sensitivity to cultural phenomena in literary texts (or their identification and placing in context), students were not allowed to use the Internet, to search for and verify information during testing. We believe that if participants had been allowed to use the Internet and search tools during testing, the overall picture of their sensitivity to cultural phenomena would have been significantly distorted. In the next phases of the research, which will focus on the translation aspect or the specifics of particular cultural phenomena in translation, students will, of course, be allowed to use the Internet and all available resources, as is common practice.

3.2. Findings analysis

In this paper, we focus on two main criteria in the quantitative evaluation of the data. The first is the success rate in identifying cultural phenomena (realia and precedent phenomena) (see Figure 1). A total of 34 cross-cultural units were represented in the excerpts provided in the questionnaire. The maximum number (34) of identified intercultural

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phenomena – i.e., 100% success rate – was observed only for one student (participant O). The lowest number of identified intercultural units was 9, which represents a success rate of 26.47% (participant D). 17 out of 19 students were able to identify more than 20 intercultural units, which represents more than half of the intercultural phenomena represented in the excerpts, with the identification success rate ranging from 58.82% (20 units) to 100% (34 units). Only two students identified less than half of the intercultural units represented in the excerpts, with success rates of 26.47% (9 units) and 47.06% (16 units), respectively.

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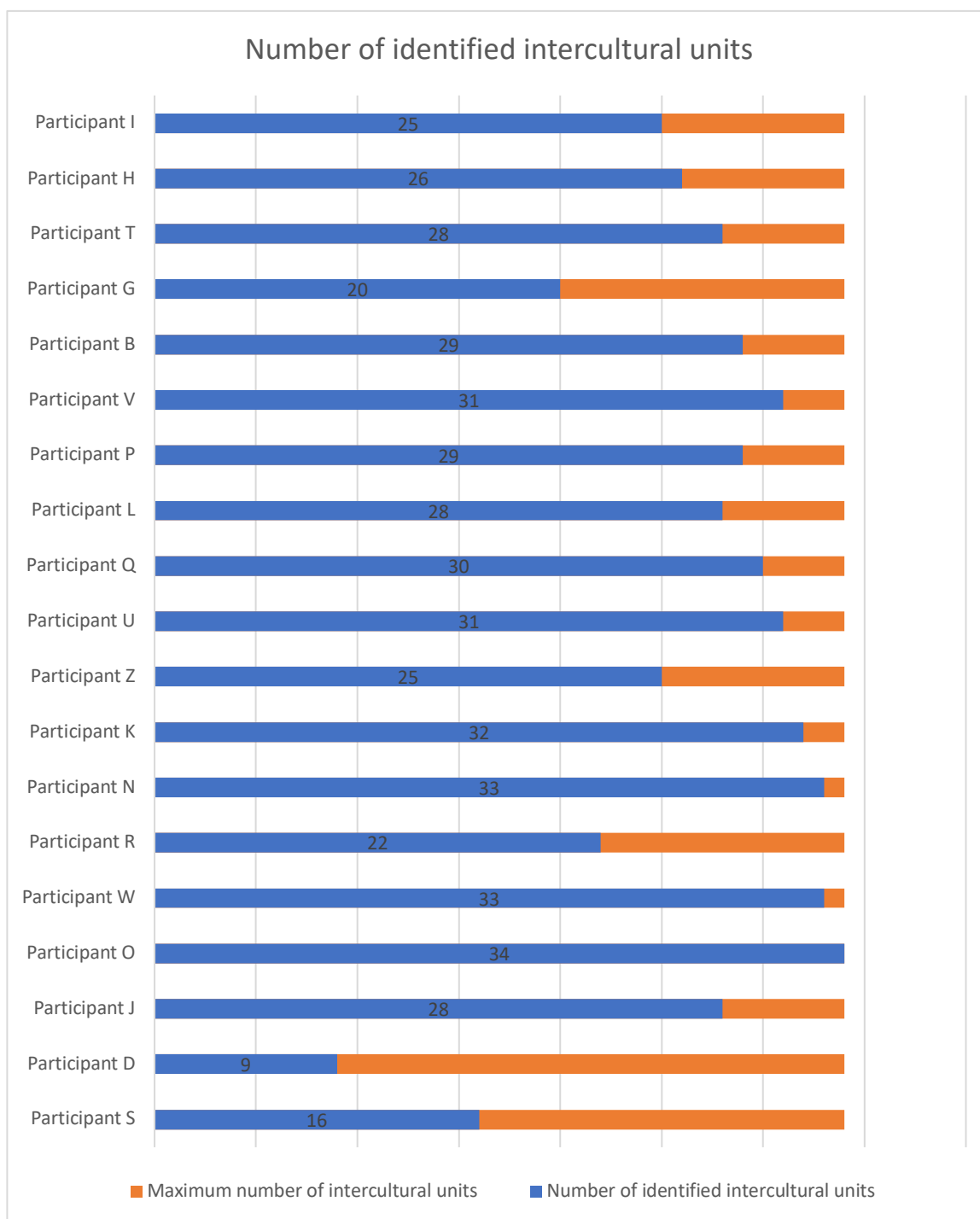to cultural phenomena in literary texts**

Figure 1. Number of identified intercultural units

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Another assessed criterion was the success rate in adequately classifying cultural phenomena and briefly explaining them (see Figure 2). A total of 34 intercultural units were represented in the text excerpts. The highest number of adequately classified and explained intercultural units was 26, representing a success rate of 76.47% (participant W). The lowest number of adequately classified and explained intercultural units was 3, representing a success rate of 8.82% (participant D). 10 out of 19 participants were able to adequately classify and explain at least 17 intercultural units, with success rates ranging from 50% (17 units) to 76.47% (26 units). Less than half of the intercultural units represented in the samples were adequately classified and explained by 9 participants, with success rates ranging from 8.82% (3 units) to 47.06% (16 units).

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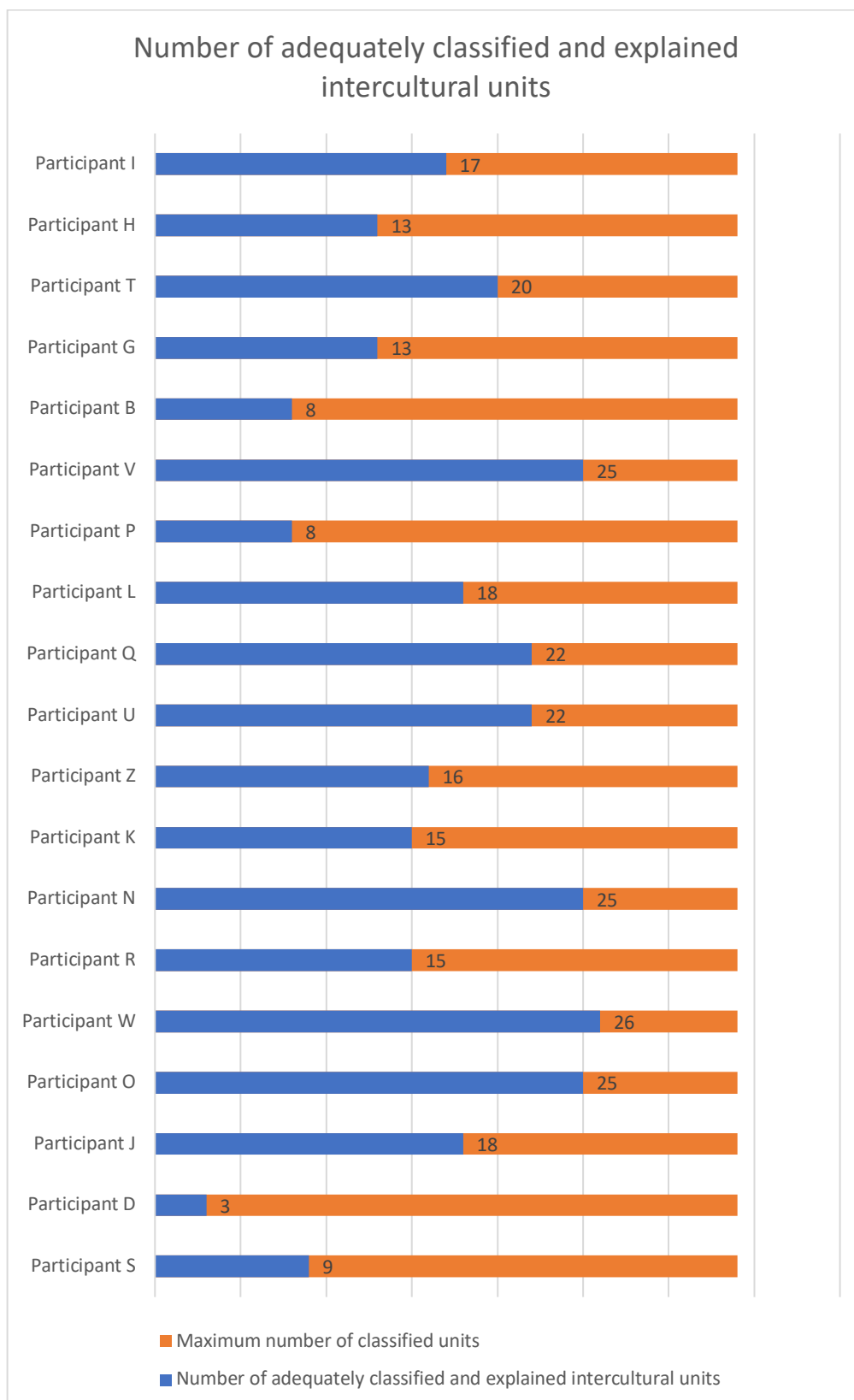to cultural phenomena in literary texts**

Figure 2. Number of adequately classified and explained intercultural units

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Figure 3 provides a comparison of the number identified, adequately classified and explained intercultural units per participant. The figure shows that for all 19 participants, a higher success rate was observed in identifying intercultural units, which averaged 78.79%, and a lower success rate in classifying and explaining intercultural units, averaging 49.23%.

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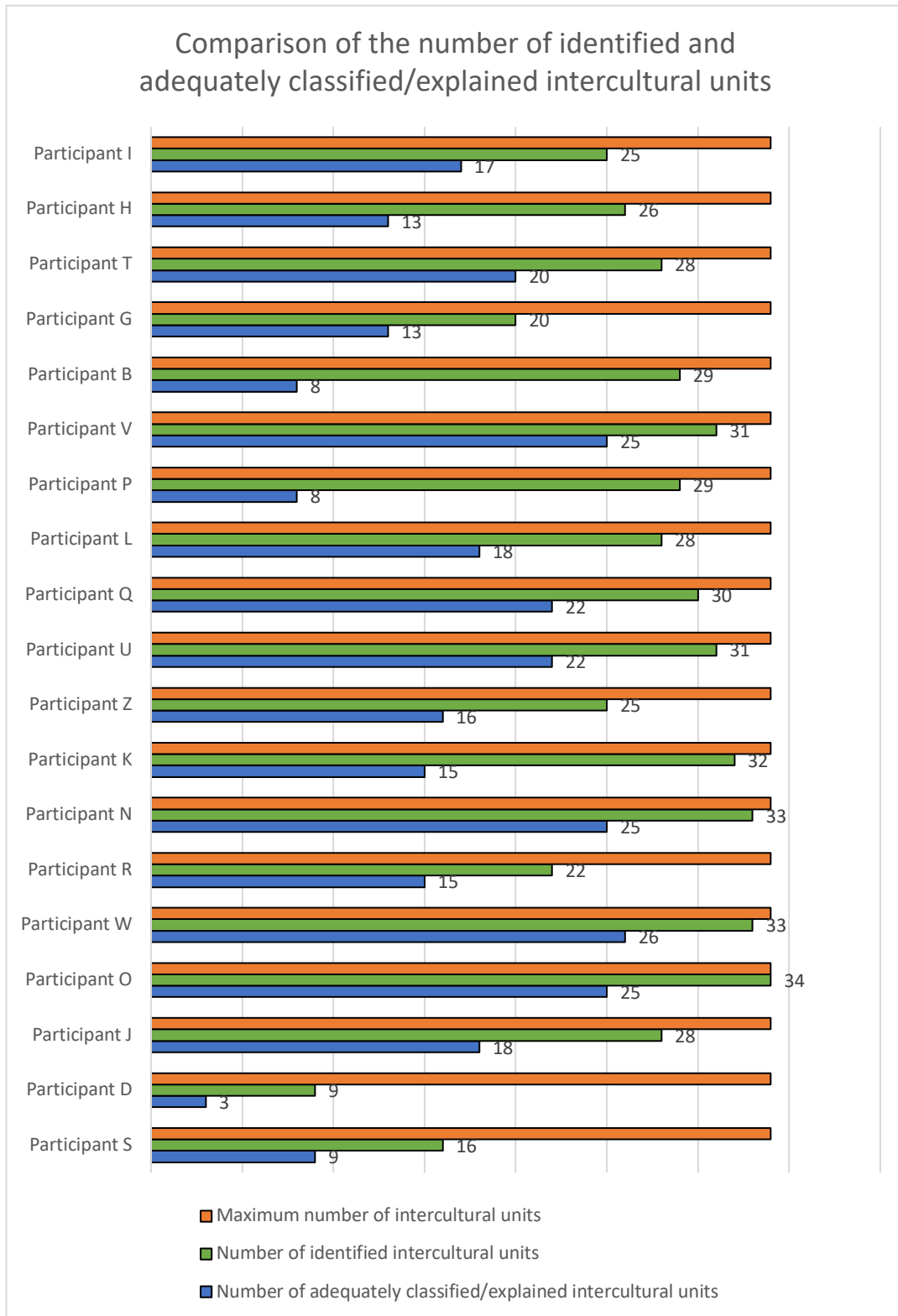to cultural phenomena in literary texts**

Figure 3. Comparison of the number of identified and adequately
classified/explained intercultural units

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Figure 4 shows an overall comparison of the number of identified and adequately classified and explained intercultural units according to participants' mother tongue, as we are aware of the fact that the above criterion may have had an impact on the identification and reception of interculturally conditioned units in different linguocultural spaces. Since one of the participants' working languages – T&I students at the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra – is Slovak language, it is essential that students are able to optimally identify and explain interculturally conditioned phenomena associated (not only) with the Slovak linguocultural space from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives.

The participants whose mother tongue was Slovak (11) were able to identify 29 intercultural units on average, which represents an 85.29% success rate. On average, they adequately classified and explained 21 intercultural units, representing a 59.63% success rate. The participants with Hungarian as their mother tongue (5) were able to identify 27 intercultural units on average, which represents an 80.59% success rate. On average, they adequately classified and explained 13 intercultural units, representing a 38.24% success rate. The participants whose native language was Russian and Ukrainian (3) were able to identify 18 intercultural units on average, representing a 51.96% success rate. On average, they adequately classified and explained 10 intercultural units, representing a 29.41% success rate.

Although it is a relatively small research sample, the results indicate a tendency that sensitivity to cultural phenomena primarily associated with the Slovak linguocultural space and the ability to adequately understand them may be determined, among other things, by the mother tongue (linguistic competence), or the linguocultural community in which a person grows up. We are planning to confirm these findings by further research – we are currently conducting research with other groups of participants, i.e., T&I students in other years of their studies at the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra, so that more general conclusions can be drawn in this context.

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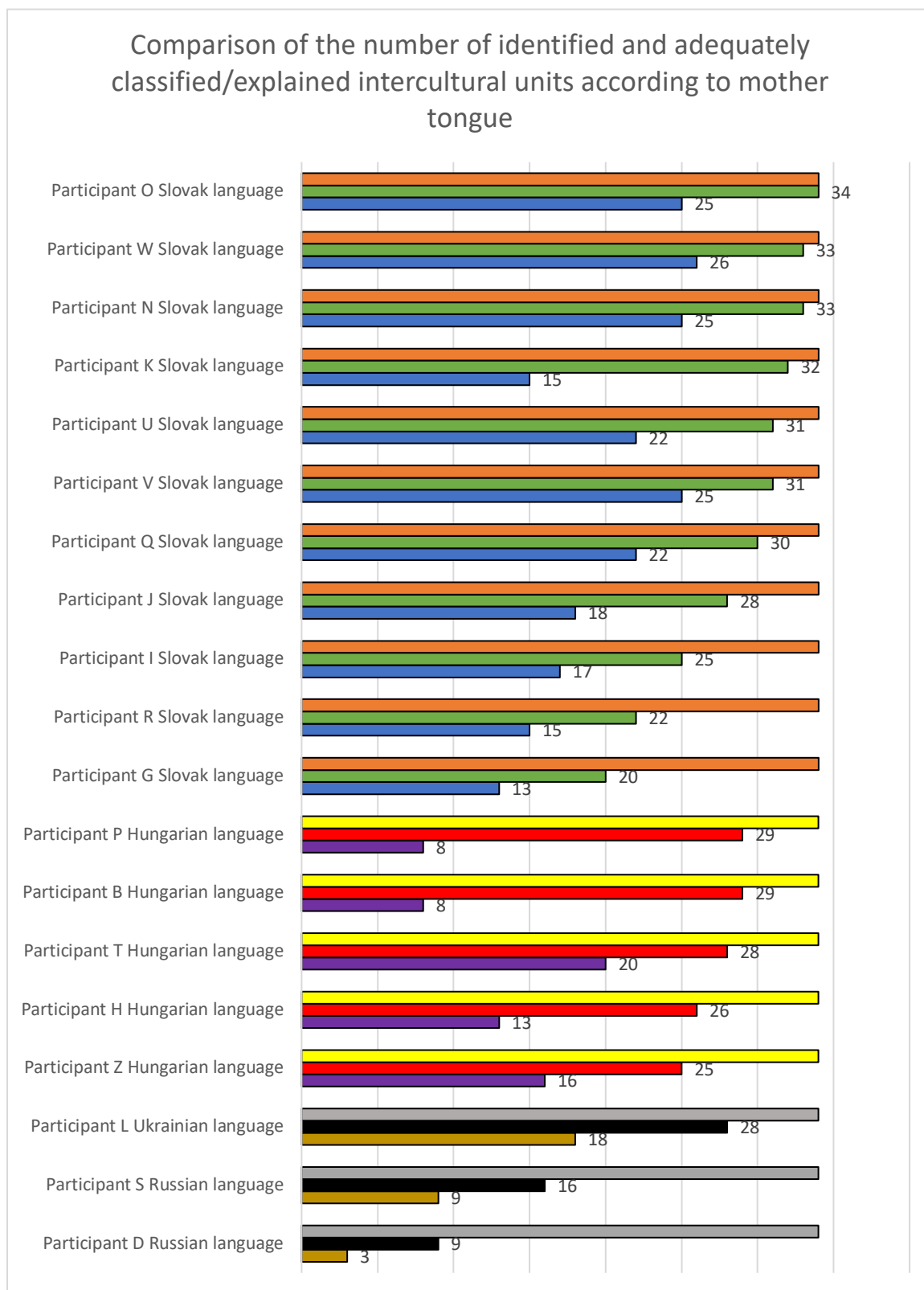to cultural phenomena in literary texts**

Figure 4. Comparison of the number of identified and adequately
classified/explained intercultural units by mother tongue

4. Conclusion

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In the initial stage of the conducted research, the results of which are presented in this paper, we focused on a quantitative evaluation of the success rate of third-year T&I undergraduates of the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra, in identifying, adequately classifying and briefly explaining interculturally conditioned phenomena (realia and precedent phenomena) present in selected literary texts excerpts. The realia and precedent phenomena represented in the individual excerpts reflected the Slovak linguocultural space in both diachronic and synchronic aspects; in some cases, they were universal units requiring general knowledge of history, politics, literature and art, which future translators should possess.

We are aware that the presented research results are limited by the size of the sample, which is conditioned by the number of students who participated in the research (19 third-year T&I undergraduate students of the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra). Currently, testing of students who are in other years of their studies is also underway, which will allow us to reach more relevant conclusions related to the sensitivity to cultural phenomena in literary texts. Since in this phase of the research we focused only on the initial testing of students' sensitivity to cultural phenomena, including their placing in context and brief explanation, students were not allowed to use the Internet, search for and verify information during testing. These will, of course, be essential in the next phases of the research, which will focus on the process of translating cultural phenomena into a different linguistic and linguocultural space.

The results reached with this research sample show that 19 T&I students have a relatively high degree of sensitivity to cultural phenomena in literary texts, i.e., they were able to successfully locate them in the texts. The participants' average success rate in identifying intercultural units amounted to 78.79%. The average success rate of participants to adequately place the identified intercultural units into the context (historical, political, social, literary, cinematographic, etc.) and to explain their meaning is much lower, i.e., 49.23%. Within the analysed research sample, it is not the identification of cultural phenomena itself that appears problematic, but rather the knowledge of their basic meaning, or their placing in context. It will be interesting to see whether this factor will be confirmed when testing students who are in other years of their T&I studies.

In this context, when it comes to training of future translators and interpreters at the Department of Translation Studies of the Faculty of Arts, CPU in Nitra, students' intercultural competence (including their general knowledge of world history, politics or literature related to a specific language) can be developed during the courses forming the core of the study programme, e.g. History and Realia, Literature (of a specific language), as well as during practically oriented translation seminars within specific language combinations. This may include, for example, practically oriented tasks when students work with different types of texts (both at

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the linguistic and extra-linguistic level), discussions on their placing in a historical-social context or area, in the case of literary texts, knowing and presenting the basic biography and work of the author, pre-translation analysis of culturally (historically, socially, politically) determined specifics represented in the text, discussion of their meaning or their ethnosocial background, additional study of the materials, etc. There is no doubt that the development of intercultural competence is a continuous and long-term process, but the role in this respect is not only played by institutional training, but also by the individual efforts of future translators.

In the next stages of the research, we will focus on a detailed qualitative evaluation of the collected data, which will provide us with an overview of the most challenging groups of intercultural units from the students' perspective, and on the subsequent improvement of their intercultural competence in the translation courses within the studied language by means of a specific model of translation assignments and exercises with the representation of different types of interculturally conditioned units which is currently being developed by the investigating team of the KEGA project. The partial findings of the research confirm the continuing importance of developing the intercultural competence of future translators, as mere sensitivity to (identification of) cultural phenomena in a literary or audiovisual text constitutes only one of many steps in their optimal transfer. In this context, the adequate reception of cultural phenomena plays an important role, which is determined by the knowledge of the ethnosocial background of the phenomenon, placing the phenomenon in context and the awareness of its possible updating in the literary text.

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Annex

**Sample questionnaire
Identification number:**

Your mother tongue:

1.   Read the following excerpts from literary texts.

    a) Identify (underline) an intercultural phenomenon (cultural reference, allusion, realia – personality; artistic work; significant historical, social, cultural event, specific object with cultural value, etc.)
    b) Place the intercultural phenomenon in context (history, politics, literature, etc.) and explain it briefly.

→ Na štvrtej ulici vo svojej obľúbenej kaviarni si vždy dala veľké kapučíno, a kým čakala na metro, s chuťou ho vypila. V podzemnom vlaku si potom vytiahla brožovanú knihu a okamžite zapadla do príbehov. V poslednej

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dobe ju fascinovali najväčšie klasiky. Pani Bovaryová, Tess z d Urbervillovcov, Anna Kareninová... (Cabala, Satori v Trenčíne, 2020, 17).[13]

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[13] She always had a large cappuccino at her favourite café on Fourth Street, and she drank it with zest while waiting for the metro. Then, on the train, she'd pull out a paperback and immediately become engrossed in the stories. Lately, she'd been fascinated by the greatest classics. Madame Bovary, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Anna Karenina... (Cabala, Satori in Trenčín, 2020, 17).