

# **NATIONAL , CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC UNIQUENESS AND ORIGINALITY OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND APPLYING THEM IN STUDYING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**Author : Kornelia Kostova , Master of English philology, doctor candidate**

Studying English as a Foreign Language is actually not only just a part of the curriculum in Higher Education but is something much more – “an educational experience <sup>[1]</sup>that starts in Bulgaria since childhood and is likely to continue throughout life . It goes beyond the limits of the school, the University and the Curriculum. Studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is connected with the national, cultural and linguistic features of the countries where it is spoken but most of all with the features of character of the people who populate these countries and their soul.

Motivation is what actually lays the basis of the students’ drive to study EFL. If one is expected to practice English for achieving certain professional goals or communication : she / he might need to cope successfully with some professional literature in their specific field, talk with colleagues, make friends, attend lectures, symposia, conferences , workshops which have English as a working language, play and entertain, visit foreign countries, use the social nets, surf the Internet, sign contracts, negotiate deals, transport goods, exchange articles, make catalogues or menus, attract tourists to Bulgaria what not – the reasons are as many and as diverse as real life itself and larger than life. As a matter of fact studying EFL is an experience that makes you rich with friends and emotions, save for learning outcomes, enlarges your scope, changes your point of view for the better and it cannot be described but mostly must be experienced. Nowadays studying EFL entered the era of the E-Learning . The computer-based learning offers the student a variety of exciting educational tools like e-textbooks, you-tube videos, e-webinars, web-based platform learning , participation in blogs, forums etc. which gives every student the opportunity to take as much knowledge as he /she wishes to in the

comfort of his/her home or just at the tips of their fingers(mobile-device learning). The role of the teacher has shifted as well : the teacher is a mediator, a guide, a facilitator in learning, not an authority any more . He/She is given more responsibility as a lesson –designer and course designer which is quite a demanding task. The good teacher should as well take into consideration their students’ learning styles and design the course according to the students’ preferences, so that the online course in EFL to be successful and with excellent outcomes.

Similarly to Bulgaria, our native country and all European countries have their specific national originality and uniqueness which has to do with its traditions, linguistics, national features, policy and culture. Studying English unites all Europeans in sharing their way of life and traditions through communication and more we cannot do without studying the culture and the national features of the UK, their way of life and stress the fact that cross –cultural studies is one of the European policies for better cooperation and international support of the EU countries. The culture of the UK is the pattern of [human activity](#) and [symbolism](#) influenced by the [UK's history](#) as a [developed country](#), a [liberal democracy](#) and a [major power](#). Although one can meet people from all the 4 religions there, the predominant one is [Christian](#). The UK consists of [four countries](#)—[England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#)—each of them has distinct customs , rituals, rites, [cultures](#) and [symbolism](#), including its unique myths, legends and their transformation in modern literature. [British literature](#), [music](#), [cinema](#), [art](#), [theatre](#), [comedy](#), [media](#), [television](#), [philosophy](#), education and [architecture](#) are quite well appreciated both by its inhabitants and by the visitors to the country, they are influential all around the world. “The United Kingdom is also prominent in science and technology. Sport is an important part of British culture; numerous sports originated in the country, including [football](#) but the most popular and exciting game for the British nowadays is still cricket. The UK has been described as a "cultural superpower", <sup>[2][3]</sup> and London has been described as a world cultural capital.”<sup>[4][5][6][7]</sup> In my view London attracts visitors, guests, business –makers, holiday-makers and what not due to its special charm, wonderful architecture

that had started since Sir Christopher Wren, museums, parks, shops, monuments, galleries, restaurants and places for entertainment, the wonderful river Thames which is symbolic for the city and excites our senses but it is as well due to the fact that London is the focal point of many industrial business head offices, politics, culture and sports, save for being a place rich in historical sites and memories. . If you visit London do not miss The West End's Theatre Royal in Covent Garden in the City of Westminster or Shakespeare's Globe with its thatched roof . You can enjoy a play and go back to the seventeenth century when one of the roles of the theatre, save for entertainment had been to initiate new culture, coin new words and enrich the English language which is one of Shakespeare's contributions despite his prolific work as a writer, poet , dramatist and playwright.

The [cultures of England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) are diverse,distinctive and unique. If one is invited to a British home it is traditional to take a box of chocolates as a gift, a bottle of wine and a bunch of flowers. At the end of the meals one should offer to do the dishes . If you pay the bill or go Dutch in a British restaurant,be sure to arrange well the banknotes of the pounds and be careful for the Queen's face to be seen well , never folded or clamped as it can be considered insulting . Remember to nod if you mean "Yes" and shake your head if you mean "No". Here are only some of the tips that underline the cultural differences between our two nations

Traditional British food is important to be considered as one of the main features of British way of life and culture . It more often than not includes fish and chips and [cream tea](#) (scones, cream and jam). Tea is the [most popular beverage in the UK](#).<sup>[8]</sup> Traditional examples of [English cuisine](#) include the [Sunday roast](#); a [roasted joint](#), usually [roast beef](#), [lamb](#) or chicken, served with boiled vegetables, [fish and chips](#), [Yorkshire pudding](#) and [gravy](#).pies.<sup>[9]</sup> A prominent meal is the [full English breakfast](#)—consisting of [bacon](#), grilled tomatoes, fried bread, [black pudding](#), [baked beans](#), sausages and eggs. The English are considered well-bred, polite and tolerant who never show their emotions in public, some consider them hypocritical , others

think they can keep a stiff upper lip . Another important feature of their national character is that the English are quite a musical nation. The British national anthem "God Save the Queen". [Irish dancing](#) is popular all around the world. Britain is the country who gave the world “The Beatles” and they laid the foundations of the rock music. The [circus](#) is a traditional form of entertainment in the UK, where the circus ring was invented in 1768. [Pantomime](#) plays a prominent role in British culture during the Christmas and New Year season.<sup>[10]</sup>

[England's universities](#) include some of the highest-ranked universities in the world; the [University of Cambridge](#), [Imperial College London](#), the [University of Oxford](#) and [University College London](#) are all ranked in the global top 10. Symbols, flags and emblems occupy central role in British language and culture. The [Union Jack](#) is the [national flag of the United Kingdom](#). It's red, white and blue colours are the combination of the [red cross](#) of [Saint George](#) for England, the [saltire](#) of [Saint Andrew](#) for Scotland, and the [red saltire](#) of [Saint Patrick](#) to represent Ireland.<sup>[11]</sup>. Interesting are the floral emblems of Ireland :the [flax flower](#) and the [shamrock](#), England:the red and white rose, Wales:the [daffodil](#) and [leek](#), and Scotland:the [thistle](#).

The student of English as a Foreign language must be aware of the fact that dull and boring grammar and difficult vocabulary can be learnt in a pleasant and relaxed way if the teacher uses the modern technologies, interactive methodology of ELT, aided by computer based learning, mobile learning or web-based platform . The Internet offers us a variety of pleasant ways to practice reading and listening comprehension while seeing a film on the Internet , playing a game , interacting with an e-tutor or communicating with friends. Studying English can be turned into an amusing experience which can bring the learners a lot of joy if his/her learning styles had been defined by psycho-metry testing, he/she is given a proper preference path of accessing an online foreign language course. The online communication allows students to ask questions and be given answers. In some cases the course can be offered as a hybrid: online and offline tutoring aimed to support the student face to face . When a student accesses an online course he or she can plan , take their own

time, organize studying better. Save for considering the student's personal learning style the computer or the mobile phone takes into consideration his/her preliminary knowledge of the foreign language and the recently achieved level. Computer –based learning can save the student and the teacher time and efforts, according to the learner's individual bias-a great advantage modern technology in education can offer us. Moreover the computer-based self-assessment is impartial. It leads to better planning and raising motivation. Come to think : Nowadays it is no more that difficult to study a foreign language and be successful.

### References:

1. Kolb et all , 1989 :4,London
2. ["The cultural superpower: British cultural projection abroad"](#). Journal of the British Politics Society, Norway. Volume 6. No. 1. Winter 2011
3. Sheridan, Greg (15 May 2010). ["Cameron has chance to make UK great again"](#). *The Australian* (Sydney). Retrieved 20 May 2012.
4. Calder, Simon (22 December 2007). ["London, capital of the world"](#). *The Independent* (London).
5. ["London is the world capital of the 21st century... says New York | News"](#). *Evening Standard*. London. Retrieved 10 February 2012.
6. ["London is world capital of culture says LSE expert – 2008 – News archive – News – News and media – Home"](#). .lse.ac.uk. Retrieved 10 February 2012.
7. ["Cultural Strategy | Greater London Authority"](#). London.gov.uk. 6 September 2010. Retrieved 10 February 2012.
8. ["Still a nation of tea drinkers: More Brits enjoy a cuppa than a coffee"](#). The Mirror. Retrieved 7 March 2013
9. ["Traditional English Food Specialities"](#), TravelSignPosts.com, retrieved 5 September 2009
10. Bartram, Graham. ["British flags"](#). *The Flag Institute*. Retrieved 2007-05-02.
11. David Christopher (2002). "British Culture: An Introduction". p. 74. Routledge,