

Anna Gasienica-Byrcyn, Loyola University Chicago-Lake Shore Campus

Polish Culture in Lesson 0

Culture and traditions constitute essential elements in the process of Polish language education. The textbook *Hurra po polsku, Podręcznik studenta* by Małgorzata Małolepsza & Aneta Szymkiewicz in *Lesson 0* introduces briefly Polish phonetic system and greeting expressions without offering any follow up exercises in *Hurra po polsku. Zeszt ćwiczeń*. Thus, it is an open field for Instructors of the Elementary Polish to create cultural and phonetic resources complementing *Lesson 0*.

A presentation of catchwords linked to various thematic groups, such as: Polish first names, well known Poles (writers, artists, filmmakers, composers), Polish cities, Polish food, while practicing Polish alphabet, diacritic marks, diagraphs, consonants, oral and nasal vowel, and formation of syllables, is a basic approach of inviting students to expand their interests in the area of Polish culture and traditions.

Moreover, the use of children's poems offers an enjoyable way of learning the language. The poems written by: Broniewski, Brzechwa, Czechowicz, Hłakiewiczówna, Jachowicz, Janczarski, Konopnicka, Ostrowska, Porazińska, Rogoszówna, Szelburg-Zarębina and Tuwim represent a colorful spectrum of Polish verses strongly immersed in the Polish culture. They serve as wonderful illustrations of poetic language, every day expressions, and grammatical structures. Children's poems can be employed in *Lesson 0* for: listening exercises, reading, and recitation as an entertaining learning tool. Rhythm, repeated expressions, and the flow of poems help students to learn vocabulary words and phrases. The visual representation of a poem, a painting created by words foreshadows the meaning of the verse. Poems written in various forms, colors and painted with words arranged in short and long lines become poems/paintings that students remember visually and aurally. In addition, students can find short clips of these poems in different versions on Youtube.