TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE GLOBAL LANGUAGE CLASSROOM[1]

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ABSTRACT

The rapidly increasing use of English as a language of intercultural communication between non-native speakers means that the issues raised in this presentation will be of interest not only to students of linguistics but also to those involved in different fields of study, such as education, business and industry. The knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for successful intercultural communication have to be practiced, to be observed and discussed in the global language classroom. Mobility of people, student mobility, immigration patterns, rapid international transport, new technologies of communication, and opportunities for project participation in international teams and networks.National cultureshave a huge influence on people's values, attitudes and behaviors. People coming from different cultures have to negotiate, interact with, understand and respect the behavior and reactions of people from quite different cultures. Thus, it is very important that there is an awareness of cultural differences since multicultural groupingsare becoming more common in professional settings and elsewhere around the globe.

KEY WORDS: intercultural communication project 2030, language students.

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[1] Review paper

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly increasing use of English as a language of intercultural communication between non-native speakers means that the issues raised in this presentation will be of interest not only to students of linguistics but also to those involved in different fields of study, such as education, business and industry.The knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary for successful intercultural communication have to be practiced, to be observed and discussed in the global language classroom.Mobility of people, student mobility, immigration patterns, rapid international transport, new technologies of communication, and opportunities for project participation in international teams and networks. Europe is obviously developing its own 'international culture in some areas, even though in general, cultures retain distinctiveness. People still queue, order, argue or complain, and make friends quite differently

Language represents   the deepest manifestation of a culture and people's value systems.The assumption that what is needed for a successful intercultural communication is to learn the other's language, is not sufficient.Considering the role of cultural values in discourse, the various major function of language are stressed:

- Language as a means of identification, where we indicate group membership and make group boundaries, whether at the national, regional, local, ethnic, political or religious level
- It is the most important medium of human communication, since through language we express information, ideas, emotions, attitudes, etc.
- Language as a means of cognitive conceptual development, facilitates the creation of new concepts
- The language is an instrument of action, as certain important acts are performed purely linguistically
- It is because language performs all these functions in humans and human societies, that is so crucial

We all belong to and are molded by a series of interlocking cultures, which influence the way we view the world, make decisions and interact

with others. A number of authors define cultureas the whole way of life of a distinct people, its total set of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behavior, social habits.National cultureshave a huge influence on people's values, attitudes and behaviors. People coming from different cultures have to negotiate, interact with, understand and respect the behavior and reactions of people from quite different cultures. Thus, it is very important that there is an awareness of cultural differences since multicultural groupingsare becoming more common in professional settings and elsewhere around the globe.

Globalization is currently transforming the fundamental parameters of the post-modern world. Powerful forces of integration in all spheres of life are reconstituting the world into a single social space, creating possibilities of global identifications and shared identities - such as:customers for the same goods or services, addressees of the same messages, users of the same lingua franca amongst people far removed from one another in time and space.

The Language Students

In my teaching experience I have encountered many language students who were highly inexperienced intercultural travelers. Although their grammatical and lexical competence in the English as a foreign language may have been outstanding, they did not know how to handle cultural difference.

The material provided for this presentation is based on the methodology of data collection, covering questionnaires, interviews, field work, and observation of spontaneous authentic social interaction. Comparative methodis used to show a number of differences between English and Macedonian in the area of speech acts.At a meeting in a Macedonian institution a distinguished American guest is introduced.One of the Macedonian hosts greets the visitor cordially and offers her a seat of honor with these words:"*Mrs. Linda, please, sit! Sit!*"The word *Mrs.* is used here as a substitute for the Macedonian word *госпоѓо*, which (unlike *Mrs.*) can very well be combined with first names.

What is more interesting about the phrasing of the offer is the use of the short imperative *sit* which makes the phrase sound like a command, and in fact like a command addressed at a dog.A very informal offer could be phrased as *have a seat*, with an imperative mood, but not with a verb of action in the imperative mood.More formal offers would normally take an interrogative form:

> *Would you like to sit down?*
> *Won't you sit down?*
> *Will you sit down?*
> *Sit down, won't you?*

Significantly, English language has developed some special grammatical devices in which the interrogative form is normally used not for asking but for making an offer, a suggestion or a proposal.The deep routed habit of acknowledging possible differences between individual points of view is particularly clearly reflected in the English tag questions. (Wierzbicka, 1985).Seen from a Macedonian point of view, English speech is characterized byan abundant presence of tag questionshighly diversified in form and function.

> *Close the door, will you.*
> *Close the door, won't you.*
> *Close the door, could you.*
> *Close the door, can't you.*
> *Close the door, why don't you.*
> *Close the door, why can't you.*
> *Close the door, would you.*
> *Lovely day-trip, isn't it?*
> *Isn't it nice?*
> *Lovely, isn't it?*
> Macedonian speech acts
> *Така ли?* (true?)
> *Зарем не?*(yes?)

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Не?(no?)

Добро?(good?)

If these couple of words were used nearly as often as English tag questions are, Macedonian speech would sound grotesquely repetitive.The English strategy of using auxiliary verbs in any combinations of moods, tenses and persons – as tags, ensure great formal variety of tag questions.This allows them to be used much more frequently than the three, or four Macedonian tag words could be used.Basically tag questions express an expectation that the addressee will have to agree with the speaker, but the very need to voice this expectation again and again signals constant awareness of a possibility of differences of opinion, of point of view. The very fact that tag questions have come to play such a major role in English seems to reflect the same cultural attitudes which have led to the expansion of interrogative forms elsewhere and to the restrictions on the use of imperative.The range of situations where speakers of Macedonian would invite confirmation is not nearly as wide because Macedonian cultural tradition does not foster constant attention to other people's voicesother people's points of viewand tolerates forceful expression of personal views and personal feelings without any consideration for other people's views and feelings.

In Macedonian cultural tradition arm hospitality is expressed as much as by the use of diminutives as it is by the 'hectoring' style of offers and suggestions. Characteristically, the food items offered to the guest are often referred to by the host by their diminutive names.

Земи си од гравчето! Земи, касни си, не срами се!

Сега, кафенце доаѓа!

The diminutive praises the quality of the food and minimizes the quantity pushed onto the guest's plate. The speaker insinuates:*'don't resist! it is a small thing I'm asking you to do – and a good thing!*

Would you like some more dear – little-beans? You must!

Now, the coffee – Dim.-Dim., is coming!

In Macedonian, the diminutive and the imperative work hand in hand in the cordial attempt to get the guest to eat more.In English, certainly the

cultural style of such offers is very different from that of *Would you like some more?* But the difference cannot be described in terms of politeness.Rather, it has to be described in terms of different cultural traditions, and ultimately different hierarchies of cultural values.

Dichotomy directness/indirectness

ESL students should be aware of the fact that in English people avoid making direct, forceful comments as they avoid asking direct, forceful questions or making direct, forceful requests.They hedge – the use of expressions such as *sort of, rather* fulfills a function similar to that of interrogative devices.Whereas English is fond of understatement and hedges, by contrast, Macedonian tends to emphasize rather than understate, thus opinions are expressed directly, forcefully. An absence of an intimate T-form of address sets English apart from other European languages. The English *you,* though very democratic, can be seen as a distance-building device. Macedonian has T-V contrast, thus allows the speaker to get psychologically close to the addressee.

An American visitor would find it difficult to understand the ritual of *мезе*when invited to a Macedonian home. *Мезе* 'time spent in every day conversation topics accompanied by drinking (usually home-made spirits), salad, appetizers'…American concept of time differs from Macedonian one.

Lexical evidence – lexical difference

Cultural awareness is present in lexical evidence through which objectivism is seen as a cultural value. In English, the way of referring to oneself as in the expression *this country, in* Macedonian it would be inconceivable to refer to one's own native land, one's *татковина*as *оваа земја* 'this country'. The Macedonian expression 'this country' could only be used with respect to a foreign country. The word *privacy* which has no equivalent in Macedonian, is an instance of a cultural taboo

characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon culture and can be seen as another strategy for building a little protective wall around every individual. The word *compromise* in Englishhas negative connotation, whereas in Macedonian it expresses positive connotation. In Macedonian, *бескомпромисен*'without compromise' said for someone who would never accept a compromise is emphatically positive, a word of high praise, like *heroic, noble.*

A new approach to teach intercultural communication in a classroom-conclusion remarks

The above elaborated examples speak of a need to teach intercultural communication in a novel approach. Since the students are active participants of the learning processes in the classroom it is very important to contribute to the development of their individual features as active learners. Therefore the role of the teacher is to provide students with abilities to express their own critical thinking. According to Gojkov (2011) what is today pointed out in common resolutions, conclusions and otherdocuments issued by the bodies of the European Union is that education has amore emphasized critical responsibility to transfer values to young people andhelp them make not only wise but humane and moral decisions. Students should be provided with possibilities to build a system ofappropriate values, to be trained to planand anticipate the consequences of their own decisions and actions, implying tolerance,listening skills, and problem solving skills.

The use of information and communication technologies contributes to the improvement of the learning process. There are different attempts with innovative approaches towards developing more interactive and communicative learning processes in classes. Among them the project Teaching 2030 with multiple beneficiaries under the ERASMUS+ Program (2017-1-AT01-KA203-034984), is an example where eight European Universities participate in development of innovative approach for the learning process in higher education that will contribute to enhance, both, the students' and professors' skills. The importance of

intercultural communication is identified and recognized as crucial part during the learning process.

The students should learn to be aware of cultural differences and be prepared to deal with them in a non-judgmental way. A worthwhile purpose for any teacher is to **….** It is more than obvious that cultural clashes of this kind cannot be completely eliminated, but they can be minimized by enlightened, well-planned multicultural education. In a multi-ethnic global community the problem of teaching intercultural communication is not a purely academic one.It is a problem of immense practical significance. There is a potential for language teaching which can contribute to learners' better understanding of others and themselves, of other cultures and societies and their own.

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