

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The great enemy of clear language is insincerity.

George Orwell

Global migrations in the 21st century crucially determined changes in cultural and language space, established new international alliances, and as a result led to rapid increase in the number of interethnic conflicts. International business also made its contribution into developing new challenges. All that requires ‘*upgrading*’ educational systems in the majority of the countries. That is why studies in cross-cultural communication received its present-day status.

In our country modern tendencies in education require better training of future specialists in all spheres of economy, where a good knowledge of foreign languages is not an option but a necessity. A qualified specialist should speak several languages, should be ready to communicate with people from different countries at the appropriate level in order to succeed in doing business or in maintaining interpersonal relationships. A future specialist should also possess certain cultural knowledge – i.e. be prepared to deal with diversity of cultural, religious and other identities. Thus a foreign language is not only a means of interpersonal but of international, intercultural communication.

A good knowledge of foreign languages, cultural awareness become the integral part of professional competence because it gives the possibility to obtain new and important information, to work productively, to develop as a professional, to realize personal ambitions and to change the sphere of activity. A most important role in educating future specialists belongs to teachers of foreign languages, whose work becomes more and more complex as they are not only to teach grammar rules and vocabulary but also to be able to easily understand diversity of our poly-cultural world, its values, to introduce this knowledge into everyday teaching process.

Regretfully the analyses of present day teaching practices shows that the level of cross-cultural competence does not always correspond to modern requirements - the case is that students may possess a good knowledge of languages (linguistic competence), but their level of social and inter-social competence is not satisfactory. Sometimes it causes problems during cross cultural communication with people of different cultural background.

All students are to understand the importance to focus on the concept of culture which incorporates many constituencies: values, rules (written and unwritten), ideas, religious beliefs, works of art, etc. It also means the way the people behave, the actions they take. It even includes facial expressions and body language. Such key cultural phenomenon as '*face*' with the notion of power, social status, family background and relations is symbolic in many countries; to save '*face*' is of vital importance.

The goal of foreign language teachers has become maintaining the atmosphere of equality, mutual respect and trust in the classroom, especially a multi-cultural one, giving equal opportunities to everybody to realize their ambitions and aims. For students it is essential to see the possible problems and conflicts which can arise due to poor understanding; to be ready that their efforts to achieve mutual agreement may not always lead to success while teachers should be aware that students of different culture need more time to understand and respond the teacher's message and plan their classes correspondingly.

Awareness of one's own cultural identity is essential for overcoming national stereotypes, understanding that there are no such things as the 1st class culture and the 2nd class culture, though different cultures form people's pictures of the world in a diversity of ways.

'It goes without saying that foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers, having the ability to experience and analyse both the home and target cultures'[1:73].

While working in multi-cultural environment teachers should keep in mind that in some cultures it is a '*must*' to speak slowly and carefully choose the words in order

to be taken seriously as a reliable person and to establish good and lasting relationships. It is also necessary to adjust the timing of speech, tone and pitch of the voice. Before teaching a new multi-cultural class the teacher should elaborate his/her own communication strategy for this very group of students keeping in mind the diversity of their cultures. It is advisable to have at hand a list of several important rules (or notes) which will remind some most useful techniques and ways, like the following:

- address all the members of the class in the same way;
- do not use slang/jargon words and expressions;
- be always polite and respectful;
- do not ask improper and personal questions ;
- be aware of modality of your speech;
- take into consideration body language and facial expression;
- remember that in many cultures there are gender differences.

“Основным результатом коммуникации является взаимное понимание.”[2:3] In order to achieve this goal training of foreign language teachers can be successful when certain conditions are observed. They may be formulated as following: 1.culturally oriented approach, 2.elaboration of the assessment criteria for teacher’s qualification in cross- cultural communication, 3.thoroughly developed programmes.

“Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them.”[3: 1]

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