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CHALLENGES OF TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The present article is part of a course that intends to make the students familiar with cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal communication, pluralism and individualism of the people belonging to a wide range of cultural backgrounds, taking into account the values provided by anthropology, high and popular culture, sociology, business, international relations. The course tries to identify the ways that people behave in terms of individualism and collectivism in multilingual and multicultural societies. The present article focused on teaching communication in intercultural contexts represents one of the activities of the Vir_Teach (A virtual solution for comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language teachers in Europe) project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme; Parteners: Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University (Romania), University of Burgos (Spain), UC Leuven Limburg (Belgium), Szczecinska Szkola Wyzsza (Poland) and Universidade Lusófona, (Portugal).

Keywords: *intercultural communication, euphemisms; political correctness; teachers' training.*

Introduction. Globalization has become integrated in all social, economic, political, cultural environments and it has changed the way people interact. Technology has led to different codes of behavior for almost all the people in the world. The process of globalization is characterized by intensive intercultural interactions that may lead to communication deficits, thus national languages acquire unspecified culture bound features, verbal communication is accompanied by culture-specific nonverbal signals that might be misunderstood by the counterparts. Taking into account these reasons the dialogue between the representatives of different cultures might fail, thus the concept and discipline of intercultural communication becomes prevalent. By using the nonverbal channels, the teachers of foreign languages teach foreign linguacultures, a concept enclosing verbal and nonverbal sign systems. The word was coined by the American linguist anthropologist Paul Friedrich (1998) and later it became languaculture as it was first used by the American anthropologist Michael Agar in his book, Language Shock: Understanding the culture of conversation (1996).

Karen Risager speaks about the concept of linguaculture (or languaculture) as an offshoot of a cultural movement originating in the German-speaking areas of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, a movement that "emphasized that language should be

seen as intimately related to nation, people, and culture. During the nineteenth century, this idea gained a National-Romantic form stressing the intimate relations between the national language and the national culture. Since the 1990s, however, this national paradigm has been questioned because of the rise of interest in globalization and transnationality, and this has led to a rethinking of the relationship between language and culture. The concept of linguaculture has been an important element in this recent development, and the term has been spreading in various fields of language studies such as language teaching and learning, and sociocultural linguistics." [Risager, 7]

Theoretical Approaches. Intercultural communication is communication between people with differing cultural identities. One reason we should study intercultural communication is to foster greater self-awareness (…), intercultural relationships are formed between people with different cultural identities and include friends, romantic partners, family, and coworkers. Intercultural relationships have benefits and drawbacks. Some of the benefits include increasing cultural knowledge, challenging previously held stereotypes, and learning new skills [Martin & Nakayama, 2010].

The most important goal of intercultural communication is to make people aware of the cross-cultural boundaries and the similarities or the differences within these spaces. Marilyn Leask says that "traditionally, two definitions of culture are distinguished, one coming from the humanities, the other from the social sciences. In a discussion of culture, teaching in the context of modern foreign languages education at advanced level, she argues: that the (one) focuses on the way a social group represents itself and others through its material production, be they works of art, literature, social institutions, or artefacts of everyday life, and the mechanism for their reproduction and preservation through history" [Kramsch 1996: 2]. The other refers to the attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of that community" [Kramsch 1996: 2]. (…) Whichever definition of culture one might adopt, and the two definitions are not necessarily exclusive, it soon becomes clear, that given their characteristics (…), new technologies have a considerable impact on groups of people, how they present themselves, and communicate, and share ideas, thoughts, memories, attitudes, beliefs etc. with each other" [Leask 2012: 19].

Johan le Roux analyzes the effective formal education that should be about values, assumptions, feelings, perceptions and relationships and "no education can take place without interpersonal communication. Effective teaching can thus be qualified in terms of relating effectively in the classroom. Effective education thus also presupposes effective communication skills. Communication as the means and indeed the medium of education is therefore crucial to school success in culturally diverse education. Teachers should therefore be sensitive to the potentially problematic outcomes of intercultural communication in the culturally diverse class. Communication may be a useful source of intercultural knowledge and mutual enrichment between culturally diverse students if managed proactively by the teacher [le Roux 2010: 37].

Recently, Michael Byram and Manuela Wagner argue that "language teaching has long been associated with teaching in a country or countries where a target language is spoken, but this approach is inadequate. In the contemporary world, language teaching has a responsibility to prepare learners for interaction with people of other cultural backgrounds, teaching them skills and attitudes as well as knowledge" [Byram, Wagner 2018: 140].

Case Study: Euphemisms in Intercultural Communication. Teaching in intercultural contexts is a challenge for teachers of foreign languages who have to be

careful in approaching different linguistic or cultural issues. They have to make the students aware of the differences of the people belonging to a wide range of cultural backgrounds while teaching

The American Heritage Dictionary defines euphemism as "the act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive." Edward Hirsch goes further and explains that euphemism has its roots in a Greek word meaning the "use of auspicious words". The poetic use of euphemism, substituting one word for another, using words of good omen, probably has its origins in magical practice. (...) Euphemisms sometimes provide away of voicing something – erotic, religious, political – that cannot be said or written directly. Euphemism gets around the censors, which can be personal, social, or political sometimes internal, sometimes external" [Hirsch, 222].

The use of a particular kind of euphemism is currently referred to as political correctness or being PC. These are expressions, which relate to people and society, and political correctness is a concern not to use language that might be perceived as offensive by particular members of society.

In Forbidden Words: Taboo and the Censoring of Language (2006), Keith Allan and Kate Burridge analyze the "visual euphemisms that replace objects or concepts that are considered unpleasant. They say that visual euphemisms are commonplace; for example, low-calorie salad dressing (usually oil-free) is presented in shapely, slender-wasted bottles. The shape, the cleverly altered spelling and reversed coloring on some of the packaging sends out the message non-fattening loud and clear."

"While teaching politically correct language," says Maryna Tsehelska, "a teacher should clearly differentiate between sexist language, pejorative language and taboo language." Sexist language is a term that labels the use of male-dominated phrases suggesting that members of one sex are less able, intelligent, and skillful (...); pejorative language is the use of words or phrases disapproving or suggesting that something is no good or of no importance (labeling nationalities, aged people, etc.); taboo language includes words or phrases which are likely to offend somebody." [Tsehelska, 23]. Avoiding these words and phrases means using politically correct language.

Besides all these differences, intercultural communication asks for knowledge of the culture, historical events, cultural stereotypes, values, gender and social dynamics. However, the overwhelming majority of current research on gender and communication finds that while there are differences between how men and women communicate, there are far more similarities [Allen, 2011].

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ANALYZING SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES: DEFINITION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper aims to define the phenomenon under study and outline its key features in relation to language, sexuality, and gender, as well as some pedagogical implications. Drawing upon interdisciplinary research, this analysis begins with an overview of approaches to understanding sexual identity, its nature and definitions. Finally, based on the current literature analysis, the paper discusses relation of sexual identity to language and communication, and provides the author's ideas for pedagogical implications of sexual identity construction issues.

Key words: *sexuality, sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, identity.*

Ця робота має на меті визначити явище сексуальної ідентичності та окреслити його ключові особливості стосовно мови, сексуальності та статі, а також розглянути окремі педагогічні аспекти. Спираючись на міждисциплінарні дослідження, аналіз починається з огляду підходів до розуміння сексуальної ідентичності, її природи та дефініцій. Нарешті, на основі аналізу літератури, у статті обговорюється зв'язок сексуальної ідентичності з мовою та спілкуванням, пропонуються авторські ідеї щодо педагогічних аспектів проблеми побудови сексуальної ідентичності.

Ключові слова: сексуальність, сексуальна ідентичність, сексуальна орієнтація, стать, ідентичність.

Эта статья направлена на определение феномена сексуальной идентичности и очертание его основных характеристик в отношении языка, сексуальности и пола, а также некоторых педагогических аспектов. Анализ, основанный на междисциплинарных исследованиях, начинается с обзора подходов к пониманию сексуальной идентичности, ее природы и определений. На основе анализа литературы, в статье обсуждается связь сексуальной идентичности с языком и общением, а также приводятся авторские идеи относительно педагогических