UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CULTURAL STUDIES

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Dialogism in a cross-cultural communication

Case study: Erasmus+

(FINAL THESIS)

Rijeka, rujan 2018

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ABSTRACT

In the modern times, we are increasingly confronted with members of other nations and cultures. It is logical to reconsider our approach since we meet each other at all levels of life - business, academic, leisure, etc. There are differences, which sometimes seem insurmountable, in the communication of different nations and cultures, but the following quote sums up the general idea of what this thesis is about and how I think those differences can actually be surmounted:

> "Everywhere and with every step, on each or without any occasion, with or without reason, it is necessary to ridicule the most firmly accepted judgements and to state paradoxes. And then - one will see what happens" (Bauman, 1991:82).

For example, words by itself do not have an intention so firstly we can think about how we use them in each context. A sea can be: fish habitat, death for sailors, place for leisure and swimming, salt container, national border, metaphor for something abundant, food source, a subject of inspiration, and so on, but on the base line, a "sea" by itself as a word is nothing more than a signifier for natural salty water mass on Earth.

Therefore my question is why and how does communication happens beyond words?

Before we say anything, we are also forming thoughts through dialogue. When we engage in a dialogue, be it with a person, a form of a literature or something else, it is always a dialogue of more factors than we are aware of – in general, of multiple texts within the contexts. We communicate in concepts and images, thus we should examine the human brain as software, whereas interaction is based on social settings. Knowing that someone is of another culture, we approach them as an operating system that we do not understand (know nothing about) and its settings can be absolutely different from ours. Thankfully, we are all capable of learning different ways of communication, we only need volition.

KEY WORDS: dialogism, consciousness (social, collective), context, society, culture, (creative and productive) communication, language, meaning, cultural patterns, stereotypes, self, Other, experience

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

This study has an attempt to investigate the way people engage in a dialogue. Moreover, it will try to discuss a communication in a cross-cultural environment, through the examples and experiences of studying abroad through Erasmus+ projects. Every cross-cultural communication is an encounter of two or more microcosms[1] of cultures where very fraction of communication has potential of mediating certain aspects of a culture. Theory of dialogism best serves understanding and improvement of such communication. According to the theory, meanings are inter-subjective and constructed in a context. They are always made through cooperation of the communication and the context. I start with the assumption that, even if we have different socio-cultural backgrounds and speak different languages, it is possible to find a 'common language' and moreover, to have a 'successful dialogue', which I will try to define through the thesis.

I find the proposed research of a high importance, since we increasingly encounter different cultures on a daily basis, but we are not fully prepared for the dialogue given the differences people tend to resist. This is no surprise since we are constantly bombarded with all kinds of terrible news: terrorism, dangers, stereotypes, hate, west against the east – north against the south, and vice versa, religions against religions, conflicting worldviews, and so on. Abstractly speaking, it is important to prevent the flow of negative thoughts directed towards the Other just because they are not Self. The only way to succeed is to comprehend the Other, but also to understand the power of a successful dialogue. These capitalized concepts will be clarified through writing, but in the deductive spirit of this paper, I will introduce the practical part first.

METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire, I made for the purpose of this thesis, was intended for students who have participated in Erasmus+ Exchange session for (at least) one semester (4-6 months) and all responses refer to that period. The questionnaire is structured so that it requires shorter or longer answers, depending on the question. The questionnaire is less intended for statistical data, and more for personal testimonials of the participants. Given that the questions are of a somewhat

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[1] One as a sample for all

private character and require eventful answers, the questionnaire was filled by colleagues from the university of different nationalities from which three are Greeks, two Italians, one Hungarian, Indonesian, Mexican, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian and Turkish. Although I mention nationalities, they are not so important for the purpose of this survey, yet to cover more different perspectives. I will implement the answers to the following clarified questions through the text:

1. "What is you nationality?"

This question is asked for the reason of easier organizing the subjects and more importantly, to maximize different perspectives and mindsets of responses. As far as the difference in nationality is irrelevant in terms of the ultimate goal of the conclusion, that is to say that a 'successful dialogue' is possible, despite the different states they come from, inasmuch it is important to be aware of their cultural circumstances affecting the construction of identity, opinion and a general approach to life.

2. "What is the nationality of people you've spent most of your time with? (If you can, name at least 3)"

The purpose of this question is to detect whether there is a pattern in surrounding thyself with certain nationalities, but the volume of only 12 respondents may be too small for the pattern.

3. "How many people have you approximately met?" and "How many people are you still in contact with?"

These questions are in the same manner as the previous one. The intent was to ascertain the sociability of certain nationalities, but also to get an insight into the general tendency of people's social affiliation in an international environment.

4. "What is a one word for the overall feeling of your period abroad?"

This brought me to the answers with which I wanted to get short insights that would summon the experience as a reflection to the previous 4 questions.

5. "Do you think like you have been introduced to, or you have improved or gained, the feeling of the "European spirit"?".

Given that the main feature of Erasmus is that it is organized by the European Union, which initially has the idea of erasing borders, suggests the spirit of freedom, encounter of diversity, attainment of equality and advocacy of diversity, it is important to be aware of its characteristics. As it is written on their website, the values that are being promoted are: "Human dignity, Freedom, Democracy, Equality, Rule of law, Human rights" (European Union, Europa.eu). With this question, I want to get an insight into whether the respondents have acquired the sense of belonging to that community with these specific values promoted.

6. "Have you participated in any social or academic activity where you were sitting in a circle, rather than classically sitting in rows?" and "Was there more of an individual or a team work encouraged?"

In environments like teaching, lectures and other organized social activities where earlier mentioned values are promoted, sitting in a circle instead of the classic lines and team work is being advocated.

7. "Can you say that you have changed in some way after studying abroad? If yes, what is the most prominent feature of yourself that has changed?"

As the answers showed, each of the respondents noted a change in some way, most of them in terms of mind opening.

8. "Have you ever felt that, the fact you are a not a native English speaker, deprived you of the possibility of getting close with someone?", "Have you ever been engaged in communication where you had to retreat because you didn't understand an interlocutor?", "Have you improved your vocabulary?" and "Did you feel limited in expressing thoughts and feelings in English?"

Questions based on the premise that communication is constructed around the objects which is not being transferred only by limiting knowledge of language, but also, as I will later describe with the communicative constructionism, through interaction in a context. Communication is a two-way creative process that encompasses various settings belonging to the theory of dialogue explained later in the thesis.

9. The next four questions are gravitating around one main point which is the problem of stereotypes: "What are, if there are any, most common stereotypes you have heard about

your own nationality?", "Were there any moments you felt like you became aware of a feature of your own culture you were not aware of, and what was it?", "Is there any stereotype you can point out, which you disapproved about some culture?" and "Is there any stereotype you can point out, which you approved about some culture?".

In the meeting, and indeed, in everyday life conducted in an intercultural environment, by itself the question of stereotypes is raised. It is also a common topic of informal talks. As I will explain later, the stereotypes are not necessarily negative by themselves, but in any case, it is important to be aware of their impact on the structure of thought, whatever it is.

10. "Have you been warned of any dangers by your parents, friends or relatives prior to your period abroad?" and "Have you experienced any dangers and what were they about?"

These are the questions set for the reason that I see dangers as the incidental consequences of stereotypes, or of the false representations of reality due to the fear of the different, or of what is not I.

11. "Over time, living abroad and encountering other cultures, did you start feeling distant from your own culture? If yes, in what way?" and "Have you had problems with the adaptation to your old way of life?"

are set because I am interested in whether the intercultural environment could, if we feel good about it, in a way permanently change our own habits and the mindset.

12. The final question is somewhat longer, but has provided quite interested answers which, in a picturesque way, showed different structuring of a reality based on a culture inputs: "Can you write a phrase, a saying or an idiom that you use in your native language but directly translate it into English, for the following situations (Croatian phrases translated to English are in brackets as an example): 1.When being very thirsty (dying out of thirst), 2.When being very drunk (drunk as a mother/or a pig), 3.When some place is very far away and unreachable (behind the gods legs), 4.To have a nap (to kill an eye), 5.When someone is confused, inattentive (like a fly with no head), 5.When you finally discover the point of the problem (there is a rabbit in that bush), 6.When you missed a chance (grandmother has passed with cakes).

DIALOGISM THEORY

In order to be taken seriously and to some extent approach the scientific circle, a dialogism theory has to escape ideal signifying, thus, there is a need to „underpin the empirical description and explanation of human action and language use in real mundane life" (Linell, 2009:11) with the help of certain propositions called „axiomatic" or „dialogical principles" (ibid, 11). Central to dialogism is an individual meaning-making where individual is never fully autonomous entity, but is always deeply implemented in social, and that is why "dialogism denies the autonomous subject who thinks, speaks and acts in and by himself" (ibid, 13).

Linell prefers to address dialogism as a relatively consistent academic scheme based on different approaches with analogies to the somewhat central idea gravitating around the dialogism settings. Dialogism is considered to be a schemed theory of knowledge gathered around analysts who, more or less, agree about main premises on the nature of the human knowledge: "Dialogism is an epistemological (…) framework; it concerns the most general (…) categories in terms of which 'dialogically' (…) minded researchers think about human action, cognition and communication" (Linell, 2009:7). It is important to distinct "dialogicality" from the "dialogism", because, former unlike latter indicates basic aspect of peoples state and order, moreover, it is a kind of rhetoric which "refers to some essences of the human condition, notably that our being in the world is thoroughly interdependent with the existence of others" (ibid, 7). Thus, "if dialogicality is a property of the subject matter of the human and cultural sciences, then dialogism is an epistemological framework that takes dialogicality systematically into consideration" (ibid, 7). As "dialogism" is all but homogeneous uniform theory, its premises should be closely examined in order to fully comprehend it and grasp its understanding and meaning. Its most important hypothetical marks are the following:

INTERACTIONISM

Synergy between one and Other is inevitable, be it in contact with a written medium, a person or a piece of art; all of them are dialogues and engage in contact with Other(s). "Communication (…) involves interaction, especially interpersonal interaction" unlike "cognition, roughly to be defined as intelligent or non-random coping with the world (…),

also involves interaction with the world, albeit not always (…) with other human beings" (ibid, 14).

CONTEXTUALISM

Rhetoric always has a situation it belongs to; a piece always belongs to a whole in some way, more or less (in)directly and the relationship is consistently mutual. Making impressions within a broader meaning implies "that sense-making process and situated discourse are always interdependent with contexts" (ibid, 16). To make sense of an "I", I need to reflect to "You".

COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCTIONISM

This one deals with a relation of thought and meaning, language and communication; they are interdependent. Words are not just grammatical constructs for real objects; although real world exists in nature by itself, it is still there for us to make meaning out of it and to sign objects with names and meanings. A certain object belonging to some environment is assigned a meaning by combining language, thought and interaction counting on the existing conditions. Communicative constructionism adheres to "the meaning of discourse and texts(…)accomplished in and through the active and formative sense-making which is part of the linguistic, cognitive and communicative processes themselves" (ibid, 19). Thus, an interactive communication comes out-of, and -is in the words. The basic assumption is that a genetically ruled human is a social, historical and cultural being interconnected with others in the same manners, while, at the same time, owns a personal awareness.

SEMIOTIC MEDIATION

Dialogue is based on interaction and context, but what are they based on? There must be some kind of an arrangement on which the communication rests, and that is a "semiotic system" which is based on language and other means of communicating. It is not only

here that dialogue is coming from or through; there are more patterns depending on the mindset, knowledge, worldview, starting from the basic daily activities.[2]

It is obvious that dialogue is not merely communication between two interlocutors; dialogue is a philosophical concept, a symbol for a way of understanding linguistic expression, thought and awareness.

Opposing dialogism to monologism is the key to understanding both, not only in their differences, but in the sole notion of the juxtaposition as it is only possible to understand Self in contrast to the Other.

LANGUAGE

It is safe to say that language's basic ground purpose is communication because a "verbal interaction is the basic reality of language" (Vološinov, 1973:94). However, in order to see the broad picture of a phenomena as a language, the interdisciplinary approach is necessary. Due to complexity of language as a system of communication, it seems logical to grasp it with the maximum number of disciplines:

> "Language is not a monolithic whole, and from a biological perspective may be better seen as a "bag of tricks" pieced together via a process of evolutionary tinkering. To the extent that this multi-component perspective is correct, any attempt to single out just one aspect of language as "core" or "central" is a mistake" (Fitch, 2010:5).

It could be said that digitalization, globalization and the cosmopolitan spirit of modern generation[3] has made national language less important; as long as two interlocutors have common

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[2] According to Linell (2009), there are also: "Perceptual mediation", awareness of the surrounding; "Practical mediation", the ways of what is considered to be rational and efficient behavior; "Linguistic (semiotic) mediation", establishing terms and concepts through language; "Artifact-based mediation", mainly technology.

[3] Generation as an entity is fueled with the current wide socio-cultural context. If we understand generation on a global level, it can make it quite general and banal in leaving out to much of individual perspectives in comparison to locally understood generation which would take more individuals into account. As the analysis gets closer to the specific social group, there are less exclusion possibilities. However, the characteristic of the smallest social group we can call a generation, at least to some extent, refers to the general global picture of a specific generation. Considering the globalization impacts, all the happenings are a consequence of central economic and political happenings. Every generation is a culture bubble for itself, has its own worldview, patterns of behavior, language properties (use of specific words through generations). Mannheim (1972) says it is important to consider that a generation is not a social construct, but should be examined in wider social and historical context. Nevertheless, each generation has its own way of language use. Bakhtin talks about generational language: "In any given historical

interest or other type of social circumstances, they will find a way of understanding, whether by body language, commonly targeted points of interest, and so on. For example, liking the same book, music, type of art, or other, is a big step in mutual understanding. Since the certain, for example, music genre (which would then be "verbal performance in sound") carries a set of meanings, suggested ways of behaviours, world-views, mindsets, historical development, references to specific authors and their ideologies means that its admirers share the similar point of view and that is what instantly connects them. Utterance is only a small piece of a mind flow coming out loud as an expression of the shared thoughts, figuratively speaking:

> "The outwardly actualized utterance is an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech; the dimensions and forms of this island are determined by the particular situation of the utterance and its audience" (Vološinov, 1973:96).

According to Bakhtin, a language is never deprived of its socio-historical context. To talk about language means to understand it as "centripetal" force which takes all of its constitutive environment and "actualizing forces that were in the process of creating a life for language" (Bakhtin, 1982:270). That centripetal dynamic then "serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world"(ibid, 270). Grammar serves as a "stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language" (ibid, 271),so if a non-native English speaker speaks broken English, often so radically broken and enriched with the native speakers own language accent, how is he being understood? By what means? Is the understanding based on mistake tolerance? On understanding the idea behind a language? Mind reading? A context? Logic behind merging broken parts of speech? Body language? Probably all together, and more.

One of the ways we are becoming aware of thought construction is by practicing a foreign language because at the same time we are learning about ourselves and the others. Apart from serving as a way of communication, language is an important agent in the design of cognitive abilities and understanding the world. Since there are several thousand languages in the world we can only imagine how many different ways of thinking and perception of reality exist. Language

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moment of verbal-ideological life, each generation at each social level has its own language; moreover, every age group has as a matter of fact its own language, its own vocabulary, its own particular accentual system that, in their turn, vary depending on social level, academic institution (the language of the cadet, the high school student, the trade school student are all different languages) and other stratifying factors…Those social generational languages thus… may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically" (Bakhtin, 1982:290-291).

is a unique system and mode of communication that only in human language forms a complex system of rules and characters. Through and in language, we create knowledge, which is what makes us different from animals:

> "(...) at none of the systems of animal communication studied so far has been observed the existence of semantic relations and structures (...) only in human language there are complex logical-semantic relations embedded in the meaning of the word (...) the establishment of meaning relations through the metaphor pervades every human language, but it has not been recorded in animal communication systems (..)" (Matasović, 2011:39).

INDEXICALITY

As Sapir (1929b) argues, language is a guide to the scientific study of a social reality; he says it is not just a tool, but an unconscious agent of constructing reality. Language is embroiled in a broad socio-cultural context and is „caught up in, and ultimately constituted by, indexical processes and modalities beyond itself"(Nakassis, 2016:331). Language is not self-ruling, independent entity since it „splits and perforates itself, continually displacing itself beyond its putative borders"(ibid, 331). „Every indexical sign is entangled with its material contexts (present and past) and thus is never fully extricable from them, if also never fully determined by them"(Derrida, 1988 in ibid, 332). Indexicality, because it points to the importance of context and ideas beyond language, is one of the crucial principles in linguistics: „language is cross-culturally an ethnographic object of cultural conceptualization, conjured and mediated by those ideologies that, ironically always imbricate the linguistic with the non-linguistic" (ibid, 334).

TACIT COMMUNICATION - BEYOND THE LANGUAGE
HETEROGLOSSIA

Bakhtin (1982) emphasizes the importance of the "internal dialogue" which is inseparable from the meaning it constitutes, and is not just a mere literary form of expression.

One of the most distinct Bakhtin's concepts is heteroglossia; it is an inner dialogue which, for example in a verbal communication with a non-native English speaker, can be recognized in, for instance, direct translations. You can discover the way a person thinks about a certain thing and

how they construct thoughts. Also, in a communication between two or more people heteroglossia manifests in each of the interlocutors mind. They all have some expectations and intentions while having conversations. Heteroglossia in a novel can be compared to real dialogues between people: "Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized" (Bakhtin, 1982:324). While there is an out-loud conversation, at the same time there is an inner personal dialogue processing information about cultural background in each of the interlocutor's minds serving the purpose of mutual understanding and more or less smooth continuation of a conversation:

> "And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they -as it were- know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialogue know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other…a potential dialogue is embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages" (ibid, 324).

Communication is thoroughly infused into a socio-cultural context. When two individual interlocutors encounter, they express "surface upheavals of the untamed elements in social heteroglossia, surface manifestations of those elements that play on such individual oppositions, make them contradictory, saturate their consciousness and discourses with a more fundamental speech diversity" (ibid, 326).

INTUITION AND UNCONSCIOUS PATTERNING

In what way and to what extent is intuition socially determined rather than individual and instinctive, and what is its connection with patterns in language? Individual is a carrier of the meaning of society. Although "social" and "individual" are contrastive, ultimately extremes meet each other. It does not mean that every individual depicts society or that society as a whole depicts every individual, but if we are about to "eliminate certain aspects of such individual behavior ... and to hold on ... to certain norms of conduct which have been developed by human beings in association with one another and which tend to perpetuate themselves by tradition, we speak of "social behavior" (Sapir, 1995:116). According to Sapir, individual and social behavior in the core is inseparable, the difference is "in terms of organization" (ibid, 116). All behavior is

highly determined by environment in which a person is located, as the giraffes have a long neck for the purpose of reaching high branches, so is the human behavior adapted to circumstances where "social tradition is constantly suggesting to us from the very moment of our birth" (ibid, 119). Sapir emphasizes the importance of function and form. Although it is easy to distinguish them in theory, they are interwoven in use and it is always important to perceive "social behavior from a formal as well as from a functional point of view" (ibid, 121). An important layer of intercultural communication is therefore unconscious patterning. It is implemented in everyday human behavior that is not subject to conscious actions and becomes automatic as a result of such normal and common sense use. Maybe grammar, with the "value in so far as society has tacitly agreed to see it as symbols of reference" is the best example. We use it without being aware of using it. But yet, there was time when we had to learn it to later successfully use it. As little kids we start speaking, but also with no knowledge of the ways we are constructing sentences. Just later in primary school we learn what are the parts of stories, sentences, words, letters and sounds we use to convey some meaning. It could be for a reason why "relations between the elements of experience which serve to give them their form and significance are more powerfully "felt" or "intuited" than consciously perceived" (ibid, 122). Also, as a result of a "very delicately nuanced feeling of subtle relations" handshake may be an automatic movement of a hand while officially greeting a person of respect, but for Japanese it might be egregiously repulsive. For example, a Croatian can often hear that grammar of his native language is too complicated because it has 7 cases, but the average Croatian will never really understand it because he had learned the language more intuitively than, say, the Italian who is trying to learn Croatian. It is equally applicable to understanding cultural patterns which leads us to revelation to what extent "one is being impelled by strict loyalty to forms of behavior that one can feel with the utmost nicety, but can state only in the vaguest and most approximate fashion" (ibid, 123). For Sapir, language is "free and necessary, in the sense in which all artistic productions are" which puts emphasis on the creative use and its various manifestations throughout the world. Therefore, cultural patterns are so profoundly and thoroughly penetrating the psychology of social behavior that it is logical for them to function at an unconscious level. Everyone is free to discover the settings of their behavior, thinking, language, gesture, and all other aspects of being, which are subject to cultural patterning, but Sapir considers "it is useless and even mischievous for the individual to carry the conscious analysis of his cultural patterns around with him" (ibid, 141) like it is necessary for a

human organism to direct and organize its own functioning, and to relieve a man of constant thinking about, say, breathing, which is fortunately happening automatically.

COMMUNICATION AS RULE

Suppose a word is a medium of a communication. What can be taken as the opposite is no-word, thus speechless or silence, but given that silence is a concept[4] (with the meaning and is not equal to zero), "one cannot not communicate" (Watzlawick, 1967:275). When the silence is understood as an existing construct, it shows some communication: "Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value: they influence others and these others, in turn, cannot not respond to these communications and are thus themselves communicating" (ibid, 275). This shows how communication is happening even without a shared language, but also conversation: "Neither can we say that "communication" only takes place when it is intentional, conscious, or successful, that is, when mutual understanding occurs" (ibid, 276). Therefore, "all behavior is communication".

"In fact, it seems that the more spontaneous and "healthy" a relationship, the more the relationship aspect of communication recedes into the background" (ibid, 277). Seen from a different perspective, the more communication succeeds on a tacit level, the better you read the body and the mind, and the relationship between the two participants is more successful:

> "Because they were acquired so early in our lives, many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore, they cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by outsiders" (Hofstede, 2005:10).

The analysis of a computer program development or some kind of artificial intelligence successfully acquaints us with the way we treat information by comparing it with the development of an infant intelligence that has come to the age of words learning. For example, show a toy car to a child. A child learns that it is an object called a car. If he has not learned yet

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[4] "Is music just sounds? Then what does it communicate? Is a truck passing by music? If I can see it, do I have to hear it too? If I don't hear it, does it still communicate? ...Is there such a thing as silence? Even if I get away from people, do I still have to listen to something? Say I'm off in the woods, do I have to listen to a stream babbling? Is there always something to hear, never any peace and quiet?" (Cage, 1973: 41) Later, he also writes: "there is no such thing as silence. Get thee to an anechoic chamber and hear there thy nervous system in operation and hear there thy blood in circulation. I have nothing to say and I am saying it." (ibid, 50)

what the car is in the real world, the car for now remains only a metallic or plastic object that fits into his palm, goes with words "broom, broom" and is something that should be fun, to be played with. Only when it sees the real sized car on the road and hears its sound, gets the dimension of the subject in reality. The next step could be to ride in the same thing that he has held in the hand until recently. Later he learns parts, brands, shapes, and eventually by adolescence learns how to drive it, i.e. his data collection can now be used in practice: "instructions are of a higher logical type than the data; they are meta-information since they are information about information". That way his mental map gets more and more developed and linked to the concept of a car. In the same way, "computer needs information (data) and information about this information (instructions)" (Watzlawick, 1967:277). Thought processes and, consequently, communication, are the processes of constructing the layers that are accumulating and which we very soon become unaware of. If we strive towards 'successful dialogue', our tendency must be directed towards discovering these layers, just as archeologists reveal the properties of the time from which a stone was excavated.

DIGITAL VERSUS ANALOGUE COMMUNICATION

Communication between two interlocutors is happening based on a mutual understanding and exchange of information for the purpose of a 'successful dialogue': "Every communication has content and a relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication" (ibid, 278). Watzlawick's third axiom of communication emphasizes the importance of awareness of communication patterns in order for smooth and harmonious relationships. He explains this in the example of a men and a women who cannot come to a stable ground of communication because of "their inability to metacommunicate about their respective patterning of their interaction" (ibid, 279). They are incapable to detect communicative patterns in a clear and logical way, to detect occurred intervals throughout the communication, or: "The nature of a relationship is contingent upon the punctuation of the communicational sequences between the communicants" (ibid, 281). In that sense, communication can be both digital and analogical. From this point of view, mimics and gestures are analogue, and words are digital. While talking about human communication, a division between digital and analogue seems to be the most important one. Basically, it is a difference between of what is said and what is meant.

Digital communication refers to content, form, word, syntax, and analogue communication refers to what is not said, but is visible, can be deciphered, or is intuitive:

> "We hold that the term must comprise posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, the sequence, rhythm, and cadence of the words themselves, and any other nonverbal manifestation of which the organism is capable, as well as the communicational clues unfailingly present in any context in which an interaction takes place" (Watzlawick, 1967:282).

Analogue communication is a core of mutual understanding, thus everyone should be aware of its strengths and power to make a setting between the polar sides of communication chain. What makes us human is our impeccable, thorough ability for empathy that can be best demonstrated by analogue communication, and not so much by digital: "Indeed, wherever relationship is the central issue of communication, we find that digital language is almost meaningless" (ibid, 282). Of course, like everything else, two polarities cannot be without one another:

> "Digital language has a highly complex and powerful logical syntax but lacks adequate semantics in the field of relationship, while analogic language possesses the semantics but has no adequate syntax for the unambiguous definition of the nature of relationships" (ibid, 284).

Ideally, a certain proportion of each makes an ideal communication and contributes to a successful dialogue.

DIALOGUE

The word 'dialogue' is derived „from the Greek word dialogos", where „logos means "the word," moreover, its definition. „Dia means 'through', and not as prevalent opinion suggests 'two'"(Bohm, 1996:6). In the most elementary sense, it is referring to the signs „flowing among and through us and between us"(ibid, 6). Referring to the field of communication, there is a big difference between dialogue and discussion. The former is supposed to be productive and creative, and, as it considers latter, it is more about operating with information, contrasting them, but with necessary no goal for new insights and ideas: „Discussion is almost like a ping-pong

game, where people are batting the ideas back and forth and the object of the game is to win or to get points for yourself"(ibid, 7), whereas in dialogue „Everybody wins if anybody wins"(ibid, 7). In the case of a dialogue one should be „open to questioning their fundamental assumptions"(ibid, 7). One should consider own opinion as the best version of an assumption he could come to like „when a doctor has an opinion, that's the best assumption that he can make based on the evidence"(ibid, 8). Also, one should not take own opinion as the absolute and unchangeable because if "a person identifies himself with" their own opinions thus holds on to them as if they are constitutive part of their identity. One should be aware of "the process of thought behind the assumptions" (ibid, 9) and not treat opinion as "truth" while at the same time understand "thought as a process": "Dialogue is really aimed at going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively" (ibid, 9).

The definition of a communication is based on a premise that a main goal is to make 'a thing' collective. Communication is a development of entity in a new constructive way where „two people are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together"(Bohm, 1996:3). One of the conditions of such a communication is that „each has to be interested primarily in truth and coherence, so that he is ready to drop his old ideas and intentions, and be ready to go on to something different, when this is called for" (ibid, 3). However, we do not live in an ideal world and many times people do not want to give up their radical attitudes, whether they are political, religious or some other and they „are avoiding the confrontation of contradictions in certain ideas that may be extremely dear to them" (ibid, 4). Culture itself is a powerful imposter of worldviews, especially if it is naturalized, i.e. accepted for granted. Although I agree that it is important to constantly question own opinions and attitudes, I also find that it a large number of people is not ready for it. Bohm (1996) calls it „block", „insensitivity", or „anesthesia", in comprehending and understanding own inconsistencies in thinking. As a solution he suggests everyone should be aware of „what is actually "blocking" communication", and at the same time „attending properly to the content of what is communicated"(ibid, 5).

As mentioned earlier, in defining the dialogue we are most often encountered with a definition that involves two or more participants; but it is important once more to consider that the etymological definition of dialogue does not imply a number two at all because „dia- in dialogos is the prefix meaning through or by"(Linell, 2009:4). The number is less important in this respect

since the theory of dialogue addresses a somewhat deeper level of communication. Dialogue should not be opposed to monologue in a way that it enhances the importance of a number when „other-orientedness, interaction and context-interdependence"(ibid, 4) are the most important parts of a dialogue.

If it is possible to define an ideal or successful dialogue, it would be something like this: „high-quality interaction aiming at a high degree of mutual empathy and/or open interaction characterized by symmetry and cooperation, with equal opportunities for participants to take turns and develop topics, and without coercion from any party"(ibid:5).

MEANING IN A DIALOGUE

I should refer to a meaning through a dialogical concept of culture, where "given a dialogical point of view, we shall see, it is no longer possible to talk about Culture with a capital C" (Linell, 2004:1). Specific for dialogue is its non-limitation, i.e. infinity in meaning. Its characteristic is overcoming of time and space, or in the 'Castellanian' sense, the dialogue is located in a timeless time and the space of flows: "Within a transcending, dialogical perspective, culture is both a type of process and the products of such processes" (ibid, 2). A dialogue is a continuous process of change and dynamics, "thus we can see culture as a network of overlapping discussions and tendencies, changing attitudes and ideas" (ibid, 2). The sign in this context is a phenomenon that "reflects the functional dynamics of the social matrix that created them and deeply affect their creators in return "(ibid, 7). Context is a key point because "meaning occurs in interaction, as an emerging result of that interaction (…) meaning springs out of dialogue and belongs to dialogue, making dialogue a core aspect of all forms of culture" (ibid, 7). "Meaning is, in a word, dialogical, and a dialogical theory of culture is simultaneously a theory of cultural creativity" (ibid, 7). Meanings occur beyond our interaction and they "are not either subjective or objective; they are intersubjective, based on people's participation in culture and communication, that is, in largely public and shared procedures of interpretation and negotiation" (ibid, 7). An individual is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural context, unknown time and space. What we communicate is not unique and original at all times, but is always adapted, at the same time subordinate and superior to the given context. Meanings arise and are modified in dialogue, and vice versa, they

are "deeply influenced by the specific inter-actants in their specific ways of being situated" (Linell, 2004:10).

Speaking about the creation of meaning, Linell (2004) advocates Bakhtin's idea of a mutual construction of signs and meanings. New meanings are being created only in an interaction, relationship, communication and exchange of culture where "ideas crucially presuppose, and are often responses to, other ideas, and when other people receive and respond to them, they give rise to yet other ideas" (ibid, 114). Dialogue implies such dynamism, volatility and instability in the exchange of meaning:

> "Material which has in some way or another been part of prior discourse, may be re-contextualized into novel contexts and new commitments, and the incorporation of ideas from other contexts may lead to the marginalization of aspects which were earlier in focus" (ibid, 115). Meaning-making "is similar to a multi-party conversation, in which participants come and go, or at least are active only in periods, and in which new episodes are often initiated by particular participants' re-contextualizing material from the prior dialogue, providing new perspectives on the subject matter and locating it in a new argumentative surrounding" (ibid, 115).

A main point of the concept "recontextualization" is that "words are never innocent; they have been touched by others" (ibid, 128). It is something as remediation, or finding a new way to use an old thing, but never in such a simple manner. Recontextualization does not mean transferring one term or concept from one discourse to another in an unchanged shape. It is a complex transfer adapted to all existing conditions and circumstances: "selected parts of discourses and their meanings in the prior, 'quoted' discourse-in-context are used as resources in creating new meaning in the 'quoting' text and its communicative contexts" (ibid, 116). It does not only change peripherally, but also from the deeper level: "Recontextualizations are often also reconceptualizations, cognitive 'reframings' involving refractions of meaning and mutations of sense and value" (ibid, 116). Words are, as people, always enriched with their own past experiences, times and places. They carry their 'luggage', and even when they go through reconsideration and recontextualization, thus almost completely change their meaning, their roots remain the same.

MONOLOGISM

Concise explanation of a monologism theory consists of "the information processing model of cognition, the transfer model of communication (communication is a transfer of messages from senders to recipients), and the code model of language (language consists of static signs, i.e., stable combinations of expressions and fixed meanings)" (Linell, 2009:36). "Thus, we are still faced with a transfer model of communication, in which cognition is the only fundamental phenomenon, and language is a code ancillary to this" (ibid, 38).

According to the dialogism theory, meanings are not purely constructed through cognition, with no much reference to the context, but rather are at least to some part "communicatively constructed", i.e. "language contributes to sense-making of what is said in the situated interpersonal interaction itself" (ibid, 38). While, as it considers monologism theory, "unique or dynamic contexts are not essential, that is, not for the understanding of the specific thoughts, situated behaviors, utterances or texts, let alone of the underlying language system" (ibid, 36). Thus, a context is a kind of a fixed circumstance of a social situation, independent of it.

The distribution and interpretation of meaning depends on an individual speaker and a disposed language and "there is no place for constructive processes of communication in monologism" (37)

The general outlook of monologism consists of a belief that there are only singular entities, grouped in larger bodies, and they are, provided by specific sociocultural circumstances, interpreting and constructing essences of the world surrounding them. One of the crucial contrasts between monologism and dialogism theory is the way they perceive and define a relationship between rhetoric and a situation:

> "Monologism conceives of the relation between discourse (language use, thinking, communication) and contexts as purely external, as contingent rather than intrinsic and conceptual. (…) Dialogism, by contrast, assumes that there is a dialectical, intrinsic relationship between discourse and contexts; they mutually shape each other" (ibid, 38).

From a monologist point of view "communication is a matter of transfer (or transmission) of information and messages" (ibid, 38). So, how does for example a shared thought becomes

collectively implemented? Only in a case of a communication based on fair and meaningful assertion, deprived of transmitted and allegorical meanings, where "the speaker has a specific and precise intention with his or her message (the utterance is intended univocally), the words (and other parts of) language have stable meanings (i.e., language is a code), and the speaker uses words in a correct (sincere, truthful, appropriate) way" (ibid, 39)[5]. Furthermore, they need a shared language, ideally mother tongue in a case of idioms and phrases possibly known only to the original speakers of the language because "the authorities that determine the meanings of communicative acts are two: the speaker/sender and the language code (and, by analogy, other cultural routines, common knowledge of the world, etc.)" (ibid, 39).

Monologism follows the logic where "a language must be a code with fixed relations between static expressions (…) and stable meanings" (ibid, 39), thus the language has nothing to do with a thought process and is "therefore actually irrelevant if you want to understand the thoughts" (ibid, 39).

If an 'ideal' communication is set as a goal, a monologist point of view is untenable in unusual contexts, interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds speaking different languages, contrasting worldviews, opposing mentalities, crucially distinct point of views, etc. Dialogism from that point of view suggests more complex theory, but settles for less perfect communication, emphasizing the importance of "understanding each other sufficiently well in order to proceed further in their communication or other current doings" (ibid, 39).

Considering the cross-cultural communication, dialogism is the only real possibility that actually suggests concrete solutions providing the insight to a more productive and harmonious dialogue "with resources such as repair, responsive (follow-up) questions and candidate understandings, probing the issues in current focus and negotiating the use of particular words or concepts" (ibid, 40).

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[5] The theory of monologism is inclining to Grice's (Logic and Conversation) "conversation maxims" (based on quantity, quality, relation and manner) where he suggests different maxims, some of which are: "Avoid obscurity of expression; Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange); Do not make your contribution more informative than is required; Avoid ambiguity; Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); Be orderly", etc.

According to the dialogist standpoint, dialogue consists of dubious and equivocal motives, objectives, aims/utterances. A conversation is by itself accidental productive process where "utterances and interpretations are 'coauthored'" (ibid, 40).

Also, language cannot be expected to be used as a set of constant unchangeable meanings consisted in vocabulary, but with "partly open 'meaning potentials', that is, users can use them together with contexts to guide others (and themselves) to particular interpretations" (ibid, 40). It is not as from the monologism point of view that interlocutors are moderately, or not at all, flexible in constructing meaning and having communication independent of a situation and environment, but in dialogism theory "sense-making is always an interaction between the potentials of the linguistic resources and various aspects of contexts that are made relevant in situations of use" (ibid, 40).

In contrast to monologism where "cognition and communication are taken to be separate processes, cognition being prior and intrapersonal (individual), and communication being entirely secondary and interpersonal" (ibid, 40-41), dialogism takes them as complementary and cooperative. There is no hierarchy between them nor it is considered that cognition determines communication: "The verbalizing process transforms the subject matters cognized and communicated; it involves communicative and cultural construction of content" (ibid, 40).

From the dialogist perspective, thinking (or cognition) is concerned with sense-making in and of the world, in relation to the world and with the help of communication, language, and the use of artifacts (ibid, 41).

ERASMUS+ AND CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

From now and onwards, I will start implementing answers to the questions asked in the questionnaire presented earlier. To the question "Do you think like you have been introduced to, or you have improved or gained, the feeling of "European spirit?", 10 out of 12 people answered positively. To the next question: "Can you name 3 characteristics of European culture?" some of the answers were following: *Well-organized system, hard-working people, beautiful landscapes, liberal, equal, democratic, diversity, solidarity, unity, liberal values, diversity of cultures,*

inclusivity, social life, emotional, open minded (x3), *curious, easy-going, friendly and willing to help*.

One way in which European identity is trying to build is by a dialogue. Europe organizes and finances various projects and programs in which different nations and cultures come in touch to learn about each other. Their primary purpose is seldom a mere encounter between different cultures that make up Europe (more specifically, European Union), but their organization is gathered around different topics such as the environment, (un)employment, communication, tolerance, working with people with special needs, and many others. Through such encounters, to which the inhabitants of Europe, but also the rest of the world, are responding more and more, a dialogue is encouraged. It is implied that (chosen) participants should approach projects open-minded and to be ready to meet different cultures in the cosmopolitan spirit; it is often the reason for participating in increasing employment opportunities, but more often it is the expansion of social networking and cultural capital around the world. "If everybody has a different opinion, it will be merely a struggle of opinions" (Bohm, 1996:12), but European Union is trying to connect and unite people of Europe through different workshops, trainings, courses, exchanges, and so on.

If there is something that represents European culture, what would it be? People gathering from all parts of Europe (and the rest of the world) and talking about actual politics, the past and the future of Europe, "they are a sort of microcosm of the whole culture" (ibid, 13), and at the same time it is a microcosm of the dialogue improvement. Erasmus is about gathering members of different nations and cultures and directing them to joint activities, because it is confirmed that "the collective thought is more powerful than the individual thinking" (ibid, 14). Bohm compares it with light:

> "Ordinary light is called "incoherent," which means that it is going in all sorts of directions, and the light waves are not in phase with each other so they don't build up. But a laser produces a very intense beam which is coherent. The light waves build up strength because they are all going in the same direction. This beam can do all sorts of things that ordinary light cannot" (ibid, 14).

By promoting the European spirit and the European culture we supposedly share, but not forgetting the local (national) culture, the European Union very skilfully encourages creation of the European spirit:

> "If we have a dialogue situation—a group which has sustained dialogue for quite a while in which people get to know each other, and so on—then we might have such a coherent movement of thought, a coherent movement of communication. It would be coherent not only at the level we recognize, but at the tacit level, at the level for which we have only a vague feeling" (ibid, 14).

That vague feeling is a feeling of the unity of all nations. Because, if European Union originally exists for economic and political reasons, the only way that people could feel as a part of it, like they belong to it and that it belongs to them, is a personal experience by gathering in some kind of forums for public discussion, i.e. dialogue between all the parties. By decentralization, uniting and including all races, classes, generations, nations and other types of identities into one entity something like a laser beam is produced because "if people were to think together in a coherent way, it would have tremendous power" (ibid, 14).

To the question "Have you participated in any social or academic activity where you were sitting in a circle, rather than classically sitting in rows?" 8 participants answered positively, 2 answered sometimes, and only 2 answered negatively.

"A basic notion for a dialogue would be for people to sit in a circle. Such a geometric arrangement doesn't favour anybody; it allows for direct communication" (ibid, 15). So if there is an idea of changing the collective thought of Europe, then the projects like Erasmus+ are quite good for gathering participants from all across EU: "The group is a microcosm of society, so if the group—or anyone– is "cured," it is the beginning of the larger cure" (ibid, 16). "The point is not to establish a fixed dialogue group forever, but rather one that lasts long enough to make a change" (ibid, 19). Sharing meanings is the key for developing tolerance, open-mindedness, knowledge and interest for Others because "a society is a link of relationships among people and institutions, so that we can live together" (ibid, 19). Collective consciousness is built up by projects that gather people from all over Europe. By different meetings, encouraging, socializing and drinking games, participants get closer to each other and share experiences, their own modes of behaviour, political, cultural and economic backgrounds. By becoming friends in an estranged

city they are making friends so that they can regain the feeling of comfort of living in another country. Thus, sharing meanings, thoughts and reasons for the same project/city/period choice, their differences and similarities are getting more and more revealed: "If everybody sees the meaning together, of all the assumptions, then the content of consciousness is essentially the same" (ibid, 27). Mobility, meetings of different cultures, especially young people who are somewhat untainted from the past conflicts, are also a fertile ground for changing attitudes and creating new ones because "shared meaning is really the cement that holds society together" (ibid, 29), and thoughts are especially cemented when they are enhanced by emotions and friendships. Gathering individuals of different backgrounds, while organizing their fun activities, is opening the mind to new ways of thinking, softening hardened attitudes and negative prejudices, also "possibly it could make a new change in the individual and change in relation to the cosmic" (ibid, 46).

Being in the European Union has opened up the possibility of mobility throughout the whole Europe and beyond. If one of the goals is "European identity" with respect and preserving tradition, I think it is very important to know and be aware of different cultures, to develop intercultural communication skills, resourcefulness, adaptability, understanding, sensitivity, etc. In concrete, we can say that European Union is a centripetal force by organizing programs like Erasmus+ which includes several types of international European programmes and projects[6] whose goal is, other than language learning, decentralization by placing projects in the unknown small cities, but at the same time centralization of the European spirit idea. One of the main goals of European exchange programs is improving learning foreign languages, with emphasis on the English language. One thing that proves that is OLS[7] , program which every exchange student has to go through before he starts his program in order to compare it with results at the end of a period of studying abroad. By that way, European Union can have an insight into student's language improvement which is an authentic indicator of socialization since language is best taught by lively face to face interaction. To keep the language alive and vital, it is important for it

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[6] "Erasmus+ is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. Erasmus+ offers opportunities to study, train, gain work experience or volunteer abroad and one of its strategic objectives is to strengthen linguistic skills and support language learning" (Taken from the web page https://erasmusplusols.eu/).
[7] "The Online Linguistic Support (OLS) supports language learning for Erasmus+ mobility participants. The OLS offers participants in Erasmus+ long-term mobility activities (Key Action 1) the opportunity to assess their skills in the foreign language(s) they will use to study, work or volunteer abroad. In addition, selected participants may follow an online language course to improve their competence" (Taken from the web page https://erasmusplusols.eu/)

to sustain its dynamic life. It should reproduce and welcome all changes, improvements and enriching structures: "Stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing" (Bakhtin, 1982:272), which opposes any attempt to keep the language *clean*. This makes language static, and therefore, announces its death. So, in order for language to stay vibrant, meanings should be open for modifying and multiplying by which the matrix of language is getting more and more complex. In the example of the widespread use of English we see that its impurities and broken uses did not do any harm, but exactly the opposite. What makes it so successfully and widely used is the dynamic life of journeys to all continents, thereby gathering experiences and constant enrichment.

What we all share to some extent are similar everyday tools and objects, like in hygiene frame we all brush our teeth in the morning with a toothbrush, go to the toilet and take a shower, or we jog and ride a bike in a more or less the same way, we all study, though in different institutions, and other not so culturally specific things. But, because an external object is never just an object itself and is not perceived universally, we all have a similar idea behind it which leads us to the similar way of use so it must be taken in the consideration that a person always "confronts a multitude of routes, roads and paths that have been laid down in the object by social consciousness" (Bakhtin, 1982:279) (as a totality of mindsets), and more specifically, in the use of foreign language - a "Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages" circumscribing the object. "A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way" – it is always in contrast with Other, which is supposed to be absolute opposition, but is also a paradox because in order for something to exist, the existence of opposition is essential. Thus, we communicate in concepts, and words are tools to describe them.[8]

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[8] Magritte and his word-image art philosophy is a great example of arbitrariness of the sign system: "The Key to Dreams (1930, New York, S. Janis Gallery). This is one of Magritte's most important paintings among those in which he investigates the relationship between words and things so as to discover how the true nature of thought hides behind daily language. Under four objects, isolated from each other, the artist writes a noun that correctly corresponds only in the case of the sponge: under the purse is written "the sky", under the knife "the bird", under the leaf "the table". The error exemplified here originates in the structure of language, that arbitrarily fixes a relationship between a name and a thing. Agreeing with Wittgenstein, Magritte affirmed that in designating things, it is a mistake to depend on the words that name them: the way the words are used is important, as is clearly demonstrated in Key to Dreams. Analyzing language conventions, Magritte's aim is to investigate an implicit philosophical problem: if and how language derives from the structures of thought, the ideas and concepts elaborated by man; thus he wanted to highlight the paradoxes and insoluble problems. According to Wittgenstein our whole intelligence is 'enchanted' and captured by the mechanisms of language" (Zari, 2001:28).

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH – CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

To the question "Did you feel limited in expressing thoughts and feelings in English?" 9 participants answered negatively and 3 of them answered *sometimes* or *just a bit*.

Can English be used as a neutral-common language? One of the answers might be hidden in the following quote:

> "If, however, we take the idea of systems of cultural conceptualisations emerging from the interactions between people seriously, then it is obvious that even if we could come up with a 'nuclear' English, this itself would in time develop its own new systems of conceptualizations" (Sharifian, 2009:246).

By nuclear English it is meant on simpler, more direct, understandable and deprived of national and cultural outlines. English as a language, however widely used, still belongs to certain communities and cultures and thus cannot be fully deprived of ideology. Meeting and, moreover, everyday coexistence with different cultures carries a great cultural-informative and eye-opening value. The most valuable experience is learning about oneself while learning about others, but also about one's own culture through other people's opinions and attitudes. A lot of times in cases with no shared language, even the speakers of different languages can understand each other because they communicate in images and concepts, and not merely words, but also in intonations:

> "Expressive intonation is a constitutive marker of the utterance (…) if an individual word is pronounced with expressive intonation it is no longer a word, but a completed utterance expressed by one word (there is no need to develop it into a sentence)" (Bakhtin, 1979:85).

In order to facilitate communication among members of a community who communicate, more or less, concepts based on common knowledge, members use the thought and linguistic tools which Sharifian names as "cultural conceptualizations" which "are 'negotiated' and 'renegotiated' across time and space by generations of speakers so that the members of a group are able to think, so to speak, in one mind" (Sharifian, 2009:243).

Cultural conceptualizations are complex and emerging from experience. They are conceptions and perceptions of a social reality and tools involved in brain processes responsible for language and opinion. They are variable, both cross-culturally and among individuals of the same culture (albeit to a lesser extent), depending on the emotional pattern and aspect of life: "New cultural conceptualizations may also be triggered by influences from, or contact with, other communities" (ibid, 243). They are highly variable and depending on an individual mindset, culture or situation and asks for signifiers in the form of words: "Human beings communicate their various systems of conceptualizations using language and, in fact, many aspects of language are largely embedded in the conceptualizations that are used to interpret and organize our cultural experience" (ibid, 243).

Considering that "lexical items in various languages may encode the way speakers have conceptualized their experiences in the past, shaping the frames of understanding available for interpreting new experiences" (ibid, 244), in the analysis of the various segments and situations of communication, it is important to take the mediated language into account.

"Various genres can reveal various layers and facets of the individual personality, and individual style can be found in various interrelations with the national language" (Bakhtin, 1979:63). Given the culture, personality, experience and other contents of the Self, the situation and the context in which it is located, the individual expresses the thought. Bakhtin suggests that there is a somewhat solid set of rules for each circle of social communication where speech genre clarifies and strengthens "the link between language and life": "Each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own relatively stable types of these utterances" (ibid, 60). In a simplified manner, linguistic expression largely determines communication. Therefore, in an international communication we can often discover the character of a national language, such as determining gender, i.e. "…bilingual learners and speakers of English may draw on their first language systems of cultural conceptualizations when using English".

Sharifian (2009) suggests a reconceptualization of an international communication based on English language. The basis of his idea is "the need to recognize that in international contexts two interlocutors may not share the same system of cultural conceptualizations, even though they both use English to engage in communication with each other" (ibid, 246). In the absence of

knowledge of English phrases, speakers of English as a foreign language sometimes directly translate phrases from their own language, which leads to misunderstanding. In, and because of, such cases, Sharifian suggests that "interlocutors would first need to minimize the assumption of shared cultural conceptualizations" (ibid, 247).

The 'glocalization'[9] approach in English use is suggested: being aware that English is widely used language, but to have a tendency to use it appropriately to the situation. It is interesting that, from all the people, it is often most difficult to understand the native English speaker: "'native' speaker competence may not necessarily enable individuals to be effective speakers in EIL contexts, particularly if their competence has been exclusively developed in monocultural contexts" (ibid, 249).

For example, Erasmus+ plus is a program for which it is necessary, or at least desirable to speak English so a person can participate, if not in an informal communication, then at least in a formal one (for example, with professors). But it's not always so and not everyone actually speaks English properly. Even though the main use of English is for the academic purposes, most of the English is learned through socializing. This phenomenon of common language use on Erasmus+ program is interesting. It is evidence of human adaptability to different social situations which does not exclude the use of language. No matter how speakers are being incompetent English speakers they use slang words, phrases, and are generally feeling comfortable in articulating meanings and ideas because it is more about an idea and content than it is about form or grammatically correct pronunciation.

To the question "Were there any moments you felt like you became aware of a feature of your own culture you were not aware of and what was it?" 5 of the participants answered negatively, but 6 answers have shown that meeting new cultures can, not only enrich us with new knowledge about other cultures, but also about our own. Portuguese answered he became aware they are *very touchy and welcome someone into a friend group the second they meet them*. Italian answered: *...it looks like Italians (me included) say "it was funny" instead of "it was fun", and some people find this... fun? Funny? I don't really know anymore. Oh, also we can't really pronounce the difference between "beach" and "bitch"*.

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[9] The ability to assimilate structures of globalization into a country and culture that will contribute to growth and diversity.

Phrases are excellent indicators of familiarity with cultural conceptualization. The phrase is rarely a literal translation, and more often a metaphor. Therefore, understanding a phrase, in a way implies understanding of a mindset. This and similar knowledge is called "meta-cultural competence". It is interesting that a lot of time we become aware of our own cultural conceptualizations which "emerge out of the interactions between people from differing cultural backgrounds" (ibid, 250). But also, "as speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds come to interact with each other in English, new systems of cultural conceptualizations may develop, both at the individual level and at the level of communities" (ibid, 250).

The answer of the final, and maybe the most interesting questions, can give an insight into a better understanding of different mindsets and meanings sketched in a language. The question was: "Can you write a phrase, a saying/idiom that you use in your native language, but directly translate it into English; I have chosen only the 'unusual' ones for the following situations:

o   When being very thirsty: *I'm so thirsty I could drink from the sea (Italian); I became a crow from the thirst (*Greek*); My neck has become dried (*Romanian*)*

o   When being very drunk: *Being a pie/I was a gnat (*Greek*); Being like a Percoca- peach-like fruit that we usually drown in wine before eating as a dessert (Italian); Having a bitch (*Portuguese*)*

o   When some place is very far away and unreachable*: To the devil's mother (*Greek*, Romanian*); In the world's anus/In God's anus/In Assland- generally everything that has to do with your butt (*Italian*); In Judas's ass (*Portuguese*)*

o   To have a nap*: I fell for a little bit in the arms of Morpheas (*Greek*); To pull a baby of sleep (*Romanian*)*

o   When someone is confused, inattentive: *Like a dizzy cockroach (*Portuguese*)*

o   When you finally discover the point of the problem: *Here falls the donkey* (Italian)

o   When you missed a chance: *Stay watching ships* (Portuguese)

TEXT IN A CONTEXT

All aspects of a culture can be understood as a text in a context – an individual can read it, analyse it, criticize, compare to another text and be able to use that knowledge in the future, moreover to reflect on yourself and own cultural background: "The meaning of a text result from the reader's interaction with and reconstruction of the author's construct" (Iser, 1972:15), where by construct is meant all that author is potentially exposing to a reader, where "reading a particular text involves relating it to previous knowledge and to other texts read before" which is "therefore a dialogical activity" (ibid, 15).

Context is a very important part of a dialogism theory; when it comes to monologism "contexts are often treated as stable environments that are there before or independently of people's actions and discourse" (Linell, 2009:36) – context is all but the first level of importance for social and cultural interaction, while, when it comes to dialogism, "all cognition or communication is reflexively tied to its contexts" (ibid, 37).

Communication between two (or more) individuals can be compared to text reading. There is an individual who is reading and a text which is communicating messages. Both of them have a proper context and the two of them together have a common present context. Sometimes two interlocutors have a shared context prior to the communication, but in an international communication it is rarely a case. Their communication is like "an arena in which reader and author participate in a game of the imagination" (Iser, 1972:280). The more unknown the literary work is, the more imagination, a reader can use in a curious exploration of the subject "for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative" (Iser, 1972:280). Otherwise, "the result would be the boredom which inevitably arises when everything is laid out cut and dried before us" (ibid, 280). Like in a case of Japanese communication[10], it is the silent and subtle level that

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[10] Japanese lexicon is saturated by "norms of verbal agreement and empathy" (167). Their communication is very intuitive because of „a set of cultural values that emphasize omoiyari „empathy", over explicit verbal communication"(Clancy, 1986:165). Detailed, extensive and broad verbalisation of own thought is considered cheap and even taken suspiciously since, when it comes to a personal opinion, a person "should not express it if it conflicts with the opinions of others" (ibid, 166). Individual consciousness is ultimately directed towards the collective and hence individual "thoughts and feelings must fall within the range of others ability to imagine and understand, even without any explicit verbal expression" (ibid, 167). There is an emphasis on a dialogue in a way that the idea is realized only by two or more interlocutors: "In this view of communication, mind-reading is seen as both possible and desirable"

"stimulates the reader's creative participation" (ibid, 283) for there is a need to fill up all the shortcomings and ambiguities for the purpose of rounding up the story. But it is not a one way process; like the communication is inevitably continuing process, so it is in the case of a text reading. The text is being shaped in the reader's fantasy. Though, it is not an absolutely imagination favorable field because "the written text imposes certain limits on its unwritten implications" which "set the given situation against a background which endows it with far greater significance" (ibid, 281). Since people are social beings, they cannot survive without communication. To feel content, people have a need to tell stories[11], but that would make no sense when no one would hear them. Therefore, a storyteller needs an audience who will interpret his story, which only then gets significance. By telling one story, a narrator sends some information about himself; a reader withdraws his own conclusions, but that is still not enough to make a story. Different parts "take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlative…the interaction of these correlatives will not be a fulfillment of the expectation so much as a continual modification of it" (ibid, 283). In a development of a story "each intentional sentence correlative opens up a particular horizon, which is modified, if not completely changed, by succeeding sentences" (ibid, 283). Every communication is thus a "creative process that is far above mere perception of what is written" (ibid, 283) (or heard), of what an outcome is "the virtual dimension of the text, which endows it with its reality" (ibid, 284) where the virtual dimension is "the coming together of text and imagination" (ibid, 284).

The reader is not a passive victim of what a certain text implies. The reader always approaches actuality based on his assumptions and therefore formulates a reality based on already established foundations. The way in which the reader interprets the text reveals the nature of his character, "but at the same time, the reality which this process helps to create is one that will be different from his own (since, normally, we tend to be bored by texts that present us with things we already know perfectly well ourselves) (ibid, 286). So learning different cultures, ways of

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[11] "Language, more than anything else, is what makes us human: the unique power of language to represent and share unbounded thoughts is critical to all human societies, and has played a central role in the rise of our species in the last million years from a minor and peripheral member of the sub-Saharan African ecological community to the dominant species on the planet today" (…) "Human language gives us the ability to express anything we can think, and to communicate these thoughts via a set of mutually comprehensible signals. Although all animals communicate, this boundless expressivity sets our species off from all others" … "kin selection and kin communication played a critical but typically overlooked role in language evolution, driving our unusual propensity to cooperatively share information". Desire to communicate is a distinct human ability: "advanced theory of mind and Mitteilüngsbedurfnis – typify humans and perhaps only a few other species" (Fitch, 2010).

thinking and living, and all possible Others, makes new insights and broadens the mind: "it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure" (ibid, 287) called life.

Linell brings a context to a new way of understanding. Context is a broad concept and a kind of a circumstance framework that surrounds phenomena, be it from the past, future or present, here or there – be it in accordance to temporality or locality. Linell (2009) explains the context thoroughly. There is a "realized context" which refers to properties inherent in the immediate, original environment to which the communication is referring; and "contextual resources" which are not based on immediate reality, but on any occurrence which, in one way or another, may have importance for communication: "Even if contextual dimensions are not in themselves meanings, they are resources in the meaning-making processes; they are impregnated with affordances for making meaning: referential, cognitive, emotional, embodied, etc." (Linell, 2009:17). Meanings are thus inevitably constructed within the matrix and therefore should be observed in that way.

THOUGHT AND THE COLLECTIVE

Thought is one of the key instances in consideration of an identity. In the history of civilization and its development, it can be said that it is the main starting point of everything, because "practically all of what has been called nature has been arranged by thought" (Bohm, 1996:49). Thoughts create divisions and communities, arrangements and disagreements. Thought is the source of knowledge, but also ignorance. If we deal with either the positive or negative consequences of a human thought, it is logical to start from the roots, but keeping in mind that we have largely departed from them, "herefore, the source is not in time—not back in ancient times, when it may have started—but rather the source is always now" (ibid, 48).

"While it is true that understanding a message to some degree depends on a correct interpretation of the words being used, as well as on a certain respect for the usual form these words and their combinations take in any given language […], it remains that words, no matter how well chosen and correctly joined and pronounced, do not convey the entire message, or even the major portion of what we intend to say" (Mey, 2006:787).

Given that thought is generally expressed by words and actions, it is important to focus on specific things "beyond the word", i.e. in "processes that take place outside the material world, in the world that we can't see" (Bohm, 1996:50). It is important in the first place to deal with thought because, on a general level, "the real crisis is not in these events which are confronting us, like wars and crime and drugs and economic chaos and pollution; it's really in the thought which is making it—all the time" (ibid, 50). If we can change anything, starting from the individual level, then that is the thought[12].

By consuming mass media, social networks, television programs, and education systems and passively involving into ideologies that originate from them, "the kind of thought that's going on all around us begins to take over in every one of us, without our even noticing it" (ibid, 51). Although, one should be aware that even thought is never completely only 'ours', but it "originates in the whole culture and it pervades us" (ibid, 51). We should have to examine our own culture and education, not only from the beginning of our own life, but from the experience that stems much deeper into tradition, culture and mentality, but also the other influences that intertwine with our lives, directly and indirectly: "This deep structure of thought, which is the source, the constant source—timeless—is always there" (ibid, 51). It is a complex, and perhaps impossible venture, but it is important to consider every possibility to revise your thoughts. That way we shift from being passive victims of the system to the active participants of a social reality. The difference between thinking and thought is that thought is the result of thinking – "it goes somehow into the brain and leaves something – a trace – which becomes thought" which "then acts automatically" (ibid, 51-52). Thinking and feeling should not be separated: "They both come from the memory; in the memory they are probably all mixed" (ibid, 52). Also, they are both kinds of implicit awareness and "therefore, when memory acts you cannot separate the intellectual function, the emotional function, the chemical function, the muscular function" (ibid,

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[12] Bohm (1996) stresses the importance of changing perspective and the difference between problems and paradoxes. He says we must reconsider the concept of the problem since it is not what we think it is in the core and does not lead to the resolution of many things so named. Paradox, suggests rethinking thoughts deeper than it is with the problem. The problem is viewed more or less as a final product that has its intended solution. The paradox is somewhat more complex, but at the same time more appropriate when we consider the process of thinking and thought since "each human being has to see that the very feelings and ideas which he is inclined to identify with his "innermost self" are involved in paradox" (ibid, 67). Paradox occurs when "one is treating his own thinking and feeling as something separate from and independent of the thought that is thinking about them, it is evident that in fact there is, and can be, no such separation and independence" (ibid, 65). Treating things, that we used to treat as a problem, as a paradox, helps us reconstruct reality and change our perception of reality or "a deep and intense awareness, going beyond the imagery and intellectual analysis of our confused process of thought, and capable of penetrating to the contradictory presuppositions and states of feeling in which the confusion originates" (ibid, 67).

52). "Thought is able to provide a representation of what we experience", where "a representation is not just a concept—it's really a number of concepts together", and "the way you experience something, therefore, depends on how you represent it—or mis-represent it" (ibid, 55).

To the question "Can you say that you have changed in some way after studying abroad? If yes, what is the most prominent feature of yourself that has changed?" some answers were: *I got more open minded; I am more eager to spend time with people that I don't know much- this is mandatory during the Erasmus+ Experience, but since I got back I have spent more time than ever with people that I always liked, but never really hung out with; I learned how to be more independent and more courageous; I have been getting out of my comfort zone lately; Tolerance; Yes, I did change. Now I take decisions quicker than before; I've become a more patient person; Yes, I am more easy going and open minded; My tolerance to other people's mentality (has changed).*

Representation is, therefore, a way of perceiving reality deeply seeded into our brains. It can only be changed by meeting other, different thoughts and representations of reality, so it is important to encounter and comprehend as much of the other perspectives as possible so that your own is subject to change:

> "Truth found inside a tightly sealed home is hardly of any use outside; judgements made inside a room which, for fear of draught, is never aired are blown away with the first gust of wind" (Bauman, 1991:82).

That reflects the power of a dialogue. Our representations are being constructed through community and culture; yet later we understand that for a long period of time we took them for granted and as a part of our common knowledge: "If everybody agrees on something, we take that as evidence that it's right, or that it could be right" (Bohm, 1996:56). Thus, social constructs form our reality. They are tools for handling our social reality and it is important to be aware of them since "we are able to take "facts" which have very little value, and value them very highly" (ibid, 58). Representation and perception are the key to a dialogue because "our relationship depends on how we present other people to ourselves, and how we present ourselves to other people" (ibid, 58). By belonging to a specific society and culture we shape the understanding of ourselves and others:

"If we could learn to see thought actually producing presentations from representations, we would be no longer fooled by it—it would be like seeing the trick of a magician. As long as you don't see what the magician is doing, it seems like magic. But if you had a direct insight into the trick, it could change everything (…) To make a "world" takes more than one person, and therefore the collective representation is the key. It's not enough merely for one person to change his representation. That's fine, but we're saying that the real change is the change of collective representations" (ibid, 60).

INSIDE-OUT: SHAPING THOUGHTS IN A CROSSCULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Talking about verbal interaction, Vološinov (1973) states that an urge to study human consciousness in connection to language came from romanticists, or individualistic subjectivists. They saw "native language as the medium through which consciousness and ideas are generated" (Vološinov, 1973:83). They were not some kind of revolutionists, but they introduced important new ideas and methods of study. Given their orientation to individual and subjective, they take "monologic utterance as the ultimate reality and the point of departure for its thinking about language" (ibid, 84). That leads us to an expression, which "for individualistic subjectivism is the highest and broadest category under which the speech act – the utterance – may be subsumed" (ibid, 84). Romanticists do not supplement their theory with the cognitive aspects of creating the expression that comes from within and is then presented by some means on the outside, but emphasize the importance of understanding transformative power of expression, i.e. "that it exists first in one form and then switches to another form" (ibid, 84). The expression direction is inside out: "Everything of rea1 importance lies within; the outer element can take on real importance only by becoming a vessel for the inner, by becoming expression of spirit." (ibid, 84).

While "mastering outer material and making it over into a compliant medium of expression, the experiential, expressible element itself undergoes alteration and is forced to make a certain compromise" (ibid, 84). Since there is that motion from the inside to the out, from thought to material expression, it is inevitable for expression to lose it's supposed –purity– of the original. Such an absolute advocacy of the independent character of thought and expression lacks the account for the external sociological cultural context. Expression is not directed at the mere empty air around us, but is always directed to someone, from a thoroughly defined social position

to another. Therefore, Vološinov argues that expression is determined and tailored to the external context and is "determined by the actual conditions of the given utterance-above all by its immediate social situation" (ibid, 84). Our thoughts and statements are shaped in relation to the receiver: "I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong" (ibid, 84). In this case, the communication of two people from different cultures constructs their statements depending on the context and feature of a sociocultural history of the country they come from and the same of the person receiving the information. This seems to be an extremely complex communication system, but all these processes are running more or less in the background: "Even the cry of a nursing infant is oriented toward its mother" (ibid, 87). Vološinov further argues there is an "I-experience" and "We-experience". The difference between those two is polar, like in the case of monologism and dialogism: the former is not directed to anyone, so it is deprived of the social context that it is approaching and gets close to the instinct of a new born child which is not yet aware of the time and place. This kind of an "experience relinquishes all its potentialities, all outcroppings of social orientation, and therefore also loses its verbal delineation" (ibid, 88). The latter is always focused on the goal in a certain socio-cultural context. It increases the possibility for social consciousness, which does not mean that the value of an individual is diminished, but the contribution of a variety of individual thoughts increases the value of collective: "The stronger, the more organized, the more differentiated the collective in which an individual orients himself, the more vivid and complex his inner world will be" (Vološinov, 1973:88). In a multicultural situation, like it is an Erasmus+ program, socializing and meeting different cultures is inevitable. Ideally, a person is socialized in a diverse society of people from different nations and cultures. In such a context, the thought, starting from one, is oriented in many different directions and thus constantly generates and modifies itself. In turn, reflects on itself and thus eliminates doubts and uncertainties, clears the horizons of thoughts and one's own identity and confidence which as "one's sense of personal value, is drawn not from within, not from the depths of one's personality, but from the outside world" (ibid, 89). In a relation of two people it is not just their separated characters communicating since "the personality of the speaker, taken from within, so to speak, turns out to be wholly a product of social interrelations" (ibid, 90). Since "the whole route between inner experience (the "expressible") and its outward objectification (the "utterance") lies entirely across social territory" (ibid, 90), we embody incarnations of our own socio-cultural

contexts into a new current and context-dependent frameworks and in that way we raise awareness about personal identities. According to this theory, consciousness is not just metaphysical, unreachable and non-understandable entity existing in our minds, but it "is an objective fact and a tremendous social force", it is an "embryo of expression" (ibid, 90). The relation between our thought and behaviour is a motion of mental to physical realization, so it is mutually depending: "From the very start experience is set toward fully actualized outward expression and, from the very start, tends in that direction" (ibid, 90). This shows to what extent is our consciousness created in relation to our sociocultural context. By entering new circumstances, encountering different Others, we are objectifying our identities and mindsets. Open-mindedly referring to Others, mirroring and juxtaposing them, functioning under new circumstances inevitably builds our personality, and it can also "tie inner life together, giving it more definite and lasting expression" (ibid, 90). One person affects the thought system of another person, not by some miraculous invisible paths, but by the way a person who is supposed to get the information reads the intentions of a person who is sending information, be it on a conscious or subconscious level: it is always a communication between two consciousness, never merely an exchange and deciphering the words: "The organizing centre of any utterance, of any experience, is not within but outside-in the social milieu surrounding the individual being" (ibid, 90).

THE SELF AND THE OTHER IN A COMMUNICATION

In the simplest manner, Other is all what Self is not, and Self is in constant inevitable interaction in order to exchange meaning- be it in a purpose of understanding Self or the Other[13]: "At the origin of the problem of the existence of others, there is a fundamental presupposition: others are the Other, that is the self which is not myself" (Sartre, 1953:230).

During a complex and dynamic process of understanding the Other, the more otherness it contains - the more questions we impose on it and generally it makes us interested. Thus, "when we have been particularly impressed (…) we feel the need to talk about it (…) we simply want to understand more clearly what it is that we have been entangled in" (Iser, 1972:295). At the time an individual is "entangled, his own preconceptions are continually overtaken", in a way that the

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[13] Comparable to the theory of quantum electrodynamics where "electrically charged particles are interacting by means of exchange of photons" (taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_electrodynamics)

Other starts to feel like "he is present, whilst his own ideas fade into the past"- just then "he is open to the immediate experience of the text, which was impossible so long as his preconceptions were his present" (Iser, 1972:295). In turn, Other shapes us in a way "that we must suspend the ideas and attitudes that shape our own personality before we can experience the unfamiliar world" (Iser, 1972:296) of the Other. How it changes in individual interfering with the Other is a very important part of the communication because "the process of absorbing the unfamiliar is labelled as the identification" where it should be, rather than as a dead end, understood as a point where "one is certainly drawn into the text in such a way that one has the feeling that there is no distance between oneself and" (Iser, 1972:296-297) the Other.

Theory of dialogism points out that interaction is an active and dynamic process where Selves are encountering each-Others, i.e. **I** would not come to existence without **You**; **We** wouldn't be possible without **They**, or in a more abstract manner -black implies white, dark implies light, life implies death, and so on.

Since dialogism is already explained as a theory in which individuals perceive and interpret the world with the help of others, there is a question of how monologism involves the existence of others within the context, since they are different from radical philosophical solipsism[14] which reveals the possibility of contemplating real reality as a totally fictitious world.

Theory of mind[15], in short, suggests different awareness in different contexts. It is a possibility of an individual to be able to comprehend other persons thought. It means recognizing that "other individuals have other kinds of knowledge, perspectives on topics, opinions etc., than we have ourselves, or that others have intentions and emotions that are partly hidden to us and therefore must be inferred" (Linell, 2009:42). According to Linell (2009), with the theory of mind monologists make references to the existence of others, but more in theory than practice because "we have to assume that we, that is, each and every individual among us, has developed a ToM, a "theory" about the other having a mind of his or her own that is, or at least may be, different from our own mind and their "contents" (ibid, 43). From the perspective of dialogism "these experiments tend to transform everything into cognition exclusively, and they bereave the subject

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[14] Solipsism states that all that surrounds us, the whole reality around our physical body is being mediated only by our perception produced by our consciousness. Therefore, there is nothing but -electrical signals- in our brain.
[15] "(…) the ability to form representations that include both propositions and the other's stance or attitude towards those propositions" (Fitch, 2010:138).

of their normal, supporting scaffoldings of most mundane context" (ibid, 43). What this theory fails to take into account are "personal interests, affects, engagements with others over time, trust in things that are not absolutely certain, and experiences of activities with manifold relations to other meaningful wholes, actions and activities that constitute multiple sources of knowledge" (ibid, 43). Despite the reasonable assumptions of the theory of mind, dialogue opposes reasonable facts against, arguing that everyone "gather extensive knowledge over time about others simply by simulating others and accumulating experiences of interacting with others and observing others act and interact in various everyday activities" (ibid, 43).

"In monologism, human beings are largely portrayed as autonomous rational individuals, rather than socioculturally embedded persons. According to monologism, 'social' entities do not exist as such. Collectivities and communities simply consist of the individuals that make them up" (ibid, 44). For monologists, "a conversation is a series ('an exchange') of one-way speech acts (from speaker to listener), rather than a jointly accomplished meaning-making in concert (between interlocutors)" (ibid, 45). So, a sender or a speaker delivers information, while the receiver or the listener holds and disposes information, but does not creatively and productively takes part in a conversation, while from a dialogism point of view "participants in communication give and give off various signals to others, but these others are not just plain recipients, but must work actively with the signals" (ibid, 45).

According to Mead (1934), one thing needed for a communication is Self, but not so much the body, since we can be aware and govern the different parts of the body regardless of the rest of the body, but we cannot allocate Self. On the other hand, "my body as a thing in the world and the Other's body are the necessary intermediaries between the Other's consciousness and mine" (Sartre, 1953:223). The Self is not constituted by all experiences that happen to human during life because there are situations in which we are selectively conscious, i.e. we are not fully integrated into environment. To be self-aware means to be disembodied. We define ourselves in relation to other cultures, but only if we are capable for intelligent objectification of ourselves, exploiting the positions of others towards us: "This is because the Other is not only the one whom I see, but the one who sees me" (Sartre, 1953:228). In a sense of a dialogue (and those 'reasonable assumptions' of the ToM), it means that we are contributing to a communication, while being aware, at the same time, of our own and Other's awareness. There is (a lot of)

awareness needed for a successful communication. But not always is needed more than one person. Dialogue, as Linell (2009) argues, is not referring to the number two anyway, it rather means "thorough", so from one self through another and back to the first one and so possibly infinitely.

To the question "Over time, living abroad and encountering other cultures, did you start feeling distant from your own culture? If yes, in what way?" 5 participants answered with a clear negative answer. On the other hand, other answers varied in their explanations. For example:

No, just because I live abroad, I still miss my own culture (I miss food, I miss the city and my family and friends). But, I don't miss the traffic jam, weather, the government and its political instability; Yes, because you start adopting new habits and forget your old ones; Yes, sometimes, in the usual stuff I was doing daily, from cooking other types of food to the way I was spending my free time; Sometimes, they (-referring to own culture) are old fashioned and not open minded; No, I started to appreciate it. Maybe in some things, like, our country is not so open to new things and people.

The important awareness and "the acceptance that there are other places and other times that may be with equal justification (or equal absence of good reason) preferred by members of other societies, and that however different they are, the choices cannot be disputed by reference to anything more solid and binding than preference and the determination to stick to the preferred" (Bauman, 1991:234-235).

The awareness of the Otherness "is marked by the end of fear and the beginning of tolerance" (ibid, 235), where tolerance does not just mean acknowledgement and acceptance of the existence of the Other, but it also means solidarity and appreciating the otherness: "One needs to honour the otherness in the Other, the strangeness in the stranger, remembering (…) that 'the unique is universal', that it is being different that makes us resemble each other and that I cannot respect my own difference, but by respecting the difference of the other" (ibid, 235-236).

STEREOTYPES

To the question "Is there any stereotype you can point out, which you approved about some culture?" 9 out of 12 people answered positively with explanations, some of which are:

Finnish are definitely as shy as they say; Yes, Japanese and Chinese people are hard-workers; Asian people are more friendly, but they are sometimes more careful in expressing themselves because they fear of argument or rejection, and European and American people are straightforward in expressing themselves; Eastern Europe really drinks a lot; Don't say too much but do more (Germans).

For a successful dialogue it is not necessary for individuals to give up their own point of views nor disregarding their own culture settings in general (their mental programs), because, in that case, they could lose their own personalities: "Successful intercultural encounters presuppose that the partners believe in their own values, (…) a sense of identity provides the feeling of security from which one can encounter other cultures with an open mind" (Hofstede, 2005:365). What is necessary "is understanding first one's own cultural values (and that is why one needs a cultural identity of one's own) and the next the cultural values of the others with whom one has to cooperate" (ibid, 367).

When, in an everyday communication, someone is, for example, asked "what are the Germans like", they will try to answer by summing all the impressions they had acquired from one or more experiences: "they are hard-working and efficient".

To the question "What are, if there are any, most common stereotypes you have heard about your own nationality?" very interesting answers came up. For example, Greeks answered: *Greek being poor (we aren't that poor) and being crazy friendly and ready for party (we like having fun but we care about other things as well); Loudness, funny, stubborn, open hearted.* One Italian answered: *well, it looks like Italians are regarded as disrespectful to girls (e.g. they whistle to a nice girl in the street), but the funny one is that you are speaking 100% Italian if you do the "Italian hand gesture". It might have helped that Italians were the meme of the month during the start of my Erasmus+.* Further, Indonesian answered: *Violence, drugs, brown skin.*

"While expectations may be continually modified and images continually expanded" (Iser, 1972:288) because of course, every individual is a peculiar specimen of his own culture, but when put under the same denominator it is possible to look for shared characteristics and the person tends to "even if unconsciously, to fit everything together in a consistent pattern"(Iser, 1972:288) – that is how a stereotype comes up. Of course, it is never one-sided process where one is interpreting other. The meaning and understanding comes from interaction of one

individual and the other, each "with its own particular history of experience, its own consciousness, its own outlook" (Iser, 1972:289). Iser calls it "gestalt" way of perception which is not absolute and only interpretation, but it is rather "configurative meaning" (ibid, 289) based largely on mutual preconceptions resulting with "illusion":

> "Everybody looks at the world from behind the windows of a cultural home, and everybody prefers to act as if people from other countries have something special about them (a national character), but home is normal. This is an uncomfortable message, as uncomfortable as Galileo Galilei's claim in the seventeenth century that the Earth is not the center of the universe" (Hofstede, 2005:363).

The Other implies preconceptions or "certain expectations which in turn we project onto" it, so that we selectively choose information bringing them "to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning" (Iser, 1972:290). A cross-cultural interaction can bring harmony in a way that it gives opportunity to see our own cultural patterns from a different perspective and to modify all possible biases and stereotypes. Communicating with another culture, we consistently remain between *a priori* knowledge, what we have learned in advance and what we are currently experiencing, thus *a posteriori*. Considering the preconceptions are based on external inputs, provided by own culture powerless to see clear from such a distance the individual "has to lift the restrictions he places on the Other…he opens himself to the unfamiliar world without being imprisoned in it" (ibid, 291). Thus stereotypes are not necessarily something to be fought with nor suppressed. They consist of a healthy potential because an individual "is bound to conduct his own balancing operation, and it is this that forms the aesthetic experience" (ibid, 291).

To the question "Is there any stereotype you can point out, which you disapproved about some culture?" 4 participants answered negatively, and 8 answered positively. For example:

Germans are definitely not like everyone depicts them, and they don't all speak like Hitler; Yes, Germans are more friendly than expected; Stereotypes that, for example… European people are rude to foreigners, or American people are egoistical; The people from the north are more unfriendly and introvert; French aren't rude or selfish.

To approach the Other it cannot be without any kind of preconceptions and a priori knowledge: "In seeking the balance we inevitably have to start out with certain expectations, the shattering of which is integral to the aesthetic experience" (Iser, 1972:292). Having biases helps us in a way that, at the moment we are ready to break them down, we are ready "for a re-orientation" and "in a position to gather new experiences" (ibid, 296).

Individual's expectations in an intercultural communication can be based on stereotypes, which are later modified. Having stereotypes in this case is a positive thing because it is a spring board for new insights:

> "It is common enough experience for a person to say that on a second reading he noticed things he had missed when he read the book for the first time, but this is scarcely surprising in view of the fact that the second time he is looking at the text through a different perspective…This is not to say that the second reading is "truer" than the first- they are, quite simply, different: the reader establishes the virtual dimension of the text by realizing a new time-sequence. Thus, even on repeated viewings a text allows and, indeed, induces innovative reading" (ibid, 286).

In a continuation of communication, interlocutors learn new things about each other. So already learned information now comes to dialogue with new information:

> "Thus, the reader, in establishing these interrelations between past, present and future, actually causes the text to reveal its potential multiplicity of connections. These connections are the product of the reader's mind working on the raw material of the text, though they are not the text itself-for this consists just of sentences, statements, information, etc. " (ibid, 283)

Every communication is a "kaleidoscope of perspectives, pre-intentions, recollections" (ibid, 284) of memory and sociocultural context. Since reading the text is a matter of perception, every time in communication with new people, identity is realized in different ways (…) each identity is "potentially capable of several different realizations" which through more and more communication can never "exhaust the full potential" (ibid, 285).

STRANGERS AND DANGERS

To the question "Have you been warned of any dangers by your parents, friends or relatives prior to your period abroad?" only 2 participants answered negatively. The remaining 10 answered positively, with explanations like:

Yes, how sometimes foreigners can be racists and how they are individualistic so they do not care about you; To be careful of terrorist attacks; About my own safety when I walk alone in the night. As it follows, 10 answers to the next question "Have you experienced any dangers and what were they about?" were negative, and only 2 were positive.

"The same knowledge which serves so adequately the life functions of the natives may well prove useless to the strangers even if (and particularly if) conscientiously absorbed and assimilated" (Bauman, 1991:76). It is not due to the disbelief the stranger can never do it as a native, but rather because of "the incongruent existential constitution of the stranger, as being neither 'inside' nor 'outside', neither 'friend' nor 'enemy', neither included nor excluded which makes the native knowledge unassimilable" (ibid, 76-77). Before attempting to assimilate into a new culture, a stranger must question his or her own cultural settings: "The stranger cannot adopt the native culture as it stands without first attempting to revise some of its percepts" (ibid, 78). Anyway, Bauman argues that the real reasons of the fear of strangers are at the first place "economic, political and above all social- and none of them is likely to be as malleable, as amenable to subjective intention as the 'merely cultural' obstacles pretended to be" (ibid, 80).

He argues the solution is in the solidarity[16] which "comes into its own when the language of necessity- the language of estrangement, discrimination and humiliation, falls out of use" (ibid, 236). Bauman uses a concept of "contingent existence" which "means existence devoid of certainty, and one certainty that is missing at this desolate site of ours, or difficult to be excavated from beneath the debris of modern truths, is the certainty of solidarity" (ibid, 237). This position is devoid of any superiority. It means that the acceptance of the contingency of destiny in some sense is *nirvana*. The thing is that an individual is aware of equality to others as their destiny is equally contingent: "Once the difference ceases to be a crime, it may be enjoyed at peace, and

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[16] Tolerance is the term saturated by negativity so it is important to translate it into solidarity, theoretically and pragmatically.

enjoyed for what it is, rather than for what it represents or what it is destined to become" (ibid, 254).

"In daily conversations, in political discourse, and in the media that feed them, alien cultures are often pictured in moral terms, as better or worse" (Hofstede, 2005:5). Moreover, "the most problematic are nations and groups within nations that score very high on uncertainty avoidance and thus feel that what is different is dangerous"[17] (ibid, 366).

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[17] Hofstede (2005) argues there are six dimensions of a culture, where a dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures. While staying open to the 'discovery' of new dimensions, he names the following six: Power distance ("the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions – like the family- accept and expect that power is distributed unequally"), Individualism vs. Collectivism ("the extent to which people feel independent, as opposed to being interdependent as members of larger wholes"), Masculinity vs. Femininity (the extent to which the use of force is endorsed socially"), Uncertainty Avoidance ("deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity"), Long- vs. Short-Term Orientation ("deals with change"), Indulgence ("about the good things in life"). (Taken form the website geerthofstede.com)

CONCLUSION

Why is it such an interesting process meeting new people and having a dialogue? Well, I find an explanation in the analogy to the imagination in a literary text. The more unknown the subject is, certainly, other than feeding the mere curiosity, the more we are excited to use our imagination because it is only the unknown that opens up a portal of a beautiful new knowledge on which the world rests.

During writing this thesis, in the background of each topic, the need to find an explanation of a successful dialogue emerges. Therefore, in conclusion I want to summarize all that came out of its meaning and try to write a broad definition - a definition suitable for further research. Successful dialogue is an encounter of two microcosms, members of a culture, where both their thoughts and deeds, analogue and digital communication contributes to the construction of common ideas created for the sake of some higher purpose which is, in this case, a procreation of new ideas and insights. It means digging, anatomizing and analysing thought processes behind the conversation to fully understand why and how and what is actually happening and coming out of it – in order to be fully aware of it. Every communication is thus a creative process in which a person should minimize the assumption of shared cultural conceptualizations and open the mind for new observations. The dialogue is successful only if the outcome is a win-win situation, i.e., if all the participants benefit from it.

It is somewhat logical that, in the society and the world we are being born into, we feel helpless and irresponsible, but if we change the way of thinking and take responsibility, our flow of thoughts will begin to change, and with it, the reality that surrounds us.

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