CHANGING THE NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT – CHANGING THE MISSION

V. V. Mykhaylenko

D. Sc.

Bukovyna State University of Finance and Economics

This paper focuses on priorities for research in language teaching. The objective is to give an up-to-date overview of current thinking about an important research issue - the role of cross-cultural learning/teaching environments.

First, just TEFL has a flavour of dozens of failures which a student or his/her ancestor has already undergone. Second, a language difficulty s/he can overcome with various e-gadgets but its meaning in the interlocutor's world view is hardly possible. Some universities try to meet the students' needs and drastically change the foreign language department. The fact is that in situations of cross-cultural communication it is not only what happens or what is said that is important, it is how participants interpret the interaction which ultimately counts. It is this interpretation which guides our perception of meaning and our memory of other people.

The cross-cultural courses at Monmouth University, NJ, are in great demand among, for example, economics majors, the courses are explicitly designed to enhance a student's awareness of one or more non-English-speaking cultures through such topics as language, literature, history, values, social relationships and institutions, and ideas and beliefs [5].

What is a meaning of cross culture? Cross-culture tries to bring together such relatively unrelated areas as cultural anthropology and established areas of communication. Its core is to establish and understand how people from different cultures communicate with each other and the culture of a society comprises the shared values, understandings, assumptions, and goals that are learned from earlier

generations, imposed by the members of the present day society and passed on to the succeeding generations.

Let's start with the definition of the basic concepts of the cross-cultural studies.

In Sociology: cross-cultural is smth involving or bridging the differences between cultures (See: Collins English Dictionary, 2003).

In communication: Cross-cultural communication exists when people from differing cultures have reached a certain degree of understanding regarding their differences. For understanding to take place, both people must have some form of knowledge or awareness regarding the norms or customs that exist in each other's culture. Verbal and nonverbal communications can contain implied meanings, as well as certain degrees of symbolism. For successful communication to take place, background knowledge concerning values, norms and perceptions is necessary in order for clear, effective communication to take place.

In business: a growing number of companies are consequently devoting substantial resources toward training their employees to interact effectively with those of companies in other cultures in an effort to foment a positive cross-cultural experience. Cross culture can be experienced by an employee who is transferred to a location in another country. The employee must learn the language and culture of those around him, and vice-versa. This can be more difficult if this person is acting in a managerial capacity; someone in this position who cannot effectively communicate with or understand their employees' actions can lose their credibility. In an ever-expanding global economy, cross culture and adaptability will continue to be important factors in the business world.

In language studies: languages also differ from one another on their descriptions of time. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis different cultures also have different linguistic properties. But quite similar cultures can also have significantly different linguistic properties, in which case it is rather implausible that the thought processes of the speakers are so different. Let us take into consideration some spatial prepositions from three West Germanic languages. English, German and Dutch are linguistically and culturally closely related. Languages differ dramatically

from one another in terms of how they describe the world. Each language differs from the next in innumerable ways: from obvious differences in pronunciation and vocabulary to more subtle differences in grammar. It is interesting to analyze whether having different ways of describing the world leads speakers of different languages also to have different ways of thinking about the world.

There is a limited number of common human problems for which all people at all times must find some solution, including the character of innate human nature, the relation of man to nature, the temporal focus of human life, modality of humankind's relationship to other people and the modality of human activity. The answers to these five concerns are called 'value orientations' and can be interpreted as 'core values'.

The roots of the current Whorfian hypothesis go back to the German educator Wilhelm von Humboldt's study of linguistic relativity and determinism early in the last century [7, p.70]. According to Humboldt, languages differ from one another; thought and language are inseparable; and, therefore, each speech community embodies a distinct world-view. Benjamin Whorf extended this doctrine of linguistic determinism to describe the roles of language and thought in human development.

In the way languages describe spatial locations, dramatic cross linguistic differences were noted. Whereas most languages (e.g. English, Dutch) rely heavily on relative spatial terms to describe the relative locations of objects (e.g. left/right, front/back), Tzeltal (a Mayan language) relies primarily on absolute reference (a system similar to the English north/south direction system). Spatial locations that are north are said to be downhill, and those south are said to be uphill [4, p.109-169]. Stuart Hall, of the Birmingham School (S.Hall, 1996) considers culture to be both the means and values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationship, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence.

Culture can be defined as the totality of the following attributes of a given group (or subgroup): shared values, beliefs and basic assumptions, as well as any behavior arising from those, of a given group. Then the cross culture must be a vital issue in international business, as the success of international trade depends upon the

smooth interaction of employees from different cultures and regions [6, p.73-96; 3, p. 26-31].

Students of Agsburg University, Minneapolis, USA, as any non-English language majors, have a grudge or a prejudice against a foreign language. Psychologically they'd rather choose "Languages and Cross-Cultural Studies. Omitting culture education from a language curriculum "shuts down interest in people who don't think of themselves as linguists and who want to learn about the culture. Most students choose language for International Relations major. The department's hopes to revolutionize the way language students think about their studies [1].

The change doesn't just affect the department's name. New courses will be added, including Introduction to Cultural Studies. This "gateway course" will be taken before a student enters into their major. Several culture classes will be added to the International Relations and Language major curricula as well.

The department is also attempting to generate more interest in study abroad programs and intends to include short-term study abroad in the new major track. Language and cultural studies are to be paired completely, in the hopes that studying language will generate interest in culture, while interest in culture will encourage students to study language.

The change ultimately reflects the department's mission of creating a global community. Restructuring the department and incorporating culture education into the curriculum will encourage interest in cross-cultural studies and emphasize language education's importance in effective global interaction. "One can never thoroughly understand a culture without knowledge of language," In learning English, students need to be constantly alert for shifts in meaning as participants use varying systems and principles of interpretation.

If understanding cross-cultural interactions have become a part of our everyday life then to make the cross-cultural studies more efficient and true to life the teacher must mix in various social groups of the society the language s/he is going to teach.
References:

1. Agsburg Universit,Minneapolis, USA. News and Events, 2013.

2. Bot de Kees Ginsberg Ralph B., Kramsch Ginsberg and Claire (Editors). Foreign Language Research in Cross-Cultural Perspective /Kees de Bot, Ralph B. Ginsberg and Claire Kramsch// Studies in Birmingham. – 1991. – Vol.27, – Issue 2. – 275p.

3. Cortazzi Martin. Cross Cultural Communication. A Foreign Language Perspective/ Martin Cortazzi // Science. - Issue 15. – 1996. – Pp.26-31.

4. Levinson S. Frames of Reference and Molyneux's Question: Crosslinguistic Evidence /S.Levinson // Bloom, P. and Peterson M. (eds). Language and Space. – Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. – Pp. 109-169.

5. Monmouth University, NJ., U.S. News and Events, 2013.

6. Pethő Eszter, Balázs Heidrich. DIFFERENCES OF Language FROM A CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE/ Eszter Pethő, Balázs Heidrich //European Integration Studies. - Miskolc. – 2005. –Vol.4. – N1. – Pp.73-96.

7. Slobin D. From 'Thought and Language to Thinking and Speaking / D.Slobin // Rethinking Linguistic Relativity. Eds. John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. – Pp. 70-96.

8. VICTOR D. A. International Business Communication. – New York, NY., Harper Collins, 1992. – 296 p.

ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ У СТУДЕНТІВ ТЕХНІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

З.П. Овчаренко

ст.викладач

Національний технічний університет України «КПІ»

Іншомовна підготовка фахівців технічних спеціальностей є одним із важливих складових сучасної системи вищої технічної освіти. Метою навчання іноземній мові у вищих технічних навчальних закладах є оволодіння іноземною