INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING A SECOND LANGUAGE IN RUSSIA

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The paper analyzes the problem of teaching a second language in Russia with the help of techniques of intercultural communication. For the purpose of this paper we define teaching a second language with the help of intercultural communication as a strategy of successful teaching, based mostly on the social-geographic and mental and emotional approaches. We built up a system of teaching a second language based on the principles of motivation, tolerance, emotional state, patriotism, cultural value, reason and usability. We suggest the system of persuasion; a manual which helps to reach goals; a system of methods and techniques which enables people to use the colossal abilities of human brain. This issue is of great importance at the current moment since Russia is reinforcing its international positions and is active in developing collaboration with foreign countries. For successful negotiations we need specialists whose knowledge would not be limited by the knowledge of the English language only but they would also be well informed about the social cultural aspect of a partner. This is true not only when we talk about the business side of life; in friendly conversations cultural knowledge would only add up to the communicative purpose of the interaction. Despite the fact that a great breakthrough in the theory of communication has been achieved by many researches this knowledge is not widely used in many spheres of our life. And one of such spheres is definitely teaching. In the paper we will try to answer the question how to implement the techniques in teaching process in forming intercultural communication competence so as to make training programs more successful and productive. Our own 7-year experience of exchanging trainees with the Teaching Training Institute in Dijon (IUFM, Dijon) attests to the importance and success of our methods.

Keywords: Communication, Approaches, Principles, Trainees' program, 7-year trainees’ exchange.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Bologna agreement Russia should have already joined the world educational environment by the present moment. Thus the process is far from its end. According to the reasons that the educational profiles are not similar in both educational systems, that elements of the world educational environment sometimes fail entering the Russian system. And its specific features are not taken into consideration. New system is not established but the old one is already being ruined. The We suggest implementing the technologies of intercultural communication and using them wider in educational processes to solve the abovementioned problems. Intercultural communication is the process of various world view and understanding on the one hand, and
mutual evolution and improvement on the other. This issue has been discussed by outstanding researches (Belic & Reznic, 1998; Makovskey, 1996; Sapir, 1993; Ter-Minasova, 2008).

The implementing process should be done in two ways: firstly, put into practice separate elements and apply them at a new place; secondly, increase the importance of new educational profiles (Bachelor and Magistrate) in social cultural environment of Russian economy (Meshcheryakova, 2001: pp. 22 – 302).

The Russian population ignores the world adopted profiles of education and prefers the Russian profiles of a specialist which is not popular in the world education. Thus, we advise to use management system in the educational process, to appreciate the appearance of private educational institutions which may refer as an alternative kind to the state education.

While doing the problem discussed in this article the following approaches are regarded: social-geographic approach and mental and emotional approach.

**Social-geographic approach.** There is considered the connection of education and social and economic issues and as well as state and political problems alongside with society changing and training the specialists able to work in new economic conditions. The aim is to strengthen economic, scientific, political and cultural connections within world community. After the USSR breaking out its republics’ education systems became non equal. It takes long time even not one year decade to make a good higher education system attracting huge finance and material resources. It requires creating an *integral education space*. Whole education space means some states territories where the conditions for getting higher education for any citizen at any state education institution are present. Also it means the admittance of education certificate and state education standards and academic mobility of students and teachers. Making out the standard dilemma decides the global problems of forming an integral education space within the European Union and the world community.

Integral education space includes integral information environment consisting of publishing and distributing manuals, scientific and methodological literature, also seminars, meetings, conferences and other scientific and methodological forums.

Integral education environment needs an integral electronic library that helps to have all achievements of higher education institutions and world science centers in scientific and education process. A lot is done for this purpose. For example, we got some information about abroad research in the integral electronic information net.

The most important question in the present education reforms is the one about a more complete merging of Russian education space and the world education space. This issue is being worked over by the government and education authorities.

There is a basic methodology question – whether and how it is possible to use the abroad experience. Actually it is really worth using it because the interaction and interpenetration of various national cultures promote the world progress. Nowadays no civilized country can afford to be isolated from world community. The same can be referred to the education sphere. The question of “one’s own” and “other’s” is urgent for some countries but it is the most urgent for Russia. It deals with some special conditions of historical, cultural, social and political development of Russia during hundreds of years. Recent years there was renewed the argument about the problem of whether to use the abroad experience. The range of views is very big: some confirm the necessity of a wider using of Western political, economical and social and cultural model; some are categorically opposed to any possible borrowing. It is obvious that all this controversy reflects the ideological fight which is characteristic for the present development stage of our society. They reject any borrowings because they are sure in Russia’s being absolutely special which can’t be rationally analyzed. There is a popular Russian saying that
Russian can’t be understood through the mind. The polemics about where Russia is closer to the West or the East is renewed. Also there is a thought that Russian culture is a specific Eurasian phenomenon for which Western influence is dangerous.

Social-geographic approach seems simple but it has recently become more and more important in the light of reforms and search of ways to join Russia to world education space and at the same time to keep national values, priorities and advantages.

Social-geographic approach is polysemantic. It has many important moments like various education spaces merging and their influence to each other; Russia’s connection to world education space; creating an integral information space as a characteristic of the education space.

**Mental and emotional approach.** It is widely known that education is one of the most important factors of social and economic progress. Forming the necessary competences which any specialist, so a language teacher needs, is growing. But education period is limited by some years and is probably getting less. So it is necessary to intensify the education process, to form competence and qualities necessary for specialists. For doing this the renewing of all aspects of education process is needed: its content, forms, methods, and the most complex thing – the psychology of the education process participants – the way of thinking, interests and settings, their relations, searching for new ways and education technologies.

I suggest using the approach which I called mental and emotional approach (Meshcheryakova, 2001: 22 – 201). It means forming the mentalities, settings, motives and new world mapping through second language learning and forming a second language personality through using the emotion technologies as the means influencing the second language studying process and upbringing process.

The basis for using the mental and emotional approach is given by the researches done by the abroad psychologists. First it is R.A.Everman who thinks that the changes in the education space are the changes in the sphere of knowledge of thinking of an individual and the society in total. One can’t but agree with his point of view to the sphere of human knowledge in the future, present and past. Knowledge about the world is constantly changing. No doubt that the volume of any information as well as knowledge about any activity or object is so huge that no individual can perceive it. There were times when a person could read and understand everything in Physics, Chemistry, Geography and other science. Unfortunately information explosion didn’t meet suitable quality and dynamic changes in education. As said by R.A.Everman present education training methods use only oral and written speech, they completely ignore other properties of the mind by means of which people can be trained. According to this idea about the changes in the sphere of education the scheme of education space can be like:

- **Published knowledge of a definite subject or definite sphere.** During thousands of years this coordinate of training space was nearly even. At the era of information explosion it turned out into vertical.

- **Knowledge for a separate subject.** It was learned by an individual or a group of students by using some traditional teaching methods. Although teaching technologies have been definitely developed they don’t use all possibilities of the human mind. Actually at the present time a widely spread teaching model “class – teacher” exists since ancient Greek and Roman civilizations.

- **Human ability to learning knowledge.** It wasn’t developed during five thousand years because of low spread of biological evolution of a human as a species. People can’t
enlarge the volume of memory for keeping information but they can have a try to use the brain completely for learning and keeping information.

- **Our possible future.** It is possible to make a certain correspondence between the volume of knowledge and an ability to learn it. It can be done by using various properties of human mind and having presented the same material in different ways. A modern teaching system didn’t present all possibilities of using all properties of brain and all five sensors. But using the newest technologies people are able to provide an effective presentation of multi sensor material.

Also the basis for creating mental and emotional approach is the research by E.V.Solovyeva. It is about the phenomenon of hermeneutic situation as the absence of understanding the sense of the text at its reception and forming based on the human reflexive ability — the understanding. The author implements the model of space of consciousness as a special activity type for learning the sense of the text by the recipient; also the author researches the process of forming the hermeneutic situation within space of consciousness (Solovyeva, 1999: 4 – 14).

This linguistic research is connected with the problems of thinking development and training. It considers the situation of overcoming of non-understanding and some factors influencing the process of understanding:

- Aims, problems, motives and abilities of a person which are the conditions of forming the situation of understanding.
- Cultural and communication factors because text understanding is a special kind of communication.
- Such model of space of consciousness includes:
  - The text itself, types of its understanding, individual experience of thinking.
  - The experience of text perception, the experience of understanding organization, the experience of organization of thinking as an activity.
  - Defining, cognitive and categorizing understanding.

According to this approach I would like to touch upon the problem of motivation. In education space it can turn various elements of interaction into some ugly forms, when the needs of a high level are not satisfied and it is back to already satisfied needs (like self respect, mutual understanding). Students who didn’t get any need in development and evolution are back to the need of self respect and satisfy it by force methods. Teachers who didn’t satisfy the need in enlargeing the competence are also back to the need in self respect by abnormal deepening in work. Very often it takes a lot of time to reach the necessary result in the second language learning instead of using the perfection of training technologies.

For education space the personality of a teacher, its authority and image are an important factor influencing the teacher’s training for educational interaction in education space. Sometimes the authority of a teacher is so huge for the students that they trust the facts announced by the teacher. This can ease the process of training and knowledge learning and can make a further process of student socializing difficult. Moreover thinking does not become independent, once own world view is not formed. It’s a popular fact that the most genius stuff was created only because someone didn’t trust well known things, and could find or create something impossible, something that can’t exist in its usual sense.
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When there is a motive there is a possibility to make the participants of second language interaction behave according to the goals of education space. Acknowledgement and gratitude mean more for some people than money. The need in self respect and love must be satisfied in the process of interaction. Teachers often admit that the main factor of their work is happiness which they feel while teaching. It is popular that a good motive factor of a high level is love, jokes and fun, which ease the daily routine and help to form the feeling of one’s own importance.

On the whole I can admit that most people behave this way or any other way without thinking over why they are doing it. A lot of actions seem to be unpredictable. Thus they are motivated by something. That is why speaking about motivation we often mean that there are forces in a human or out of human which make him/her enthusiastic or persistent in making a certain action.

My personal experience of a thirty years pedagogical and research practice and also the students and post-graduates scientific researches under my supervising testify that diaries, which students write in their out of class activity time, can be very effective in the educational process and help the teacher and the student a lot. After classes the student describes in written form his impressions from the lesson, gives the details of his emotional interaction and the atmosphere in class. I can admit that twenty minutes of written self analysis low down the stress and help to keep the psychic health.

I presume that mental and emotional approach may become the most perspective in the sphere of pedagogy as nowadays people value mostly not the amount of knowledge and information but the methods of developing the processes of using the knowledge, methods of training and upbringing on the basis of a dialogical emotional interaction participants of an educational process. But the process of understanding and interacting may become more complicated when communication includes several languages.

Intercultural communication. One of the features of contemporary social and cultural situation in language education is focusing on culture (general culture, world culture, communication culture, personality culture, language culture, culture institutions). The authors like M.Cole, S.Scribner, M.M.Makovskey, S.G.Ter-Minasova, and others contribute a lot to the research of culture. Culture is regarded as an independent social environment or as an integral characteristic of all social system.

The essence of culture is revealed in activity, in achievement and values done by mankind in the process of historical development. In contemporary culture studies there is a conception saying that in the centre of historical, political, economical and spiritual processes there is a personality and natural laws of its development. As the main social function they consider personality development, i.e. human personality as absolute culture object and subject.

Some Russian psychologists contribute to this question. They discover universal, psychological basis of personality development, personality motivation development in general and in any aspects (Ananyev, 1980; Bozowich, 1968; Uznadze, 1961 and others). They worked out a variant of activity theory where the notion of action is the main principle. It means the process where subject and motive do not coincide. That’s why it is necessary for subject and motive to be reflected in personality psychic. Otherwise the action has no sense.

Relation culture is also one of the urgent pedagogic and philosophic researches. As an example is the research done by R.K. Abakarova about forming good relations among students. The essence of moral as a human value is revealed at the philosophic and historical level. There are characterized such properties as humanity, justice, the good, virtue and etc. The basic attributes of good human relations are shown. At the social and pedagogical level the author distinguishes the factors and conditions which cause the forming of such relations. It can be
progressive national traditions, pedagogical heritage for human upbringing (correlated scientific conceptions, innovative experience, science and methodology works), creative research and critical use of Russian experience and abroad experience. This research presents social space. It is the environment consisting of some interconnected and interpenetrating spheres (I – Family – Kindergarten – School – Microenvironment – Macroenvironment). The contradictions of various components in social environment make such social and cultural events like communication conflicts. The author speaks about the ways of solving it (Abakarova, 1995: 8 – 12).

According to P.A. Sorokin social and cultural events are those having the fact of meaningful interaction (i.e. any interaction). There the influence has a meaning or value which is above pure physical or biological properties of correspondent actions. It’s wrong to speak about the social and cultural events as if they consist only of people. Besides that these events include non-material notions and their material carriers as well as important and universal components (Sorokin, 1992: 192 – 206).

During teachers’ training for the interaction in education space it is important to create social and cultural self identity of education space of school students. This self identity is very precious, it helps to enlarge the chances for nations’ development, it makes the nations take their strength in the past and borrow the elements of other cultures thus continuing the process of self development.

It is well known that no culture can pretend to be universal. This characteristic is done on the world nation experience. Cultural self identity and cultural diversity are interconnected. All cultures make an integral whole in the general human heritage. Cultural self identity of peoples is being renewed and enriched as a result of contacts of traditions and values of other nations. Culture is a dialogue, it is a change of views and experience, and it is a learning of values and traditions of others. When isolated it dies.

There is done a dialogue of cultures in education space on the basis of second language learning. Modern ideas about the concept of the language as a means of people and social and cultural education space interaction are also connected with the notion of world model. It is obvious the human society is possible when there is mutual understanding and interpenetrating into the inner worlds. That’s why a general system of world view is needed. There are so many world mappings as there are so many viewers who are in contact with the reality. Even above subjective component of world mapping is an ideal formation, it can’t be broadcast by itself because of being so global. For it some means like mediation is needed alongside with the social practice of its using. It can be a world model which is a sign reflection of world mapping (Mackovskey, 1996: 16).

World model is considered as general reflection of above subjective component of world mapping in this tradition taken in systemic and operation aspect. World is understood as a human and environment in their interaction or as a result of converting the information about the environment and a human (Mackovskey, 1996: 3).

The researchers think the world model is a combination of interconnected semiotic information images implemented in world mapping. The world mapping is a systemization of an individual and people’s experience done by a person. These images generated by the same property on the basis of the same principles are not homogeneous (speech, defined types of behavior, some actions, objects and etc.). It is considered the world model can be recognized by the native speakers on can be referred to the activity sphere of social psychology. Also the world model is a sigh image; it represents a global ideal object (world mapping) by its own structure. Its structure is represented in other sigh objects in the language.
I think it is important to say that the reality is reflected by world mapping which is structured with the help of world model. The world model is represented and subjected with the help of semiotic systems, i.e. the language. When the world model is explained by the language it is called the linguistic world model (Mackovskey, 1996: 17).

I suppose that the most ancient way of teaching a foreign language is the method of mastering a foreign language via a social cultural environment. Even many centuries ago people learned about each other, about the world, learned the languages as a means of transferring information and communication in different situations of interaction with other tribes, in a common activity hunting, at a war, in a forest, traveling, negotiating, etc.

Analyzing the History of culture I found out that this method of teaching and learning a second language has been the most effective for thousands of years. It is a well known fact that a person masters the language in an easy way while communicating the native speakers, interacting with them, having long free talks, spontaneous conversations without cliché but having real information caused by the situation and personal importance.

The method of teaching a foreign language via using a socio-cultural environment is very popular in India. Interpreters are taught there this way – future specialists are given basic knowledge of a foreign language in grammar, lexis, phonetics but further they master the language in the country where they communicate with native speakers. This way of learning foreign languages was used in Russia before the revolution. Students got into a foreign language sphere very often, when they came to a Chinese restaurant, French dressmaker, bought sausages at a German butcher’s. So social cultural sphere and everyday foreign language activity helped people to know and use not only their native language but some other languages. At the present time in many countries they include into the educational process some training abroad, but not always such training have a long period of time. And that is why such training can influence the formation of communication culture.

The culture of communicating in an educational environment develops in such directions as interacting with a teacher, interacting with another student, other students and via socio-cultural environment using world cultural values – literature, cinema, art, etc. During the process of interaction there appear some situation meaningful images in the minds of the subjects of interaction; there appears a special inner spiritual world, which reflects the elements of a real cultural sphere, society. All these things lead to the widening and deepening the inner world vision and actualization “inner I”.

The understanding between the teacher and the student becomes difficult when the interaction is based on more than one language which is typical for a second language educational process. The entity of several languages, several cultures lead to differentiation in the way of thinking and understanding different cultures. Language influences the culture and the way of world vision. The more languages the person knows, the more his views on the surrounding world change. In the end the student may become the citizen not of a particular country but the citizen of the world.

For our research it is important to speak about the hypothesis of linguistic reference. It says about the connection and the influence of a language upon the culture and the world view. Sometimes it is called Sapir — Whorf hypothesis by the names of its authors. American linguists B. Whorf says that the language is not just the means for expressing ideas but it is the form that defines the image of our (after Belic & Reznic, 1998). Here I can see the culture factor, world view factor, constructing of world mapping factor, second language personality development factor. All these things are considered in the foreign language teaching methodology and they influence the teachers training for the pedagogical interaction in education space.
Also I am going to speak about mentality within the mental and emotional approach. Mentality is defined as a store of the mind, as possibilities and strength of the mind, as thinking characteristic, as a combination of all characteristic of the mind, as some settings and the content of the mind alongside with the sum of thinking properties or possibilities. Scientists believe that the mentality is the combination of ideas, views and feeling of a group of people who belong to a certain époque, geographic location and social environment. Mentality is a certain psychological way of the society that influences the historical and social processes. That why the mentality factor means a lot for a foreign language teaching methodology and the teachers training for the pedagogical interaction in education space.

Russian scientists A.A. Belic, J.M. Reznic have analyzed the peculiarities of cognition and thinking within the cultures. They define three types of mentality:

- **Western type.** It is the kind of mentality which tries to reflect the reality in the form of notions and views. This type of mentality is deductive and cognitive.
- **Eastern type.** It is an introvert type of intuition thinking. It is almost about observing spiritual perfection in a world development. It uses myths and semantic images more than notions.
- **Traditional thinking.** This style and way of thinking is popular in a traditional society. It is oriented on particular solving of life situations and for solving definite problems (Belic & Reznic, 1998).

Each of world view types has a complex polyphonic structure according to its authors. It is specific within the general human ability of thinking as an activity to operate the ideal forms of existence. This multilevel culture is referred to the style of thinking processes in the modern culture. Along with the logic thinking myths and belief in the supernatural plays a great role in culture. There is a widespread thing like rationalization in the modern culture. It means proving of some absurd wrong dogmas by a science-like method. There is a pseudo worship of some idols and modern cults – success, power, and profit. More than that seeing the surrounding events is independent from the image done by mass media. This psychological feature of a modern person perception is very obvious in the experimental research of the wrong setting. There is a simple example very popular in science. It describes a different behavior of a person who has a higher education. The person gets into a paradoxical situation when he sees black and white balls. But people taking part in the experience make him sure that all balls are black. And really under the pleasure of these people and their group ideas this very person calls white balls black. Such kind of decisions under the pleasure of well known norms and notions is widely spread in modern society.

Dealing with language education space the notion of mentality makes pedagogical process more complex as various language speakers also think in various ways because they poses different types of mentality and sensor types.

**PRACTICAL RESULTS**

There is done the analysis of Russian and foreign mentality in the educational space. It is done on the students’ questioning (the most part of the students studied for some time abroad) and comparison of manual books. As an example Volgograd education institutions are be taken. We
compared the following points: process of education, way of communication, knowledge, way of thinking, educational approach, upbringing, forming motivation, tutorial work.

There is a real experience of implementing the mentioned elements into the educational process. It is obvious in the language education. And the results are positive. There is used the competence forming methodology, distance education and centralizing of education.

While performing the process of education, Russian teachers are aimed at groups of students, whole classes when European teachers – at individuality of teaching. And each student has his own pace of progress independently from other students in class. Russian students have to wait for the class to go forward. Speaking about the way of communication, Russian teachers choose the official style, keep the distance, teach the honorable way of addressing the teachers. In Europe they value mostly free communication and friendship between teachers and students.

The third important point we researched is knowledge. In Russia they pay more attention to the amount and quality of knowledge, in Europe the situation the same but more than that, they value most of all skills of using the knowledge and forming competences. The forth is the way of thinking: the Russians teach how to find and use successful methods and technologies. Europeans teach mainly how to form your own way of vision and solving the problem. The fifth – Russian educational approach is based on having more knowledge in each discipline, when in Europe they mainly create different projects and use a lot of activities including solving the problems. The sixth – upbringing. We pay a lot of attention to this sphere and it is a separate unique thing, sometimes independent from educational process. They never distinguish upbringing and teaching as separate things. Speaking about forming motivation, Russian students firstly mention fun, happiness, wishes to please the parents, being proud of the success, secondly the wish to find his own place in the outer environment, make a career. European students do it vice versa. And the last point – tutors. Russian tutors work with groups and classes, Europeans work mainly with individuals and their socializing in groups and outer environment.

I distinguished the next levels of pedagogical interaction bases on the factor of intercultural communication during the educational crisis in Russia:

- approach,
- personal world view,
- manual book,
- native and second language mapping interaction.

Pedagogical interaction will always be a success when based on some certain principles. According to the above analyzed use of intercultural communication I denoted the following principles:

- motivation,
- tolerance,
- emotional state,
- patriotism,
- cultural value,
- reason and usability.

This article has the sub-aim to inform about the present international experience of 7 years practice for English and French teachers. It was organized by our lab “International Research
Center for Methodology of Intercultural Communication” at the VSPU and IUFM (France). Basic tendencies of this practice were: education model change from knowledge centric to competence; development of reflexive thinking and professional skills; education model change from informative and reproductive to activity and creativity; integral interdisciplinary approach to practice modeling; using of problem and project technologies as a basis for synthesis of theory and practice, multimedia and e-technologies.

Among the main principles of social and cultural aspect I distinguish second language interaction teaching in culture context; intercultural communication teaching in connection with developing law protecting consciousness and taking part in peace making activity; interdisciplinary culture study; intellectual potential when choosing the forms of second language training interaction; humanistic psychology of training environment.

In the context of culture dialogues minor methodology principles make conditions for studying the culture of the countries which language is learned. The culture of the world space supports it as well as over thinking the Russian culture from of a position of a culture dialogue like a minor principle for English and French teacher’s training (Russia and France). Any culture is a combination of peculiarities of an interaction, unforgettable social and cultural values, it depends on the society. Only because through its traditions and forms of expression every separate social and cultural group, community or nation declares the surrounding space about themselves, join it but keep their self identity.

In my practical work I put in one of the first places creating cultural self identity of the educational environment of a group, class, school; and correlation of these self identities with the differences in their own culture as trainees from Russia had their teaching practice in France (Bourgogne University) and trainees from France – in Russia, at Volgograd State Pedagogical University.

When teaching a language interaction in the context of culture dialogue I used the popular statement that a communicative and social and cultural development of interaction subjects by foreign language means will form the communication ability speech tact, objectiveness in views and assessments being ready for mutual interaction with people with different views notwithstanding their ethnic, race and religious believes.

It was presupposed to study national culture of peoples, international communication speakers. This culture is one of the branches of world culture, it helps to understand the integration level of western European and eastern European cultures into world culture and the integral planet culture sense for mankind evolution.

The development of reflexive methodology thinking was done within forming the professional competence of a trainee during the training the following discourse skills were achieved under the next levels: actual level which deals with the ability to focus to accentuate to discuss the training actions of a teacher; assessment level that helps to asses the result of a lesson and to suppose more effective teaching and education methods; cause level that regards the ability to prove the necessity of choosing existing methods and technologies from many others.

CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the culture in foreign language teaching methodology is getting more and more popular thanks to contradictory views. Some scientists believe one should focus on ones native culture. While others consider concentrating the effort on the importance of teaching the abroad culture, the culture of the studied language. In my opinion such views contradict the notion of a culture dialogue which means knowing ones owns culture and the culture of a second
language. While cultures interact, I call this process intercultural communication during which cultures act in a dialogue, they influence and penetrate into each other and some cultural patterns change. All this characterizes the integral notion educational system crisis in Russia. The aim of our article was to regard this question from the position of using the most rational methodology in the educational environment.

REFERENCES