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## CROSS CULTURAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY IN DEVELOPING SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONALITY OF STUDENTS

I.D. Garus, M.A. Bondarenko

*Despite a growing interest among college and university students in developing their spirituality and personality through higher education, few are provided with opportunities to do so. An integral approach to the study of consciousness and personal calling through foreign culture and language learning addresses this gap by examining theories of consciousness and spirituality from diverse epistemological perspectives, including traditions of civilization and culture. Results indicated that students became more open to diverse ideas about consciousness, more self-aware, and more committed to communication and self-reflection. Implications for the growing discourse about cross cultural approach to foreign language learning in developing spirituality and spiritual intelligence of a personality are discussed.*

**Key words:** CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication), spirituality, spiritual intelligence of a personality, cross-cultural approach to FL studying, cultural awareness, communication behavioural patterns, idiosyncratic factors.

There's no doubt that awareness-raising activities, especially focusing on the development of socio-cultural activities, should be introduced into language learning class.

Students of English in Ukraine must be aware of important cross-cultural differences that occur on the level of discourse, conversation in particular. Of all verbal interactions, conversation is by far the most difficult because it is exactly that form of communication where differences in cultural assumptions and values are most vividly and strikingly perceived by counterparts. These differences pertain primarily to the form of activity and motivation, form of relation to others, perception of self. As all cultures contain their own patterns of thinking, assumptions, values, and norms of behaviour, to properly understand foreign counterparts interactants should hold to the following rules of speech behaviour:

- 1) Establish conceptual cross-cultural bridges;
- 2) Foster an attitude of cultural relevance, which means that since a culture provides a complete system of meaning for conducting life, each culture possesses integrity and is neither inferior nor superior to any other culture. But in a structured situation for a specific purpose, one cultural system may work better than another;
- 3) Work toward self-understanding. An awareness of one's own culture along with examples of contrasting cultures contributes to the individual's understanding of her- or himself as a cultural being. This understanding assists in preparing for the hardships of culture shock and the frustrations common to working abroad or dealing with foreign nationals at home. Obtaining objectivity in appraising oneself as well as one's counterparts and an ability to separate cultural from idiosyncratic factors in oneself and others is important to effectiveness in foreign cultures.
- 4) Identify facilitating and interfering factors, those which help work with foreign counterparts and those which are usually a handicap;
- 5) Develop cultural judgment, since any success relies on judgment, good will, and cross-cultural commitment. It is necessary to maintain a curious and open mind, to question and inquire, and to test our analyses and suggestions.

These rules of behaviour as well as universal Principles of Politeness and Cooperation guide speech behaviour of foreign counterparts in each particular situation. Teachers of foreign languages must form students' cross-cultural awareness and understanding to enable them to adapt their modes of behaviour to a form appropriate to the local situation. This is the only way to become truly masters of a foreign language and culture. It is high time we abandoned the idea that cultural differences are minefields to communication and mutual understanding and accepted the challenge that cultural differences are the relevant source material to be employed in classes of foreign language learners for mutual benefit and cooperation.

The mastery of a foreign language, as is well known, presupposes not only familiarity with the rules of grammar, but also a certain store of words and the specifics of their usage. The ability to speak a language, and consequently the evaluation of the level of language skills, is inextricably linked with understanding the history, culture, and customs of the people speaking this language.

The cultural ethnolinguistic concept of foreign language teaching presupposes not taking the communicative approach and purely communicative competence as the objective of training to extremes. It would be more precise to speak of communicative orientation of the learning process. Intercultural competence comes to the fore. In other words, foreign language teaching becomes intercultural teaching, learning how to understand the foreigner, aimed at overcoming xenophobia and existing stereotypes.

The new approach to foreign language teaching also requires new methods, means and forms of teaching. This is particularly true for the development of a new type of textbooks, new generation textbooks. In this type of educational process, the source culture and the target culture play an important role. They are being compared and juxtaposed, as a result of which a new type of linguistic personality is formed. It shapes a new attitude to national identity, to target and source culture.

As it is known, language and culture are closely interlinked in FL learning and teaching. Culture is a motivational factor in FL learning. This applies particularly when English is in use as a medium of international communication. Students will need to be alert to signs of cultural differences, to be tolerant of such differences, to be prepared to establish a proper base for communication by raising cultural differences into consciousness.

Integrating language teaching and culture is a must today. Culture may significantly contribute to the learner's linguistic, cognitive and social development. Students are to be made to realize that culture is an important component of education. Shaping students' cultural awareness will partially contribute to the achievement of this goal. It will help students to understand specific differences between their own culture and the other cultures they study. It is true, "successful communication can only take place where there is adequate awareness of the cultural context within which the language is used". (Blackmore)

With reference to the latest scientific research it maybe asserted that the primary aim of the foreign language teacher is to systematically and consistently incorporate cross-cultural issues into the FL teaching process, to logically integrate language teaching and culture. It may be achieved through students' acquisition of socio-cultural competence which is an integral part of communicative competence as the major objective in FL teaching.

Socio-cultural acquisition is organized according to the specific features of each year of study. Meanwhile, one of the major aspects in all

years is developing cross-cultural skills. Shaping students' cultural awareness will obviously contribute to the achievement of this goal.

In fact, to become a proficient language learner a student should have the ability to reflect on his own learning, to be aware of what it is and why it is important for him. Indeed, he should have the ability to spot and realize similarities and differences between cultures of the target language and his own one. In other words we should promote students' cultural awareness of different communicative behavioural patterns characteristic of the target language cultural community. It will help to raise students' awareness of the target language communicative behaviours, of their own country and develop the ability to explain their own cultural standpoint.

Another important medium of developing spirituality and personality of students when learning a foreign language and the culture of countries where it's spoken is the potential application of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), both for its potential appeal to young people accustomed to using technology to communicate with their peers, and for its potential in allowing people from all parts of the world to communicate quickly in one-to-one and one-to-many situations.

The teaching of culture imposes a number of demands on the FL teacher. First is the nature of culture itself, which, far from being static, changes over time and embodies a number of beliefs, meanings and behaviours within any given country.

Second is the very real danger of stereotyping where our cultural influences lead us to impose our own meanings on to other cultures.

Third is the danger that teaching will be focused on the dominant culture. To avoid that all young people should be offered three orientations during their education:

1) Cognitive orientation: the acquisition of knowledge about and understanding of other countries, cultures and societies.

2) Evaluative orientation: reflection on social norms, respect for the norms of other societies and an evaluation of them in an unprejudiced way.

3) Action orientation: instillation of a disposition to engage with others, i.e. people from another culture or society.

Learners need to be able to consider the experiences and perspectives of people in other countries and communities at first hand if they are to test the information they have been given about the cultural traits of the speakers of the language they are learning. CMC can provide regular access to native

speakers and a perspective beyond that of the dominant culture, by means of easier access to all parts of the world where the foreign language is spoken. Contact does not necessarily lead to cultural learning, but it can foster positive attitudes, as well as supporting students' knowledge about one another's cultures and most important it can help mould spirituality and personality of students.

Making use of foreign language learners' computer literacy and appetite for communication with other young people via the internet seems an obvious way for foreign language teachers to develop the linguistic and cultural skills of their learners.

Even though this is virtually a virgin field, we have already been able to describe specific patterns of behavior in a given culture and through comparison with the native culture of the student we have discovered that there are certain misunderstandings that take place again and again. Good experimental test items have been worked out from the information yielded by that partial comparison of cultural behavior, and we have every reason to believe that much more complete testing of cultural understanding can be carried out with present tools, including CMC.

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*Незважаючи на зростаючий інтерес серед студентів коледжів і університетів у розвитку їхньої духовності і особистості через вищу освіту, прикро, що лише деяким з них надана можливість зробити це. Комплексний підхід до вивчення свідомості та особистого покликання до пізнання іншої культури і мови займається цією прогалиною шляхом вивчення теорії свідомості і духовності з різних гносеологічних перспектив, у тому числі традицій цивілізації та культури. Результати показали, що студенти стали більш відкритими для різноманітних уявлень про свідомість, більш самосвідомими і більш досконаліми в спілкуванні та саморефлексії. Обговорюються наслідки зростаючого дискурсу про міжкультурний підхід до вивчення іноземної мови в розвитку духовності та духовного інтелекту особистості.*

**Ключові слова:** СМС (Комунікація Computer - mediated), духовність, духовні відомості особистості, міжкультурний підхід до вивчення FL, культурне усвідомлення, поведінкові зразки комунікації, чинники ідіосинкразій.

*Аннотація. Несмотря нарастающий интерес среди студентов колледжей и университетов в развитии их духовности и личности с помощью высшего образования, только некоторым из них предоставлена возможность это сделать. Комплексный подход к изучению сознания и личностного призвания к познанию другой культуры и языка направлен заполнить этот пробел путём изучения теории сознания и духовности исходя из различных гносеологических перспектив, в том числе традиций цивилизации и культуры. Результаты показали, что студенты стали более открытыми для разнообразных представлений осознания, повысили самосознание и навыки общения и саморефлексии. Обсуждаются последствия растущего дискурса о межкультурном подходе к изучению иностранного языка в развитии духовности и духовного интеллекта личности.*

**Ключевые слова:** СМС (Коммуникация Computer-mediated), духовность, духовные сведения личности, межкультурный подход к изучению FL, культурное осознание, поведенческие образцы коммуникации, идиосинкразические факторы.

**Гарус Ірина Дмитрівна** – старший викладач кафедри англійської мови Східноукраїнський національний університет імені Володимира Даля (м. Луганськ, Україна)

**Бондаренко Михайло Олександрович** – викладач кафедри англійської мови Східноукраїнський національний університет імені Володимира Даля (м. Луганськ, Україна)

*Рецензент – кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент кафедри англійської мови СНУ ім. В. Даля Міквабія Е.Г.*