
TEACHING CULTURE FOR DEVELOPING AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE WHO STUDY SPANISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN UZBEKISTAN: RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY BASED ON THE FILM FRAGMENT “PERFECTOS DESCONOCIDOS” (PERFECT STRANGERS)

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of teaching foreign languages is the development of communicative competence. The main requirement for effective communication is the ability to communicate culturally appropriately, interpreting the pragmatic behavior of the interlocutor. For this reason, the main task of a foreign language teacher is to develop intercultural competence and the socio-cultural awareness of students. In this work, on the one hand, we prove the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classes based on the works of Major American and European authors, provide a proposal based on a fragment of a Spanish film for the development of intercultural competence of Uzbek students of the Spanish language. The main part of the work is a presentation and analysis of the questionnaire before and after the lesson.

KEYWORDS: *Culture, Intercultural Competence, Speech Acts, Spanish As A Foreign Language, Communication, Proxemics, Pragmatics, Gesticulation, Social Agent, Intercultural Speaker.*

INTRODUCTION

Many authors such as Byram [2], Hall [6], Geertz [5], Fernández-Conde [4] affirm the importance of teaching culture in language classes. M. Jensen and A. Hermer “Learning by playing: learning foreign languages through the senses” [4] cite in their article the dialogue in G. Bateson's narrative between daughter and father on the gesticulation on the French. The daughter asks her father why the French always float their hands in the air when they speak and the father is unable to respond.

Then the daughter asks why the school teachers don't teach them how to use their hands. The father answers:

“I don't know. Really, I don't know. It's probably one of reasons why people find it too difficult to learn languages. Anyhow, it's absurd. I mean, the idea language study consists of words is completely ridiculous (...) because there is no such thing as “just words”. All that syntax and grammar, that's rubbish. Everything rests on notion that there is such a “just” words – but there isn't” (Bateson, 1972).

Byram adds more: the both, like thousands of people have been taught in various languages traditionally by memorizing vocabulary, analysing and learning grammar, translating. This led to the absurd situation when one was able to read newspaper and understand the authors but was unable to order a snack or understand the waitress trying to explain the menu. Byram states that in this case the person has everything: vocabulary and grammar in the head, but not in the hands, nose, eyes, and feet [3]

According to S. Serrano [10] in all ritualized interactions there is a programmed

behaviour. Because:

If these interactions (body movements, cuttings, greeting or dismissal situations, the way an adult treats a child, the time of day or the chair in which we have sat during a meeting, the dress we wear and the gestures we have made when sitting) were not subjected in turn to a system of communication. rules, the behavior would be as incomprehensible as it is unpredictable. It would even be totally impossible to establish human relationships of any kind. Indeed, non-verbal communication depends on a common behavioral competence "

What made Sherlock Holmes a good detective is the knowledge of his own culture, his society's members' behavioural structures. As stated by the autor [10]:

"For him, everything was communication, everything spoke to him, and objects or gestures were as good messages to interpret as words. He knew how to organize the universe of signs that surrounded him in a much more perfect way than other citizens. "

All this shows the importance of teaching culture in foreign language classroom.

MAIN PART

Background

The history of the teaching of culture in language classrooms as an essential part of the learning begins in the 50s of the twentieth century. The British pioneers report "Modern Studies" (1918) was one of the first work that emphasized the need to know better the country and its people as part of second language teaching.

During World War II, with the increasing emphasis on teaching the history, geography and institutions ...as important part of the language. One of the leading theorists of the 1960s Nelson Brooks was a major advocate of the cultural component in second language curricula. In his work "Language and Language Learning"(Brooks, 1960) he proposes a list (more than 60) topics to be dealt with in language classrooms. [1]

E. Hall in his book "Hidden Dimension" (Hall, 1989) analyses the questions of space and distance in the colonies of animals and people and concludes that "people of different cultures not only speak different languages, but, [...] they inhabit different sensory worlds " (1976: 8). In addition, he assures that man has his own culture even in his neurons and is that determines their behaviour and perception of the world.

R. Lado in his work "Contrastive Linguistics. Languages and Cultures"(Lado, 1973) seeks the answer to the question how to compare do. He claims that, by learning a new culture, the one tends to transfer. Hence, he proposes three predictable points of difficulty: same form with different meaning, same meaning with different form and same form and the same meaning with different distribution. These cultural aspects of the interpretation of the forms and meanings of objects, concepts, or behaviours can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, interaction difficulties and even the formation of stereotypes. [8]

H. H. Stern in his work "Issues and Options in Language Teaching" (Stern, 1992) determines teaching objectives, their strategies, curricular plans, analyses six aspects of the teaching culture, proposes a list of techniques to teach the cultural component. [11]

The reflections of C. Kramersch (Kramersch, 1993) who describes 4 types of reflection of facts and events throughout interpersonal interactions: perception of himself, others and real perception are important. According to the author during the cultural dialogue, each intercultural speaker perceives his attitudes and his interlocutor's, according to the rules of his own culture and may come to the wrong conclusion about the other one. To avoid this, Kramersch proposes four-step method for cross-cultural understanding.

One of the authors who deals with the subject of teaching culture and interculturality is M. Byram. In his work "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence" [2] he describes different aspects of teaching and evaluation of intercultural competence of second language learner and the specific attitudes, knowledge and skills of the intercultural speaker. In addition, he discusses the advantages and disadvantages of three possible places of the acquisition of intercultural competence: classroom, fieldwork and independent learning.

Meanwhile, in the field of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SFL) there were also several studies about the interculturality and teaching culture.

One of such scientific works "Hacia la competencia intercultural en el aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero: Estudio del choque cultural y los malentendidos" (Oliveras Vilaseca, 2000) belongs to Oliveras A.V. that studies culture shock and misunderstandings of SFL students that come from 15 countries and collect interesting data through questionnaires, introspections, distribution lists through email and stories. [9]

F.S. Trujillo, author of another important work "Cultura, Comunicación y Lenguaje" (Trujillo Séaz, 2006) does reflections on culture, communication, language, interculturality, models of teaching culture and establishes three principles: every community is multicultural; everything individual is multicultural; all communication is intercultural (Trujillo Séaz, 2006): 177). [12]

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Uzbekistan is a Presidential Republic whose capital is Tashkent. According to data of the Uzbek State Statistics Committee the country's population is over 34.5 million people. The most tourist cities are Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva.

88% of the population is Sunni Muslim and 9% Orthodox Christian. Currently more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups coexist in the country and there are 16 religious' confessions, 153 cultural centres and 38 "Do'stlik" (Friendship) associations.

The official language is Uzbek and, in the Karakalpakstan Autonomous Region, Karakalpak language. Other widely spoken languages are Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Korean, Kyrgyz and others.

Today, education in educational institutions is taught in 7 languages, the radio and television programs are broadcast in 12 languages and the press is published in more than 10 languages.

The most popular foreign languages taught in the universities are English, French, German, Korean, Chinese, Spanish and other European and Asiatic languages.

Spanish as a foreign language or second foreign language is taught in four country's public universities: Uzbek State World Languages University (from 2003), Samarkand State Foreign Languages University (since 2010), University World Economy and Diplomacy (since 1992) and Tashkent State University of Finance (since 2020). In addition, there are several language schools that offer language courses of Spanish, most of which are located in the city of Tashkent. In the universities mentioned above Spanish is taught by about 30 teachers, most of whom teach classes at the Uzbek State University of World Languages.

The most popular manuals for teaching Spanish are: "Aula internacional/nuevo" of the editorial "Difusión" (100%), "Sueña" of the editorial "Anaya" (80%), "Español en marcha" of the editorial "SGEL" (60%) y Prisma del "Edinumen" (40%).

The geographical distance makes the process of the teaching and studying Spanish more difficult than other European languages, because there are no or very little native teachers and speakers. Another problem is the absence of the cultural centre of Spain as Instituto Cervantes. Countries like Germany, France, China, South Korea and Japan have their cultural centres in Tashkent; other

countries like Italy, India spread their language and culture by organizing different cultural programs in their Embassies, but the dissemination of the Spanish language and culture is in charge of the teachers who teach it.

Another problem is the accreditation of the level of Spanish. To take the DELE exam the Uzbek candidates have to go abroad (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan or Russia), however, in 2014 this exam was organized in Tashkent the last time.

Finally, we can say that Spanish is one of the popular European languages in Uzbekistan. The reasons for learning it are different: personal interest, for studies, and, to work in the tourism sector. Although teachers have almost no support from Officials, they do everything possible to spread the language and culture of Cervantes: they organize festivals, colloquia, etc.

Presentation of the Proposal

The topic of the Proposal is "Dinner at a friend's house". It is evident that the etiquette of being a host, or a guest is different in different cultures. That is why we found this topic interesting, and we consider important to sensitize the students about appropriate behaviour in this situation.

To elaborate the didactic proposal, we have chosen the fragment of the Spanish film "Perfectos Desconocidos" (Perfect Strangers) (2017) directed by Alex de la Iglesia. The plot of the film istaken place in a dinner of four couples who know each other all their lives. Just starting dinnerthey propose a game that brings their worst secrets to the table.

The main reason for choosing the fragment of the movie "Perfectos Desconocidos" lies inthe CEFR. The Framework assigns sociocultural knowledge to knowledge of the world and explains why it is important to deserve the attention of the student: "unlike many other aspects of knowledge it is likely to lie outside the learner's previous experience and may well be distorted by stereotypes." (2003: 102). Below, he highlights a number of distinctive characteristics of a European society, some of which are exposed in the fragment chosen for the proposal:

- Class structure of society and relations between classes.
- Relations between sexes (gender, intimacy).
- Family structures and relations.
- Relations between generations.

2. Body language.

3. Social conventions, e.g. with regard to giving and receiving hospitality, such as:

- Punctuality.
- Presents;
- Dress;
- Refreshments, drinks, meals;
- Behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos;
- Length of stay;
- Leave-taking.

The interesting part for us is in the beginning of the movie, when is possible to observe how guests and hosts actbefore dinner and after sitting around the desk.

Once looked at carefully, we highlight the skills, linguistic functions andparalinguistics that we were going to work on.

The teaching unit that we propose deals with the skills of listening comprehension, oral expression and interaction, written expression, cultural awareness and pursues the following

Objectives:

- Acquire new vocabulary;
- Understand colloquial vocabulary;
- Understand the oral text;
- Develop intercultural competence.

The linguistic and paralinguistic functions respectively that are worked on are:

- Express excuse;
- Say compliments and respond to them;
- Make a toast;
- Use of gestures;
- Proxemics.

In the grammatical aspect it is intended to work the conditional sentences.

The proposal consists of 12 exercises to develop speaking, reading, listening skills and the grammar and vocabulary, but the most important activities are to work on the culture and intercultural communication competence.

The main activity of the proposal is a survey done before and after the activity. The objective of the survey is gathering comparative information on the cultural aspects of being a guest or host, if the students are going to change their ways of acting depending on the community (own vs target culture) and to know if the speech acts of greetings and farewells depend on the gender of the students and the community where they are (own vs. target).

The situations proposed in the survey are:

1. Imagine that you are going to invite your friends to dinner at your house what time would you invite them?
2. Imagine that you are in Spain, and you are going to invite your friends to dinner at your house what time would you invite them?
3. Imagine that your friends have invited you to dinner at their house. Will you take something to drink or eat?
4. Imagine that you are in Spain and your friends have invited you to dinner at their house, would you take something to drink or eat?
5. Imagine that your friends have invited you to dinner at their house. Which of the following foods would you take home where you have been invited?
6. Imagine that you are in Spain and your friends have invited you to dinner at their house which of the following foods would you take home to where you have been invited?
7. Question for MEN. You have just arrived at the your friend's house who have invited you to dinner. How do you greet them?
8. Question for MEN. Imagine that you are in Spain. You have just arrived at your friend's house who have invited you to dinner. How do you greet them?
9. Question for GIRLS. You have just arrived at your friend's house who have invited you to

dinner. How do you greet them?

10. Question for GIRLS. Imagine that you are in Spain. You have just arrived at your friend's house who have invited you to dinner. How do you greet them?

11. In Uzbekistan, if you receive guests, which of the following foods

Would you offer before sitting around the table?

12. In Spain, if you receive guests, which of the following foods would you offer them before you sit around the table?

13. Imagine that you are around the table. The food is served. How do you act?

14. Imagine that you are in Spain, and you are around the table. The food is served. How do you act?

15. When you're at a dinner party...

Classroom intervention: profile and description of the participants

To carry out our research, in the month of May we organize online classes in three Uzbek universities: Uzbek State University of World Languages, Samarkand State University of Foreign Languages, University of World Economics and Diplomacy. In total we had the opportunity to work with 26 participants.

The participants are young students aged 22-25, most of whom are women. We have planned to collect information about the gender of the participants, because this factor could influence the choice of answers to some questions.

Participants from the Uzbek State University of World Languages and University Samarkand State of Foreign Languages study Spanish as a foreign language, while at the University of World Economics and Diplomacy it is the second foreign language. Most of the participants are bilingual (Uzbek-Russian) and all are fluent in the English at advanced and intermediate levels.

Results of the presentation of the activities in the classrooms and analysis of the data

In this chapter we are going to analyse the most important results (time, the food guests take for the dinner, food served before main dish and acting around the table, receiving the compliment and answering it) of the initial and final surveys. We take advantage of the technique proposed by Stern and propose different cultural situations to which the students had to react. In the presurvey, we gave the situations that could happen in their own country and in Spain to compare the results after watching the video.

Situation 1. Imagine that you are going to invite your friends to dinner at your house. What time would you invite them?

48.1% of the students indicated that they would organize dinner for 7:00 p.m. and 44.4% at 6:00 p.m. and if they were in Spain, only 29.6% of the students would invite their friends by 9:00 p.m., while 33.3% continue to insist on starting dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Situation 2. Imagine that your friends have invited you to dinner at their house. Will you take something to drink or eat?

If this situation occurs in their country of origin, 55.6% of the respondents answered "yes", due to their culture and 40.7% answered that they would ask their friends and in case of necessity they would take something. Interestingly, the rate of responses would totally change the other way around, if they had the same situation in Spain: only 40.7% of the guests would have something to take to their friends' house and 51.9% would do it if their friends asked them for it.

Situation 3. Imagine that your friends have invited you to dinner at their house. Which of the following foods would you take home where you have been invited?

The results of the survey demonstrated that most answers contain food such as bread, fruits, which in Spain is a rare thing to take to dinner. However, it is necessary to explain that according to Uzbek traditions to visit some house you must go with bread (which is usually round. No loaf or sliced bread is taken) and in pair quantities. Also, along with the bread are taken a desserts or seasonal fruits and chocolates or candies.

However, on the one hand, the students indicated that if they were in Spain they would take some bottles of wine (55.6%), some dessert (37%), and some traditional dish (37%) some bottles of juice, soft drinks or chocolates (33.3% each). On the other hand, 11.1% of learners would opt for bread and 29.6% for fruits.

Situation 4. You have just arrived at the house of your friends who have invited you to dinner. How would you greet them?

Before presenting the test results, we would like to explain the cultural aspects of greetings in Uzbekistan. Depending on the registry, proximity of the participants of the act of speech, their age and gender, the ways of greeting may be different.

In informal situations, with family or friends, men can give a hug, shake hands or hit each other's shoulders and women give two or three kisses between them. According to cultural and religious traditions, men and women do not give kisses if they are not the family members.

To greet women, men can shake hands if they are friends and vice versa.

The survey results affirm it. 54.5% of men would hug their male friends, 36.4% would give their friends a handshake and only 18.8% they would hug and kiss all friends regardless of gender. And 68.2% of girls would hug and kiss their female friends and 31.8% would greet their all friends in the same way without depending on gender.

Situation 5. If you receive guests, which of the following foods would you offer before sit around the table?

The results of this test are very interesting, because on one side there are very big contrast and on the other there are answers with totally equal indices. The results show that in Uzbek culture the products offered to the guest in this situation are bread, hot tea, soft drinks and nuts, dried fruits, while the rate of wine is zero.

However, if the same students were in Spain, 12 out of 27 would offer their guests wine or water, 13 of them a coffee among others. It is interesting that desserts and candies have equal rates, 13 votes out of 27 and 7 and 8 students continue to opt for hot bread and tea to offer to guests.

Situation 6. Imagine that you are around the table. The food is served. How
Would you act?

The answers for this situation have surprised us a bit, since the results are different from what we expected. According to Uzbek traditions although everyone is around the table, guests usually wait until the hosts invite them to eating and anyone can hear the following speech acts is:

Host: Come on, help yourself.

Guest: No, no, you start.

Host: No, no, you are the guest, you start.

Guest: Ah, thank you, enjoy yourself!

However, in situations of great trust not so much is insisted, but anyway, the host's task is to invite to eat. Despite this, the graphs show that regardless of the cultural community, 55.6-59.3% of those surveyed would start to eat when the hosts began eating and 33.3-29.6% of the students would wait until to be invited. Only 11.1% of students would start eating when everyone else is around the table, without waiting for the invitation.

Situation 9. Your colleague says that you look very elegant today. Your answer:

In this situation we offer three possible answers:

- a) Yes, I know.
- b) Really? Thank you!
- c) Very elegant? No! I have put on my old clothes.

In the fragment of the film, you can see this dialogue between Pepe and Eva who is wearing new earrings:

Pepe: What beautiful earrings, eh!

Eva: This is you who is pretty.

The conversation shows that in Spain a compliment is answered with another compliment towards the interlocutor. In addition, it is possible to minimize the importance of the compliment by saying "Ah, I have bought them on sale".

Although has been paid a lot of attention while viewing the video, it has been done an activity, two cultures have been compared (most students have commented that if somebody does them a compliment, they simply thank their interlocutor) and the optimal behaviour in this case was explained, the results shows that the vast majority of respondents (66.7%) indicated that they would continue to act according to the rules of their own culture and only 9.5% would respond as natives.

These results can be explained because the fact that in the two compared cultures the act speech responding to the compliment is different and it is difficult to exile from your own culture after a single activity. It takes more practice this speech act.

CONCLUSION

The comparative results before and after the visualization of the fragment of the film, at the time of carrying out the activities of the proposal, justified the time employee and the effort made to elaborate the didactic sequence. In situations where cultural aspects of dinner with guests in the two countries are totally different, the final results are different from the initial ones, which show the students' estrangement of their own culture.

Likewise, situations that require the same or similar behaviour did not cause any problem. However, we have noticed that some speech acts that are different in the two cultures (responding to a compliment) can fossilize, even after to deal with them in class and in the supposed situation that occurred in the community of the target culture: intercultural speakers tend to act through the prism of their own culture.

In addition, we believe that to reinforce knowledge and new cultural habits it would be beneficial to use the role-play technique, since when performing this task, the students would have to interact, express themselves orally and put into practice all the theoretical material they have seen, heard and read.

We insist that the true acquisition of intercultural competence it is almost impossible without contact with the target culture. The positive results we have received after working on the teaching

unit proposed by us or after any cultural activity, in general, does not guarantee that students already have the intercultural competence.

Also, it should be noted that some cultural aspects are different within the same country (Basque Country and Andalusia, for example). And if we have in note that when culture is taught in the EFL classroom, it refers to Spanish culture mainly, when crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the students will have contact with other cultures.

However, we insist that the cultural component must be worked on in class explicitly or implicitly, different techniques proposed by authors have to be used, try to seek contact with representatives of the target culture and be aware that the students are “social agents” and “intercultural speakers”. Our didactic proposal is sustained by the contact of cultures that dialogue, compare, share and redefine in a complex teaching process that responds to the guidelines curricula of the CEFR, the PCIC (Plan Curricular de Instituto Cervantes) and the needs and programming of the Uzbek institutions.

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