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**MULTICULTURAL ASPECTS OF IMPROVING STUDENTS' DISCOURSE  
(WRITTEN) COMPETENCIES (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE)**

**Shahnoza Rakhimova Pulatovna\***

\*Teacher,

Uzbek State World Languages University,

Tashkent, UZBEKISTAN

Email id: sh.rakhimova@mail.ru

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**ABSTRACT**

*There are number of ways to improve students' discourse competences in the period of their learning and research: it is clear that there are some issues that a majority of students face, as written academic discourse is definitely a form of writing unfamiliar to many students. What does it mean? Why should it be important? As a general principle, people who use a language will need not only to communicate orally but in written contexts as well: indeed, these constructions should be built on solid, rigorous foundations. However, learning or studying the case of students' needs won't be enough without an awareness of multicultural aspects. Initially, it would be necessary to see what is the 'multicultural' relating to several varieties of culture or cultural elements which manifest themselves in a multicultural society. Education is the most crucial aspect of these findings: in this view the cultural dimension is also the most important aspect of any acquired language. In order to reach the desired result of learning a target language, the form of writing will, certainly, be a priority. Discourse brings culture with itself, there is no language without culture. The aim of this research is to improve students' written discourse in an uncomplicated way. It will make reference to experiences observed and used during the teaching of mixed level learners, and experiments with variorum types of methods: writing essays, using technologies and interviews were taken from the students of universities in order to show the requirements for an individual approach. This scientific work will definitely impact on written discourse competence, while also bringing visual outcomes into consideration.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Discourse Competence, Writing Skills, Multicultural Aspects, Modern Methods, Approaches Of Discourse (Written) Competencies, The Usage Of Technologies, Problems In Writing, The Methodology Of Writing.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Research review on learning the construction of multicultural competence by teachers during teaching effected by an approach of professionalization (Le Boterf, 2002 and 2004), it the construction of multicultural competence, as perceived by teachers during teaching placements. The concept o discourse competence and learning theory "Experiential" (Kolb, 1984) underlies this qualitative research. One emerged model of intervention during teaching students is likely to contribute to the construction of the multicultural aspects of future teachers. In a learning paradigm centred on the learner (Astolfi, 2003), the educational intervention should take into account the individual characteristics of learners, such as age, gender, culture, personality, type of intelligence. As a constituent element of the personality, culture, in its sense of "system of symbols, traditions, norms and institutions", is one of the individual differences (Royce and

Powell, 1983, 62, translation). Several studies have pointed out that culture determines how we learn (Kennedy, 2002; Ramburut hand McCormick, 2001). Education policymakers have included it as a differentiating factor between students, among the aspects to be considered when practicing the teaching profession (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2001; Ontario College of Teachers, 1999). Viewed from a perspective of social criticism, the treatment of ethno cultural differences in the education system is at the heart of research in multicultural education. Tinged of inherent ideological biases and social demands, the problem of discourse competence reveals its significance in the context of the increasing diversification of the Contemporary Canadian Society (Statistics Canada, 2003). Research in multicultural education has examined, among other things, how future teachers are prepared to work in multi-ethnic environments. The legitimacy of this training, the contents of the learning and their stability, the pedagogical methods used, the curricular analysis of programs representations of key stakeholders on ethno cultural diversity, and their impact on teaching and learning are topics of interest. Yet few studies deal with the contribution of professional teaching to the multicultural training of future teachers. Sometimes evaluative, when they aim to report on the level of satisfaction of related trainees with their learning. Sometimes exploratory, when looking at learning pathways (Moldoveanu, 2006) or conceptions of the multicultural skills of trainees (Mukamurera, Lacourse and Lambert, 2006), research on multicultural training in teaching internships most often adopt a self-perception approach through cases as a discourse competence. These studies highlight that improving discourse (written) competence in multi-ethnic environments lead to an awareness of future teachers to the differences and the means that a teacher could deploy to adapt his/her educational approach to the diversity of his/her class group (Cook and Van Cleaf, 2000; Duarte and Reed, 2004; Gremion, 2006; Luft, Bragg & Peters, 1999; Ogay, 2006; Santoro and Allard, 2005). Aspects of teaching activity are rarely addressed (Cook and Van Cleaf, 2000), relations with the community and parents; Mujawamariya and Moldoveanu, 2006 - multi-ethnic classroom management). In this research landscape, the problematic of the ways in which trainees learn to adapt their educational approach to ethno cultural differences seems to be very little addressed so far.

Through this study, we mainly aim to examine and formalize the process of building the multicultural aspects of discourse competence of future teachers in the context of teaching internships; it also looks at the factors which influence it. How do student-masters perceive their learning path of a pedagogical approach, sensitive to multicultural differences? What are the factors influencing the construction of multicultural competence of future teachers during teaching placements? What learning models future participating teachers would prefer? Here are the main questions to which this article will propose answers, in observing the following four steps: as a first step, we will specify the theoretical frame work underlying. Second, we will describe the research methodology used. The presentation of the results and interpretation in the light of the theoretical framework chosen will be followed by conclusions, which will also suggest avenues for future research. This research took place in Uzbekistan. The program followed by the participants lasts four-academic year. In order to be eligible, candidates must hold a first degree in university cycle. Structured in two terms, the program includes theoretical courses on learning, on the education system and didactics courses of different subjects offered totwo terms and two teaching placements of four weeks each (in the fall and spring), carried out under the supervision of an associate teacher and an internship supervisor attached to the faculty education.

This study is based on two fundamental concepts: the discourse competence of a student and the construction of professional competence. It will be explained in the following competence, each of these concepts. The multicultural aspects of improving students' discourse competence. Our research is part of a perspective of professionalization of a teacher from the outset regulated around the concept of professional competence (Paranoid, 2004, Jonnaert, 2002; Mellouki and

Gauthier, 2005). The available resources axis would refer to both the personal resources of the professional (skills, qualifications, knowledge) and the resources of environment. Ultimately, the axis of reflection exhibit would introduce the necessary distancing for the professional tutors to understand the actions why and how, after that he can self-regulate his responses to unexpectedness. When it comes to challenging the multicultural aspects of discourse competence of students, research rarely deals with all aspects mentioned above. For example, Bennett [1999] puts at the centre of his model communication, Toussaint and Fortier [2002] deal exclusively with the knowledge of the teacher, while Ghosh [1991] refers to attitudes, values and knowledge. For Coelho [1998] offers a practical guide for teachers called upon to act for teachers called upon to work in multi-ethnic environment, which is however limited to know-how. Nieto [1992] and Sleeter [1992] touch, from a point of view of social criticism, to dimensions related to know-how and relations with communities. Banks' model [1989] considers the three axes of professional competence and includes: aspects related to contextualized action (choice and use of didactic materials, educational approaches, inclusive activities adapted to the characteristics of the group), with personal resources (specific knowledge, positive attitudes, positive representations), with the resources of the environment (relations with parents) as well as with the capacities reflected exudes and teacher adjustment. On the basis of these considerations, we propose of this research, a model of the multicultural aspects of discourse competence including:

- A. teacher's personal resources: positive attitudes [respect, appreciation of ethno cultural differences] and theoretical knowledge of the ethnic groups represented in the classroom;
- B. community resources: an explicit policy framework related to diversity management in the federal, provincial, school board, university, implicit policies of the school, realities of the environment;
- C. know-how: using inclusive strategies for teaching, classroom management, relations with parents;
- D. reflectivity: the ability to critically examine ones own designs and adjust.

Federal policies in place and standards that govern the teaching profession at the (Ontario College of Teachers, 1999 and Ministry of Education) of Quebec, 2001, to limit ourselves to the examples of these two provinces explain the expectations of the system in relation to the multicultural aspects of discourse competence of teachers. The dimensions mentioned are found there (Moldoveanu, 2005). Curricula of initial training programs of teachers offered at several Ontario universities; however, do not seem to reserve this problem is addressed (Moldoveanu, 2005; Moldoveanu and Mujawamariya, 2007). In terms of the university where the participants in this research were training, the evaluation grid of internships made no reference to competency-related multicultural aspects.

The construction theory of professional competence of experiential learning of Kolb (1984) is at the foundation of construction of professional skills (Le Boterf, 2002). The learning process would consist of four stages (Kolb, 1984).

The first, concrete experience is to live oneself an authentic situation that stimulates reflection, thus enabling to move to the stage of observation reflected on discourse competence.

This second step consists of observing elements of the lived experience and reflecting on their significance. As a result of the reflection has begun, abstractions can be formulated which integrate the different observations and reflections, during the stage of abstract conceptualization.

The third stage of active experimentation ultimately makes it possible to submit concepts and generalizations to the reality test.

This fourth model, having proven itself in andragogy, is also suitable for training analysis

professionalization, such as teaching placements in the initial training programmes of the masters (Hemingway, 2003; Holborn, 2003; Le Boterf, 2002 and 2004). After identifying the conceptual of our research, the time has come to describe the methodology followed.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study followed the data collection and analysis methodology proposed by me. About 20 students participated in my experimental work in Samarkand and Bukhara universities. Students have agreed to participate in my research, on a voluntary basis: Shakhlo (female, in her nineteen's, Samarkand, elementary level of education); Zubayda (female, in her twenties, Bukhara region, elementary level of education); .... Etc. Each participant has followed two writing placements in Uzbekistan schools. In order to preserve the anonymity of participants, all the names used are fictitious. Each respondent participated in two semi-structured interviews, spread over the two internships of learning. The first interview took place before the start of the first internship and aimed to explore the personal experience of the participants in relation to multi-ethnicity (friends, work, travel), formal training received in connection with multicultural education, views about importance and the definition of multicultural education and the multicultural competence of the teacher, role of the teacher in a multi-ethnic environment and in an environment perceived as homogeneous, expectations of multiculturalism training during teaching placements. The last interview (exam), organized after the end of the teacher education programme, targeted education-related concepts multicultural and multicultural aspects of discourse competence as well as the assessment of learning carried out during the internships and the ways in which each one has carried out these learnings. Two more interviews were carried out during the two teaching courses, during which the participants were invited to describe their experiences with discourse competence related to multicultural education (situations perceived as (means, interventions of associate teachers or supervisors of internships).

In a first step, I analysed each case, and then carried out a comparative analysis according to the categories that have arisen from it. The content analysis method with a mixed reading and writing grid was used for the analysis of each case. Portraits individual have been carried out and routed to participants for validation. Without giving an account of all the results, this text deals specifically with the ways in which participants have built their multicultural aspects of discourse competence during the teaching courses. The next section will present the results and propose interpretations based on the terms of reference underlying.

## **DISCUSSION**

Perceived learning discourse competences seem to have significantly influenced the dimensions of competence multicultural related to personal resources as well as reflective capacities. On the other hand the dimension of know-how is perceived as poorly developed as a result of training professionalizing, while the dimension related to the resources of the environment is almost absent.

Only one participant [Zubayda] said that the learning placements did not contribute to the development of its critical examination capabilities. The others believe that the experiences of written discourses have sensitized, to varying degrees, the existence of prejudices in the high school environment and their own limitations and apprehensions, to the need to refocus to meet the needs of students and immigrants in turn to the training needs of teachers: "I have seen this in some schools: some teachers think that if a student has problems, it is because he is a stranger. We catalogue it right away; we do not have the patience to know it and especially to bring it to learn. If the teacher has prejudices, he will create barriers. What can he do in a classroom whose children he thinks suck? If we catalogue like that, it's because we don't do the efforts to get our students to learn. (Another teacher). Dilnoza admits her limitations, discovered during teaching internships:

"Multi-ethnicity is a great challenge. I have to recondition myself. I was surprised to find that I had some apprehensions, for example, when I had a student. Muslim, I was less inclined to talk to him. » These results are also consistent with the findings of empirical research on teaching placements. Indeed, the learnings mentioned by the participants in our study have relates mainly to personal resources (attitudes, knowledge and reflection) and less to know how to act. From another perspective, and without worrying about cultural differences, Boudreau [2001] undertook a case study that illustrates how it is possible for an intern to develop the ability to adapt one's teaching approach to the characteristics of class groups supported. At the same time to improve students' discourse competence within multicultural aspects. The indices used by the researcher to support these displays are capacity, "differentiate between a teaching routine and student learning" and skill to "seek the youth" [Boudreau, 2001, p. 79]. These two skills refer to the principles of differentiated pedagogy, in which we have inscribed multicultural education. It follows that internship learning in connection with the differentiation of the educational approach can be realized under certain favourable conditions, including the type of support provided by teachers associates and personal characteristics of the intern. Thus, the accompaniment of which the trainee at the Boudreau's centre of study [2001] benefited during his internship and focused on the development of the said skills. On the contrary, Gervais and Desrosiers [2005] do not deal in depth with either the characteristics personal of the participants, nor of the accompanying approach of the associate teachers in connection with the competence to adapt the intervention to the characteristics of the students. In order to corroborate these remarks on the type of support received during the internship and experiment, the next subsection will deal with the context specific learning to each of the participants.

In our view, the fact that most trainees report "awareness" or "taking awareness" about know-how, not concrete learning. Josie remains the only participant who spoke about the "coaching" of the associate teacher during her first internship in a multi-ethnic environment. The trainee perceived more rigor in the formative intervention provided during the experiment in question. The perception of his internship learning makes it moreover proof, Josie being also the only one to have directly linked the supervision of the teacher associate and internship apprenticeship, i.e. the training of work teams. Interaction with parents and exchanges with other teachers working in the trainee's host school are also among the factors of influence. In the Sherzod's case, the interaction with the parents seems to have fuelled his reflection around some cultural content, without, however, significantly influencing its learning. Alisher, in on the other hand, drew profit, from the pedagogical point of view, from his interactions with the parents, and tried to conceptualize his observations. For her part, Zubayda highlighted the contribution that others have made.

Members of the high school team could have to train trainees. Several external conditions have not significantly influenced the learning of students and Interns. These are the supervision of the internship supervisor, the subject taught and the level of teaching, factors that were not mentioned by the student-masters followed. Supervisors of internships were perceived as "arbitrators" or "administrators" whose role was limited to doing the administrative link between the university and the internship environment and to intervene to resolve any difficult situations. No internship supervisor appears to have contributed to the construction of the multicultural competence of the participants in our research. This conclusion supports the fact that aspects related to multicultural competence were not taken into account in evaluation. The subject matter taught and the level of education, although the participants did not mention the among the factors which influenced the construction of their multicultural competence, acted in several cases as reflection triggers. For example, Sherzod reflected on the choice of texts Noam wondered about the exploitation of works of art for doing multicultural education, while Alisher has profit of his course hospitality and tourism to introduce students to certain cultural aspects.

After examining how the different factors intervene throughout the process of construction of

multicultural competence, it is timely to examine the process itself. It's precisely the objective of the next section. The construction of multicultural competence during vocational training, an unfinished experiential learning journey? Recall that, according to Kolb (1984), learning is done in four stages, namely:

- a) Experience concrete;
- (b) The reflected observation;
- (c) Abstract conceptualization and
- (d) Active experimentation.

All participants, with the exception of Shakhlo, had the chance to do at least one internship teaching in a multi-ethnic environment. Teaching multi-ethnic classroom groups would be concrete experience, in the words of Kolb (1984). In addition, all participants displayed have reflected on the experiences acted during the experiment. Two interns confessed that participation in the research triggered and guided their reflection. The fact that the intervention of associate teachers and internship supervisors who accompanied the student-masters did not touch that very rarely to aspects related to multicultural education encourages us to believe that this is also the case for the other participants, although they were not aware of it.

The reflected observation therefore remained at the discretion of the trainees, not stimulated or oriented by the speakers who are supposed to guide them in their learning. Non-systematic supervision in connection with multicultural education conveys representation multicultural education as a secondary aspect. However, a dissonance appears between the representations of the participants in the subject of multicultural education and this representation implicitly conveyed in environments where the nine student-teachers have completed their practical training. At the end of their internship experiences, participants rejected this representation of multicultural education as problematic marginal for education. They all expressed the opinion that, on the contrary, education multicultural should be of greater concern to education stakeholders. This allows us to conclude that abstract conceptualization was also carried out at the discretion of the trainees, and that sometimes the results of the conceptualization process go against the representations conveyed by the speakers. Finally, few participants claimed to have had the chance to learn or to put to the work of the know-how during the two courses. We can therefore draw the conclusion.

## **RESULTS**

The stage of active experimentation is almost absent from the training of trainees in connection with the multicultural competence. This reading of the experiential learning perspective sheds additional light on the process of building the multicultural competence experienced by the nine participants in our research. First, this line of interpretation explains the types of learning perceived as accomplished by the student-masters followed. Learning related to attitudes, capacity critical examination and theoretical knowledge (especially of cultural practices), registered by most of the participants, seem to have resulted from abstract conceptualization, a step taken by trainees even in the absence of the accompaniment of associate teachers or supervisors internship. Participation in research appears to have contributed to these learnings, to the extent that where the participants agreed to undertake an observation and reflection process guided by interview questions. On the contrary, learning related to know-how required active experimentation in the classroom. As multicultural education did not constitute an aspect taken into consideration during the vast majority of internships, it is not surprising that trainees were unable to take this step. A second point concerns the gap, which may seem paradoxical, between the representations of education. Multicultural as a marginal aspect, apparently conveyed in internship environments,

according to the perception of the participants, and the representation of the trainees who, at the end of their training, have reaffirmed the importance and relevance of multicultural education. We put this situation on the account of the lack of accompaniment during the stages of reflection observation and abstract conceptualization. Left to their own devices, the trainees interpreted the situations that resulted in caught their attention according to their own conceptions and arrived at coherent representations with the latter. If the training received in connection with the construction of multicultural competence can be interpreted as an unfinished experiential learning journey, let's see in the following which model of professional training would favour the participants in this research.

Towards a professional training model that promotes construction the multicultural competence of student-masters during the assessment interview, organized with each of the participants at the end of their training professionalizing, they suggested possible improvements to the supervision received during the internships. We have grouped and interpreted these suggestions in relation to the stages of learning experiential according to Kolb [1984]:

- a) Organize internships so that each student completes at least one internship in the community.

Ethnic. This statement highlights the need for students to have the possibility of practical experience of teaching to multi-ethnic group-classes. According to our interpretation, concrete experience would promote the development of resources personal of the multicultural competence of the future teacher. Indeed, we have showed that participants all took for granted positive attitudes and some theoretical knowledge, especially related to cultural practices. However, constraints administrative and logistical placements make the choice difficult to control of the host environment by the faculty.

- a) Include aspects related to multicultural competence in the internships would offer trainees the opportunity to go through the stages of reflection observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation during their training professionalizing.

As shown above, participation in this research has stimulated the reflected observation, which probably would not have occurred otherwise. The results of research on internship training related to other teacher skills [Boutet, 2002; Gervais and Correa Molina, 2005; Gossel in, 2005; Portelance, 2006] lead us to believe where as the reflected observation is triggered by discussions with associate teachers, either in order to prepare a lesson, or to exchange after a teaching activity. Those research shows that this is an approach that contributes significantly to development the skills of the future teacher. In terms of participants in our research, this stage was experienced in a solitary and unguided way, which may give rise to hasty generalizations in the abstract conceptualization phase. Finally, the student-masters interviewees suggested that the internships give them the chance to put some of the inclusive strategies, which is equivalent to expressing the need to go through the experimental stage active.

- c) Train associate teachers and internship supervisors to supervise the construction of the multicultural competence of trainees. Associate Teacher and Practicum Supervisor should guide the trainee during the reflection observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Reflected observation would contribute to the development of reflection and understanding of the resources of the environment. Conceptualization abstract, for its part, would lead to the awareness of know-how related to competence multicultural. Finally, active experimentation would test the principles and policies from the previous step.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study proposed a formalization of the process of building multicultural aspects of discourse

competence of the teacher and students mostly, as perceived by student-masters during professional internships. Analysis of results identified the learnings achieved and the factors which influenced them. Interpreted from the perspective of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), the journeys of the nine participants are proving to be incomplete, mainly because of the lack of specific framework. A model supervision during teaching courses inspired by the theory of experiential learning emerged from this research. According to the participants, these suggestions would lead to the construction of the multicultural competence of future teachers, a professional dimension considered like important in the current Canadian and global context. Conducted with a small number of participants and taking into consideration only the point of view of the student-masters, this study will not be able to claim the generalization of its conclusions. Future descriptive research may inform the proposed model for the construction of the multicultural competence of the teacher by using a larger number of participants and by adding categories that appeared to be significant but did not count towards our frame of reference (e.g. the identity status of trainees). The perceptions of associate teachers and practicum supervisors should also be considered. In an approach of action research, the proposed model of supervision of trainees could be experimented with in internship teaching in order to verify its transferability to the construction of skills other than multicultural competence.

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