THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS

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Abstract

The rationale for the problem under study lies in modern requirements for improving processes of foreign languages teaching and students-translators training. The introduction of the concept "competence" into foreign languages training allows to solve the basic problem of theory and practice coordination in educational processes and in real life. The peculiarity of the pedagogical purposes of competencies development consists not in that they are built within the methods of the teacher, but are considered from the viewpoint on the skills acquired by trainees through their development in the course of intercultural and social experience.

The article highlights the notion “intercultural competence”, which is regarded as the foundation of intercultural communication. The application of intercultural communication to teaching processes is possible through modern information environment of a university, the conceptual model of intercultural communication teaching, the system of approved methodological support materials including skills development workshops and their models. The authors work out the types, themes and models for intercultural competency development and use them in a real life university environment. The training toolkit is offered for learning and mastering foreign languages and translation training including the aspects of intercultural communication: intercultural knowledge actualisation, comparison and contrasting of cultural and language issues, integration of language and subject knowledge, active learning. The results of the research can be used for further investigation of intercultural and language competency and teaching languages and translation.

Keywords: language, linguistics, competence, intercultural communication, language and translation skills, translation training.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to the modern requirements for pedagogical processes, in particular training of professional translators, we consider intercultural communication training processes from the point of competency approach which is not equal to the knowledge-focused process of training, but provides formation of real life problem solution absolute skills, execution of key professional functions, social roles, competences. The term “intercultural competence” designates the quality of the information about the phenomena and values of other cultures. In the course of intercultural communication interlocutors pursue the definite purposes reached by certain methods.

The mankind becoming more interrelated and more integral does not lose the cultural varieties. In the context of these social development tendencies it becomes extremely important to be able and learn to define cultural peculiarities of peoples to understand each other and achieve a mutual recognition. So effective intercultural communication cannot appear independently, it is necessary to form it.

Taken as a whole this knowledge and approach build the foundation of the intercultural competency the main features of which are the following: openness to comprehend another culture and perceive psychological, social and other intercultural distinctions; psychological setup in the dialogue with the representatives of other culture; abilities and skills to differentiate the collective and the individual in the dialogue with the representatives of other cultures; an ability to overcome social, ethnic and cultural stereotypes; adherence to etiquette practices.

2 METHODOLOGY

In the process of intercultural training for translation it is necessary to combine the notions of translation, communication, intercultural communication, intercultural competence both in theory and in practice. For that the programmes of intercultural communication training for translators and interpreters are developed.
3 RESULTS

3.1 Intercultural competence and translation

3.1.1 Translation and intercultural communication

In the modern world translation is considered as one of the vital and essential kinds of human activities aimed at the international exchange of the information and mutual understanding between peoples in industrial, cultural and scientific spheres. For students of the institutions of higher education it is necessary not only to acquire and improve language and translation skills within languages which they study as source and target ones, but also build up theoretical and practical base to find certain special language knowledge so that in real vital communicative situations to be able to work in various spheres of general and specialised translation. Hence, communicative and functional approach in language and translation studies should be dominant taking into account extralinguistic factors [1]; [2], [3]. In communication process language represents the totality of codes used by communicants for dialogue. But in interlinguistic and intercultural dialogue the situations of ambiguity can be solved against the context analysis, situation and background knowledge of translators [4] and their intercultural communication competence.

3.1.2 Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence, in our perception, is the concept connected with the quality of the information about the phenomena and values of another culture. In the course of our research the main features of intercultural competence were defined as its foundation:

- openness to the knowledge of another culture and perception of psychological, social and other intercultural distinctions;
- psychological state of mind in the dialogue with the representatives of other cultures;
- presence of differentiation skills for the collective and the individual aspects in the dialogue with the representatives of different cultures;
- ability to overcome social, ethnic and cultural stereotypes;
- adherence to rules of etiquette in the process of communications.

So the process of intercultural competence formation presupposes the determination of principles, conditions, technologies, factors, approaches which allow to formulate, concretise and correlate the components of communication activity with dominating types of competences, significant personal qualities, interests, propensities, abilities of trainees.

In other words intercultural competency is an ability based on mutual respect to contact with the representatives of other cultures. Communicative competency is the total communicative quality of the person consisting of communicative abilities, knowledge, and skills. The success in intercultural communication training is achieved when the theory and practice of intercultural communication are interconnected. This is possible through deviation from normal organisation of training and instantaneous immersion into new environment. Thus it is necessary to consider possible loss of a habitual behavioural pattern in own social and cultural environment, also solidarity and support of the group. Modern researchers come to conclusion, that multiculturality should become important human and social value, that ideal which one should strive for.

3.1.3 The conceptual model of intercultural competence

The conceptual model of intercultural competences includes the following types of competences in intercultural communication:

- linguistic – knowledge of language system on a priori grounds;
- conversational – an ability to verbalise thoughts by means of language units and rules literally;
- social and cultural – knowledge of national and cultural aspects of native speakers social and verbal behaviour;
- utilitarian – desire and ability to come into contact with other people;
- compensatory – the skill in speech correction, i.e. to compensate for conversational skill gaps;
- logic – allows to apply strategies for text construction and interpretation;
target – defines adequately coordinated actions in the information maintenance;

Communication is a generalising communicative property of a person owning complex communicative skills and abilities, an ability to develop adequate skills in new social structures, knowledge of cultural norms and restrictions in a conversation, customs, traditions, etiquette in the sphere of communication. This competence also means decencies in society to serve, good breeding, correct communicative means to choose accordingly the communicative situations.

Thus it is necessary to note that successful intercultural communication is impossible without ability to apply language means, including foreign languages in general, properly.

One of the most important intercultural competences is psychological and psycholinguistic setup aimed at positive estimation of the perceived phenomena and positive motivation for participation in the process of intercultural communication. The participants of this process should learn to realise, that the positive attitude is considered the major element of tolerance as a whole, that it is developed and exists on the basis of the positive and benevolent attitude to other people and to the world.

S.G. Ter-Minasova notices, that the close relation and interdependence of teaching of foreign languages and intercultural communication are so obvious, that it hardly requires vast explanations. Each lesson of a foreign language is a crossroads of cultures, it is an experience of intercultural communication because each word reflects the foreign world and foreign culture: behind each word there is a representation caused by national perception of the world [5].

3.1.4 The development of intercultural communication training conceptual model

All positions set above provided the basis for the development of the conceptual model of intercultural dialogue training.

Social psychologists consider the approach in intercultural training advanced when problems with adaptation to another culture should be viewed as absence of certain skills and knowledge, therefore it is important not just to adapt a person to another culture, but to give the chance to acquire knowledge about it. Means for achievement of this purpose are books and training methods for the intercultural dialogue. Four types of training programs are distinguished: education, orientation, instructing, and training. The advantages of such programs unlike work with books lie in that the trainee is involved in the active experience, allowing to get acquainted with behaviour, norms, representations, values and customs of other culture in the course of the intercultural dialogue.

The training program represents the system of the methods focused on the development of skills and abilities in the communicative sphere. Its primary goal is to introduce students to intercultural distinctions in an interpersonal dialogue by emulating of situations in which first of all divergences in customs, norms, values of two cultures are presented. If there are no distinctions, there are no also any grounds for misunderstanding, emotional failure, any conflict [6,7,8].

It is important to recognise the fact of the numerous published sources of specialised training literature containing a considerable number of pedagogical technologies, the role and business games which are aimed at the development of correct human distinctions comprehension and tolerance.

Valuable help in intercultural communication, in the formation of the tolerant attitude to the people different in ethnic, national, religious and other aspects can be found in practical recommendations stemmed from K. Sitaram and R. Kogdel' long-term researches [9] the results of which can be found in the Code of Ethics in Intercultural Communication.

The most adequate from this point of view typical for any culture activities related to cultural milestones, the important dates in the calendar. Creating a polycultural calendar, honouring own holidays along with the holidays of other peoples and cultures, students get used to the fact that their culture is not unique that there are also other noteworthy events.

The practice of dialogical communication should become the subject of special attention in the training of future translators and interpreters. The formats of such communication are reader's conferences, discussions of books, seminars, exhibitions, courses. All these actions should be considered as the basic method of socialisation of the translator due to his involvement in the activity aimed at intercultural interaction experience acquisition [10, 11,12,13,14].

Besides, it is possible to build all intercultural competence training as role gaming. The game order radically differs from a formal order of reality and a dispute order. On the one hand, “in the imperfect world and a chaotic life it (game) creates the temporary limited perfection” [15], and on the other
creates the condition of competitiveness, a certain possibility to reach something, that in the real world is impossible.

3.1.5 The program of training in foreign language acquisition and mastering.

The training program contains three blocks:

- Theoretical (the information about the problems of intercultural communication, such as cultural code, cultural shock, problems of verbal and nonverbal communication, the relation of national character and language, cultural stereotypes);
- Professional (the information about the profession of translation and interpreting);
- Cross-cultural (the information about the traditions, customs, history and geography, the politics and society, economy and culture of the target-language countries).

The first part of the program for training of intercultural competence is made for three levels: initial, basic, intermediate. The following topics are included: language as part of culture, customs and traditions, tourism, travelling, education, language and nationality, etc. (totally 123 academic hours).

Advanced level of foreign languages study presupposes the following block of training in addition to the previous stage: communication as basic human activity, society, language and ideology, etc. (totally 472 academic hours).

4 CONCLUSIONS

Our research has shown that professional training of translators in an institution of higher education represents a complex social system where a person is considered as a core element. The institutions of higher education carrying out educational, value-oriented, morale and ethical, cultural and ecological functions of humanistic values in society become the base for the solution to this problem. The successful implementation of intercultural communication within contemporary information environment is designated, on the one hand, by the presence of humanistic resources of the institution and the practice of tolerant behaviour, and on the other hand, by the verification of a conceptual training model for intercultural communication and its realisation in the modern polyethnic world.

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REFERENCES


