CULTURAL MENTAL PROGRAMMING
AND
THE ACQUISITION OF FOREIGNLANGUAGES

FOREIGN LANGUAGES: A BRIDGE TO INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Matej Bel University, Faculty of Economics ,

Banska Bistrica, October 17 2014

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➢ **What is behind the differences in the efficiency of foreign language acquisition?**

➢ **What are the cultural drives in teaching and learning preferences?**

➢ **How to cope with new challenges in FL education?**

Main concerns

Language use in global educational settings

- mobility on the rise
- sites of transcultural learning for stud[...] educational experts who cross languages and borders for study or work
- in multicultural classes students and teachers might have different cultural backgrounds
- communicate and interact with the help of a common language (lingua franca /local language / target FL)
- cultural differences in communication strategies
- strong interdependence between communication strategies and teaching ~ learning strategies – both acquired in childhood as part of the native culture

- *language use* , i.e. the issue of world languages, local languages, the concept of intercultural communication, and communication behaviour

- *language acquisition*, i.e. the cross-cultural differences of learning styles, learning methods and learning practices

- *language teaching*, i.e. the cross-cultural differences in expectations, perceptions and methods

Language issues

But what is good communication?

- Smooth, verbose interaction, exchange of doubts, debate???

- Mutual respect, non-confrontative communication, maintenance of harmony in interactions?

Language use for the purpose of good communication

- SOCP= speaker oriented communication pattern– (in Western cultures,), offensive mode of communication, in which the message is clearly articulated, in which the responsibility for the message transfer is mostly born by the speaker

- HOCP=Hearer oriented communication pattern – (in Asian cultures) defensive mode of communication, by avoiding direct confrontation and conflict in communication neither the speaker nor the hearer is driven into the cul-de-sac of taking sides, the responsibility for understanding the message is at the listener

Who's responsibility?

- Jin and Cortazzi: *cultures of learning=* to focus teaching and research on the learners' own perspectives and on cultural aspects of learning.
- Learners with a different cultural programming often fail to improve considerably if their energies get wasted when attempting to comprehend what is going on in the classroom and if desperately trying to cope with new strategies of learning, instead of being able to focus on language learning proper.

Language Acquisition

TEACHER-CENTRIC

- Conceptual framework offered by the teacher
- Tempo and structure decided by the teacher
- Learners listen (passive/ perceptive/observation)
- Primary inclass form: lecture
- Less attention paid to individual needs
- (Academic) evaluation of effectiveness controlled by the teacher

LEARNER-CENTRIC

- Independent learner
- Learners have freedom in deciding the structure and tempo
- Self-study (active)/self-access
- Primary inclass form: discussion
- Learners gain experience and hence deduct theory themselves
- Evaluation of effectiveness is less academic, more pragmatic (labour-market, etc.)

Language teaching

network-centric learning

- By working through internet (improvements in the accessibility both in quantitative and qualitative sense)
- By returning to the social networks as source of learning (civil communities, social media, etc.)
- Professionals (teachers) and institutionalized organizations of learning give quidance and coach

New approach

- To meet new educational requirements, standards, evaluation systems (ECTS, CEFR, etc.)
- To meet learners' changing needs and satisfy their interest (*infotainment!*!)
- To meet the changing needs of the labour market (what kind of FL knowledge is required from future language users)
- To keep up with the technological development supporting FL acquisition

Challenges and responsibilities

- a better understanding of language acquisition processes – (neurobiology, psychology, cultural and mental programming)
- a healthy balance and recognition of national cultural traits and individual traits
- applying new methods and ways (content-based LT, digital technology use, e-learning, blended learning, etc.

Need for

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