

On the Role of Intercultural Dialogue in Translation

"Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected."

~ Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations ~

Current article is dedicated to the role of intercultural dialogue and non-formal education within the frameworks of cutting-edge tendencies of shaping translation skills and abilities. Growing tempos of globalization and increasing development of multicultural interaction between young specialists enhance the necessity of abandoning the stereotypical approaches and methods of traditional or formal translation teaching. The articles also covers some issues, related to the importance of direct interaction in between representatives of different languages and cultures, aimed at shaping skills and abilities in intercultural communication, necessary in training modern and competitive translators.

Key words: Intercultural dialogue, multicultural groups, cultural diversity, modern methods in translation, non-formal education

The progress of modern social life, new development in international relations and formation of so-called "intercultural communication" requires abandoning many of the traditional stereotypes and methods of translation. Thus, the training of competitive and up-to-date interpreters is an important social goal, aimed at meeting the new requirements of society.

Throughout the last century, new schools, guidelines and concepts have emerged in Translation Studies that have not been previously presented in the traditional translation studies. The emergence of these concepts paved way for innovative approaches to the formation of translation competence, developing a training system based on communicational, psychological, linguistic and didactic aspects of learning.

Among those theories, the intercultural communication with a highlight on specific cultural background knowledge has commenced to play an utmost role in the modern methodologies of shaping broad-minded translators, well-aware of ethnic, cultural and other peculiarities of given language. The notion of intercultural communication is defined as “the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts”¹⁰.

In this regard, let us consider the newly-coined term of ‘intercultural dialogue’ and its primordial significance within growing tendencies of globalization and international cooperation in different spheres, where the translator is

¹⁰ Pragmatics across Languages and Cultures. Ed. by Trosborg, Anna, Walter de Gruyter, 2010

required to receive a proper training not only in the sphere of foreign languages but also in the intercultural communication.

Thus, according to the “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” by the Council of Europe, the intercultural dialogue is understood as “a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others.”¹¹ Intercultural dialogue is essential in such fields as political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It is aimed at developing a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives, visions of the world and practices; enhancing integration and co-operation, as well as fostering equality and tolerance.

The prerequisites of an effective intercultural dialogue cannot be limited to a merely good command of an international language. Of course, English as the international language creates a huge platform and a starting point for negotiations and interaction of different cultures. If not for the existence of an international language, the attempts of communication would resemble that of the Tower of Babel. Still, apart from the linguistic factor, such notions as equal dignity and mutual respect, gender equality, the universal

¹¹ Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue”, Strasbourg, 2008

values of human rights, democracy and the rule of the law comprise a set of conditions, necessary for a fruitful intercultural dialogue.

It should not be overlooked that there are a lot of barriers to intercultural dialogue. Some of these are the outcomes of the difficulty in communicating in several languages. But others concern the domain of politics: racism, xenophobia, intolerance and all other forms of hate speech confront to the very idea of dialogue and create structural barriers, hindering the communication.

Still, the competences necessary for intercultural dialogue are not automatically acquired: they need to be learned, put in practice and developed throughout life. The basics of intercultural training of a future translator, are, undoubtedly, shaped in the higher-education institutions, along with a good command of the language pair. However, certain difficulties may rise because of the lack of proper methodology or lecture hours devoted to training professional translators in the field of intercultural communication. Another problem is the lack of opportunities of applying the acquired theoretical knowledge in practice.

Those problems are widely discussed in modern European teaching institutions and the solutions to the short-comings of traditional or formal education are expected to be compensated by the methods of non-formal education and informal learning. Thus, apart from higher-education institutions and their education programmes, the modern European methodology

implies the promotion of non-formal education via young people's commitment and contribution to youth work and all forms of voluntary and civic services, that are able of enriching the world vision, mentality, linguistic skills, as well as interpersonal and intercultural communication qualities of a translator-to-be. The methodology of non-formal or ludic training, or the process of learning via other primordial human activities, such as work and game, is successfully included in the curriculum of various intercultural meetings, seminars, training courses, conferences and other international formats that provide an interaction in-between multicultural groups, enhancement of linguistic skills as well such qualities as leadership, ice-breaking among different groups, integration and team-building activities, as well as problem-solving. All of the above-mentioned comprise an integral specialist in the sphere of intercultural communication.

I would like to illustrate the mentioned points about intercultural communication and non-formal education over the example of a multicultural meeting, in which I participated as a future translator, youth worker and representative of a non-governmental organisation.

On February 14-21, 2014 Adana (Turkey) hosted an international Training course named "Culture Puzzle". The project was held by Adana Provincial Directorate of Social Studies and Projects (Adana Valiliği İl Sosyal Etüt Proje Müdürlüğü) and brought together 40 participants from 8 different countries, namely Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan,

Egypt, Georgia, Italy, Romania and Ukraine. Using the multicultural group of participants as a learning space on individual roles and competencies in relation to the topic of the project, the program aimed at handling the theme of corporate culture and traditional cultures with local and international youth groups, represented by the members of civil society associations, organisations and institutions. The project was comprised of corporate cultural workshops and visits to local governmental and non-governmental organisations. Non-formal education was the main methodology of the training course, which means that simulations, role games, group discussions and culture presentations were widely used throughout the TC.

One of the main goals of the program was to enable participants to more effectively deal with issues of cultural diversity in a multicultural youth work context. This main objective obtained some additional shades due to the fact that some countries from post-conflict regions were involved in the project. Hence, expected result of the project in ideal couldn't avoid including the process of icebreaking and doing away with some negative stereotypes rooted among the countries, coming from post-conflict regions, since primary there was an archetypal burden that was supposed to hinder the communication and mutual comprehension between the mentioned countries.

All in all, this project successfully managed to do away with the first superficial aspects of this profound and complex problem; thus, the political conflicts and misunderstandings didn't serve as a hindrance for the participants to speak out, to make the first step to understand and try to respect the cultures of one another, though, of course, a more deep and profound reconciliation takes up far more time and a far more thorough dialogue between the young generation.

The topic of reconciliation and peacemaking through cultural ties established among young people was also mentioned in the welcome speech made by Adana Governor Hüseyin Avni Coş. During the meeting with 40 participants of the project in the Adana Governorship Mr. Coş greeted all the participants and thanked for their active participation in the project. "I believe that this is a small but important step taken by you. Now we understand that it's our responsibility to build a more sustainable, safe and peaceful world. I'm sure you all will become "Agents of Peace" once you return to your homelands. You will share this experience you got here in order to create a more peaceful and democratic world. I hope that, as a young generation, you will grow up, achieve an important position in your countries and contribute to building a world without boundaries", said Mr. Hüseyin Avni Coş.

The training through the eyes of the participants

TURKEY

Kadir

It's my second experience in meeting with different cultural groups - an opportunity to meet participants from European part, from Eastern countries as well as the Southern part. They all have something unique that belongs only to them and you also have something yours to share, taste, hear and experience. This creates a culture combination among various nations. Actually I've already experienced the stereotype breaking in September 2013 when I participated in EVS Coordinators meeting in Athens, Greece. I had several stereotypes as I was going to meet somebody with whom we have a block or a wall between us for the first time. But once I was in Greece I said, "There's nothing like that". Of course, there are still some old-fashioned people but the youngsters are able of seeing the problem in different ways, they're able to understand the mistakes and express their feelings about what they do wrong.

Onur

I expected to meet multicultural people that have different sociological background (I'm already acquainted with 20 different nationalities), to get to know them better and share my experience and culture. Actually I didn't know any Armenian up to this day and it was a pleasure to find out they are so warm. I'm glad to be able to compare and contrast

different cultures, for instance, I found many similarities between Armenian and Turkish national food, such as “bastirma”, “sujukh”, “baklava”, “lavash” etc. I highly appreciate the “cultural nights” that gave us an opportunity to get informed about different countries not by mere statistics but to learn them on the move and take lessons of these movements, that is, to learn through national dances. The simulation game on a fictitious family (traditions of a made-up family were performed in an interactive way, involving the participants and making them evaluate the symbolism of each custom and habit) symbolized the whole humanity, helped to break some stereotypes and prejudices, urging the participants share their opinion on such kind of matters.

EGYPT

Nada

Before coming here I didn't expect that people would take it seriously, I couldn't expect I would meet those wonderful people and I didn't expect we'd make friends so quickly. But then due to some icebreaking and teambuilding games we have really become a family and hopefully we'll keep in touch. Of course, I also tried to break some stereotypes: I'm Egyptian and everything concerning my culture makes people ask – “Do you do like this?”, “Do you wear this?” etc. Actually, there are a lot of stereotypes connected with my country. Me and my friend Omneya tried to show that not all the Egyptians do the same because it's the matter of religions - something between you and

God. This program helped to limit the stereotypes that people have.

UKRAINE

Olesya

I expected get to know new people, new nationalities I've never met before. For instance, I had few Armenian friends and almost no Turkish ones before coming here. I wanted to see their culture not through the mass media and TV prisms, but through their own eyes. I had fears regarding the conflicts that some participant countries had but they demonstrated tolerance (for instance, Turks and Armenians dealt with each other quite well) regardless the political conflicts, thus I learned that everybody can find something in common with one another and it depends on each individual. I was also touched to feel the support of our participants - everybody tried to help us to deal with the situation in Ukraine. It's nice to know that besides spending a nice time at the project we also made some friendly relations with other participants.

ITALY

Giuseppe

Before coming here I expected that we would have some particular cultural internship, for instance, on international relationship, cultural evenings and meetings as well as some simulation on culture. What I got to know through "cultural

nights” presentations was the real culture represented by guys of our age. I learned about a lot of cultural differences, e.g., religion, food etc. I can call this event as the “project of life”. This made me dream about a better world without visa.

Elisa

I was very happy when an Italian organisation invited me to participate at “Cultural puzzle” project. I’ve known many people from all over the world during my life. One of my best friends is from Yerevan and she is always angry with the Turkish because of the Genocide issue. One of my expectations before coming to Adana was to understand how Armenians can love Turkish after the decades. I understood that they are just neighbors. I also expected to know better the religion of other countries and check other’s opinion about homosexuality. After this training I know that I want to visit both Yerevan and Tbilisi and to meet all of you again! I always dream of a world without frontiers where we can live all together with love and peace!

ROMANIA

Adrian and Gianina

We, “C.R.E.E.D. Romania”, partner of the project “Cultural puzzle”, enjoyed a lot getting to discover cultural aspects of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Italy, Turkey and Ukraine, and in the same time to present our country, Romania. We share a common history with lots of memories that are here to remind us that the future has to be peaceful. This project gave

us the chance to see how beautiful this world is and that together we can guarantee the peace. We'll continue the mission of the project through inviting the partners in a new PUZZLE that will be created and implemented in Romania during 2014.

ARMENIA

Diana

The most amazing thing I have discovered in the program was the inter-cultural interaction. Almost all participants were from the conflict zones what gave an incredible value to the Program. One of the best inventions of the program was “Cultural night”, where each evening the participant country was supposed to introduce the other participants with its culture through the different activities such as dances, songs, and for sure, presentation about the history and national food. Due to such kind of activities we could get adequate and very interesting information about the uniqueness of different cultures, what in some points contributed to the process of breaking the odd stereotypes. Also, various teambuilding activities became an amazing opportunity to become a peculiar bridge between the various cultures, and what is more important, the participants tried to adapt to the cultural particular features of the other cultures as well. Speaking about breaking the ice of stereotyped perceptions, these kinds of programs really have much to do with this process. For example, speaking about the states with no diplomatic relations, as Armenia - Turkey/ Armenia -

Azerbaijan, such kind of events help young people from the warring societies to get know each other, to understand better the hostile attitude and to try to break that hostility by building the dialogue.

Armen

In its affluent diversity, culture has inherent worth for development as well as social cohesion and peace. Like living organisms, close collaboration and partnerships between miscellaneous cultures are complex and dynamic.

Effective and constructive communication is vital for any kind of partnership, which can be developed up to the level of close relationship. Therein, the “Cultural Puzzle” Program paved a solid ground to know more about the other participants’ cultures via face-to-face interactions and multicultural activities with the careers of different cultural heritages, languages, traditions, to gain as much possible from the meeting in order to assess how well we are acting in shaping a peaceful society.

Yes, on the one hand everything was quite good and each participant had its own contribution in the program to make it more and more interesting, the friendly atmosphere could be seen throughout the seven-day-long program but on the other hand I cannot close my eyes on the frozen relationship between Azerbaijani and Armenian groups. When looking into the eyes of our two group young participants, I could read bitter grief in them as the pain from the war over Nagorno Karabakh still torments our two societies two decades later. To my firm

conviction, this kind of activities, such as “Cultural Puzzle”, should be utilized firstly to get to know each other, have various discussions on different topics in general, without concentrating on sensitive conflict-related issues. Afterwards, as the next level of cooperation, the two groups can touch upon those themes, speak the unspoken. Only this can be the way to break the sinister silence. Empathic attitude and tolerant behavior, respect for each other can be the pre-requisites to start the dialogue.

The reality shows that candid conversations on joint problems, common concerns and shared worries can unite people more than in other conditions. As an indisputable proof I can bring an example of those sorrowful events, taking place in Ukraine at that time. Living together under the same roof throughout the implementation of the program in Adana, the participants were more united through having joint discussions on painful daily topics, such as protests of Ukraine people who have come out to fight for freedom and human dignity. Sincere combined talks on the mentioned distressing issues could alleviate our Ukrainian friends’ sufferings at least partly.

The need for people to understand each other becomes more important. With this respect, intercultural dialogues can act as bridges between the grassroots throughout various nations and societies. If you access this bridge, you will be able to access the heart of the people you want to reach.

Օգտագործված գրականություն

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Աստղիկ Մելիք-Քարամյան

Միջմշակութային երկխոսության դերը թարգմանության մեջ

Տվյալ հոդվածում արծարծվում է միջմշակութային երկխոսության և ոչ-ֆորմալ կրթության դերը թարգմանչական ունակությունների հմտությունների ձևավորման նոր միտումների համատեքստում: Գլոբալիզացման գործընթացի արագացումն ու երիտասարդ մասնագետների միջև միջէթնիկ շփումների ընդլայնումն առաջ են քաշում ավանդական ուսուցանման մեթոդների մեջ կարծրատիպերի կոտրման և նոր մոտեցումների ու մեթոդների առաջադրման անհրաժեշտությունը: Հոդվածն անդրադառնում է նաև ոչ-ֆորմալ /արտալսարանական/ կրթության նշանակությանը

միջմշակութային հաղորդակցման հստությունների զարգացման տեսանկյունից՝ որպես անհրաժեշտություն ժամանակակից և պահանջարկված թարգմանիչների կայացման գործընթացում:

Բանալի բառեր. միջմշակութային երկխոսություն, միջէթնիկական հաղորդակցություն, մշակութային բազմազանություն, ժամանակակից թարգմանություն, ոչ-ֆորմալ կրթություն

Астхик Мелик-Карамян

О роли межкультурного диалога в переводе

В данной статье освящается роль межъязыкового культурного диалога и неформального обучения в контексте новых тенденций формирования переводческих навыков. Внушительные темпы глобализации и бурное развитие межэтнического общения среди молодых специалистов диктуют необходимость отказа от стереотипов традиционного обучения перевода и формирования новых подходов и методов. В статье обсуждается роль неформального (внеаудиторного) обучения, посредством прямого общения представителей разных языков и культур, нацеленного на формирование навыков межкультурной коммуникации, необходимых для подготовки успешных и востребованных переводчиков.

Ключевые слова: Межкультурный диалог, межэтнические коммуникации, культурное многообразие, современный перевод, неформальное обучение