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# DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS IN TEACHING ENGLISH: COMPLAINING IN ENGLISH AND ARMENIAN CULTURAL CONTEXTS

## ABSTRACT

The present paper promotes to optimize ways of developing the cultural awareness of the Armenian students of English. Proceeding from the assumption that the cultural element should be implemented in the English language classroom, the paper seeks to show that the Armenian students' culturally-induced behaviour can be enhanced by teaching them how to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings. For the purpose of the cross-cultural pragmatic analysis, one speech act, complaint, has been picked out. The choice of this expressive speech act can be explained by the fact that it is often used in everyday face-to-face communication and displays a high degree of cultural sensitivity. The main result of the research is the postulation that the linguistic expression of the illocutionary force is culture specific. The paper also indicates that the teacher can contribute to the growth of cultural sensitivity of the Armenian students of English by teaching them how to transfer the pragmatic competence appropriately in cross-cultural communicative settings.

***Keywords:*** *cross-cultural pragmatics, cultural awareness, cross-cultural communicative competence, teaching cross-culturally, illocutionary force.*

## РЕЗЮМЕ
## РАЗВИТИЕ КУЛЬТУРНОЙ ОСВЕДОМЛЕННОСТИ ПРИ ОБУЧЕНИИ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: ЖАЛОБЫ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И АРМЯНСКОМ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ КОНТЕКСТАХ

Настоящая статья способствует оптимизации способов развития культурной осведомленности армянских студентов, изучающих английский язык. Исходя из того суждения, что культурный элемент должен быть внедрен при преподавании английского языка, в статье делается попытка показать, что культурно обусловленное поведение армянских учащихся может быть улучшено путем обучения их эффективному общению в межкультурной среде. Для межкультурного прагматического анализа был

выделен один речевой акт - жалоба. Выбор этого экспрессивного речевого акта можно объяснить тем, что он часто используется в повседневном личном общении и демонстрирует высокую степень культурной чувствительности. Основным результатом исследования является постулат о том, что языковое выражение иллокутивного акта зависит от лингвокультуры. В статье также указывается, что учитель может способствовать росту культурной восприимчивости армянских студентов, изучающих английский язык, обучая их, как правильно передавать прагматические компетенции в межкультурной коммуникативной среде.

**Ключевые слова:** *межкультурная прагматика, культурная осведомленность, межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, межкультурное обучение, иллокутивное значение.*

## ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ
## ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ԻՐԱՉԵԿՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԽԹԱՆՈՒՄԸ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆ ԴԱՍԱՎԱՆԴԵԼԻՍ. ԲՈՂՈՔԻ ԱՐՏԱՀԱՅՏՉԱՄԻՋՈՑՆԵՐԸ ԱՆԳԼԻԱԿԱՆ և ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԼԵՉՎԱՄՇԱԿՈՒՅԹՆԵՐՈՒՄ

Սույն հոդվածը միտված է կատարելագործելու անգլերեն սովորող հայ ուսանողների մշակութային իրազեկությունը: Ելնելով այն դրույթից, որ անգլերեն ուսուցանելիս անհրաժեշտ է ներառել նաև մշակութային տարրը, հոդվածում մատնանշվում է, որ օտար լեզվամշակույթ կրողների հետ հայ ուսանողների հաղորդակցականան գործունեությունը կարելի է բարելավել՝ նրանց սովորեցնելով, թե ինչպես պետք է արդյունավետ կերպով հաղորդակցվել միջմշակութային միջավայրում: Միջմշակութային գործաբանական քննություն կատարելու նպատակով ընտրվել է բողոք արտահայտող խոսքային ակտը: Գործաբանական ոլորտի արտահայտչական դասին պատկանող այս խոսքային ակտի ընտրությունը պայմանավորված է այն հանգամանքով, որ այն հաճախ է օգտագործվում առօրյա հաղորդակցման մեջ: Հոդվածում ներառված գործնական վարժանքներից պարզ է դառնում, որ իլոկուտիվ իմաստի լեզվական ձևակերպումը կախված է տվյալ լեզվի մշակութային առանձնահատկություններից: Հոդվածում նշվում է նաև, որ ուսուցիչը կարող է նպաստել անգլերեն սովորող հայ ուսանողների մշակութային զգայունությունը խթանելուն՝ նրանց սովորեցնելով, թե ինչպես պետք է գործաբանական կարողությունը մի լեզվից մյուսին փոխադրել միջմշակութային հաղորդակցական միջավայրում:

**Բանալի բառեր՝** միջմշակութային գործաբանություն, մշակութային իրազեկություն, միջմշակութային հաղորդակցական կարողություն, միջմշակութային ուսուցում, հլոկուրիվ իմաստ:

### Introduction

Cultural awareness is one of the most important aspects of cognition in the era of globalization. In the first place, it means acknowledging otherness, that is, admitting the diversity that may possibly exist in the mindset, behaviours and communication styles of other people. In the second place, it indicates one's willingness to adapt to certain behavioural patterns and interact accordingly. This conception has become one of the key manifestations of communicative competence which enables the speakers to use proper language to convey information (Scarcella, Anderson, Krashen, 1990; Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars, 2000; Peterson, 2004; Ang, Van Dyne, Tan, 2011).

The recent research works carried out within the field of teaching English as a foreign language revealed that in order to be a successful communicator, it is necessary to adapt to the target linguaculture and tranfer the native language skills accordingly (Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz,1990; Takahashi, 1996; Rose, Kasper, 2001; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Cohen, 2011 ). H. Yamagashira notes that negative language trasfer, that is interference, plays an important role in interlanguage. He further observes that language transfer "at the pragmatic level is called pragmatic transfer, and it forms interlanguage pragmatics" (Yamagashira 2001: 260).

This comes to prove once more that teaching a foreign language is closely linked with teaching culturally motivated language behaviour, trying to eliminate the language errors which can be attributable to native language skills and competences (Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, 2003; Ishihara, Cohen, 2010; Gay, 2010).

B. Tomalin and S. Stempleski formulate the following goals of cultural instruction:

1. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
2. To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave. (Tomalin, Stempleski 1993: 7)

The cultural factor has undoubtedly become more significant recently as many teachers working in multicultural classrooms face the problem of diversity. They try to improve the culturally proper verbal behaviour of the students and to boost cross-cultural adaptation mechanisms. I believe that cultural awareness is also important in monocultural academic settings in Armenia where certain sociocultural factors such as attitudes, socialization practices, communication styles of the students coming from different regions of the country may hinder the process of teaching. My experience of teaching English at Yerevan State University also allows me to assert that when expressing different illocutionary forces in English, the Armenian students often transfer their native language skills mechanically. Admittedly, the use of culturally inappropriate communicative-pragmatic elements often causes miscommunication issues. Teaching Armenian students how to formulate different speech acts adequately can be associated with the linguistic perspective of cross-cultural pragmatics where the use of certain language units in the target language is explained by social context and culturally related factors. The present article enlarges on the example of teaching one speech act – complaint. It aims to show how the students' cultural mindfulness can be increased by enhancing their pragmatic competence.

According to the purpose and problems of the research, the following methods of analysis have been applied: hypothetical-deductive and inductive methods, the method of cross-cultural pragmatic analysis with elements of cognitive interpretation and case study method.

### The Importance of Teaching Cross-Culturally

The importance of cultural awareness in teaching English as a foreign language as well as in cross-cultural trainings has already been highlighted in

many handbooks, course books and studies carried out from cross-cultural perspective (Davitishvili, 2017; Kohls, Knight,1994; Utley, 2012; Holliday, Hyde, Kullman, 2010). G. Johnson and M. Rinvolucri state that although including elements of culture and civilization as part of language courses in secondary schools is praiseworthy, learning special vocabulary and factual material do not help the students to adapt to the mindset of the target language speakers. In order to help the students to become more aware of the norms, behaviours and cultural beliefs of the target culture, to avoid cultural stereotypes and develop empathy towards other cultures, they propose activating certain types of thinking (Reflecting, Sharing, Comparing, Preparing) when doing classroom activities. Interestingly enough, G. Johnson and M. Rinvolucri highlight the importance of developing more profound awareness of the students' home culture, which means that the cultural pragmatic competence is of great importance (Johnson, Rinvolucri, 2010: 15-17).

Teaching a foreign language means being involved in a complex educational scenario which includes different ingredients such as classroom discourse, objectives of teaching and strategies of teaching (Mehan, 1985; Walsh, 2006). Noting the typical ritualistic features of classroom discourse as described by various authors, L. Betáková acknowledges two structures of classroom discourse which contain interactional sequences of classroom lessons: ''initiation- response – evaluation'' and ''initiation- response – feedback. She observes that these dialogic sequences prove to be more effective for the process of learning ''depending on the pedagogical aim of the particular lesson.'' (Betáková, 2008:154)

I propose to identify the classroom discourse as a specific situational context which comprises the following constituents: teacher, students, message, teaching material, background knowledge. Subsequently, the strategies of teaching a foreign language include the following aspects:

- ✓ *Teaching English as a foreign language proper*. This aspect denotes the classroom activity of instruction and includes the process of creating knowledge, such as disseminating new information,

explaining the educational material in the classroom, assigning and checking homework, and correcting mistakes.

- ✓ *Assessment of knowledge*. Different types of tests, quizes and exercises can be used to reveal the level and quality of the knowledge acquired by the students.
- ✓ *Teaching a foreign language via metacommunication*. This aspect suggests conducting teacher-student classroom discourse which, as we know, has its special verbal/non-verbal procedures, based on the peculiarities of the communicative-situational and cultural context of the classroom. Classroom discourse is very sensitive to socio-cultural factors like age, gender considerations, social distance, cultural dimensions and intergrity.
- ✓ *Teaching a foreign language in combination with the mother tongue*. This aspect means employing interlanguage tactics which can be done by using the native language of the students to explain the new material. The strategy of using the mother tongue largely depends on the knowledge level of the students. Admittedly, a great number of research works carried out in the sphere of foreign language teaching point out the negative effect of involving the native language in the process of TEFL – the so-called negative transfer or interference (see Yamagashira, 2001). Anyhow, if we look at this problem from the perspective of cross-cultural pragmatics, we can assume that this tactical tool may prove to be quite successful especially in monocultural classrooms. Admittedly, one of the aims of the English teacher is to develop the cultural awareness of the students. Therefore, by drawing parallels between the native and target linguacultures, some similarities and differences may be revealed.

I have always wondered why some methods of teaching, innovative tools, no matter how successfully designed and preplanned they might be, do not work with my Armenian students. Many teachers fail to accomplish a pre-planned communicative activity in class because their students seem to be uninvolved in it, unmotivated and do not react appropriately. What do

you think should be taken into consideration to be successful in teaching a foreign language? We must admit that in the academic context of a monocultural country like Armenia, due attention is not paid to the cultural awareness issues in teacher training courses. When discussing professional problems, e.g., considering new methods, tools and online platforms for teaching a foreign language, the focus is put on developing different language skills and using innovative teaching material and online platforms. When designing the language courses, the goals, targets and learning outcomes are usually defined. Anyhow, the experienced teachers will agree with the idea that the same method, the same textbook, tool or online platform activity does not work equally well for different groups of students having the same proficiency level. You just cannot work successfully by using one model of classroom scenario in different classrooms. I strongly believe that the core of the problem lies in the human factor, and in particular, the cultural background or identity of the students. If we agree that education is to be student-centred, i.e. the process of teaching should address the needs of the students, the cultural assumptions of the educational scenario come to the fore. The cultural dimension of the process of teaching is very complex and needs to be studied more thoroughly.

I can state from my personal experience that the Armenian students are often reluctant to discuss in class some personal issues, topics that are related to their personal attitude, personal lifestyle. Meanwhile, they readily discuss other people's lives. In my opinion, this is because they are not taught to be open-minded and free from discriminatory judgements. Thus, during classroom discussions many students tend to be inactive because they are often frustrated by the idea of being criticized by their classmates for a viewpoint or behaviour that differs from the others. Actually, they are more active when the behaviour of a third person or party is being discussed, and they have to express their opinion about somebody else.

### Cultural Awareness and Illocutionary Force

Cultural awareness (also called cultural intelligence in business settings) is the ability of a person to act successfully and accordingly in culturally

diverse situations. It is the "ability to engage in a set of behaviours that uses skills (i.e. language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g., tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with whom one interacts" (Peterson, 2004: 89). Figuratively speaking, cultural awareness is like one's third eye, the ability to acknowledge the differences in socio-cultural, communicative patterns, and adjust to them.

As we have already stated, the present paper focuses on the problem of developing the cultural awareness of the Armenian students of English and promotes the idea that the cultural element should be implemented in order to enhance their culturally-induced behaviour. My idea is that the teacher can contribute to the growth of cultural sensitivity of the Armenian students of English by teaching them how to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings. Many studies have already specified that it is of great importance to teach the students how to formulate the illocutionary force of the speech act, that is to voice their communicative intentions (e.g. questioning, promising, advising, congratulating, ordering) in English appropriately, avoiding pragmatic transfer from the native language (Cohen, 2005; Enochs, Yoshitake-Strain, 1999; García, 1989; Judd, 1999). Cultural competence development can be accomplished through certain linguistic activities which are related to the study of the communicative-pragmatic aspect of language behaviour. Cross-cultural pragmatics studies the functioning of different language units which is determined by social context and culturally related factors (Davis, Henze, 1998; Kasper, Blum-Kulka, 1993).

The linguistic expression of the illocutionary force can be culture specific and the communicative strategies which are used to express one and the same speech act may vary in different linguacultures. Therefore, we suppose that by involving the students in cross-cultural communication practice, and explaining the differences in the nuances of expressing illocutionary forces in the native and target languages, it will be possible to enhance the Armenian students' culturally-induced behaviour.

Analysing the process of communication from the pragmatic perspective, the linguists revealed that in order to communicate information successfully, it is not enough to produce grammatically correct verbal tokens and interpret them. The most important part of the content lies in the sphere of the speakers' intended communicative meaning – illocutionary force (Searle, 1969; Levinson, 1983). Thus, when I say ''Can you open the window?'', it is crucial for me that you interpret this as a request to open the window, but not as a question about your ability to do that particular action. Cross-cultural pragmatic analysis comes to prove that the production of the speech acts is culturally bound (Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper, 1989). Naturally, we can propose that the speech acts (e.g. request, apology, order, advice, etc.) may be formulated differently in English as compared to Armenian. So, when we teach Armenians English, we should pay attention to some cultural aspects of production, that is, we should give the students background knowledge about the target culture. In doing so, the English teacher will develop the students' cultural awareness and make them sensitive to linguacultural differences.

### *Pragmatic Interpretation of Complaint as an Expressive Speech Act*

As we have already stated, for the purpose of the present cross-cultural pragmatic analysis, one speech act, complaint, has been picked out, which will be discussed in English and Armenian cultural contexts. The choice of this expressive speech act can be explained by the fact that it is often used in everyday face-to-face communication and displays a high degree of cultural sensitivity.

First of all, let us describe the notion of complaining as a sociocultural and communicative phenomenon. Complaint can be interpreted as a subjective emotional ingredient of social interaction. It is communicated when at least one of the sides experiences dissatisfaction, frustration or disapproval. As for the linguistic characteristics of complaining, it is a kind of verbal activity, an expression of complete thought which can be defined as '' A statement that somebody makes saying that they are not satisfied'' (OALD:

295). From the communicative-semantic aspect, the verb 'to complain' is a locutive verb which means saying ''that you are annoyed, unhappy or not satisfied about sb/sth'' (OALD:284). This verb is used to convey the negative emotions of the speaker and has a lot of synonyms such as 'to protest, object, grumble, moan, whine and whinge'. According to its communicative-pragmatic structure, the speech act 'complaint' is included in the class of Expressives. According to J. Searle, Expressives are speech acts whose illocutionary point is "to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (Searle, 1976: 12). Within this category, besides complaint, some other speech acts can be identified ''that express the emotional state of the speaker: apologizing, thanking, congratulating, condoling, welcoming, complimenting, deploring, objecting (Paronyan, 2012: 53). In order to understand the pragmatic nature of complaining, what makes an utterance a complaint, and how the hearer decodes the illocutionary force of complaint, let us describe the Felicity Conditions of this speech act. These are the conditions that are necessary for successful production of a particular speech act, proposed by J. Searle, who believes that to produce a speech act is to involve in a rule-governed behaviour (Searle, 1969).

## SPEECH ACT: COMPLAINT

| Propositional Content Condition | Any proposition referring to present, past or future actions |
|---|---|
| Preparatory Condition | Action/Event is (was/will be) not in the speaker's interest. It is (was/will be) harmful, unpleasant or unwanted by the speaker. |
| Sincerity Condition: | Speaker wants (did/will not want) Action/ Event to take place |
| Essential Condition: | Expression of dissatisfaction. |

Judging by the Felicity Conditions of complaint, the need for voicing this illocutionary force arises in communicative situations which the speakers interpret as unfavourable for them. In other words, there should be some reason for dissatisfaction and negative interpretation in order to express complaint. Needles to say, the evaluation of the situation can be both subjective and culture-specific. What is considered as unpleasant or unwanted action, behaviour or attitude can vary in different cultures. Hence, the reasons for complaining may be different in different cultures, which comes to prove that complaint is a culture-specific speech act. Moreover, the ways of expressing one's negative emotions, i.e. performing direct or indirect speech acts, may also vary.

As we can see, the ways of expressing dissatisfaction in English can be discussed and interpreted cross-culturally, in order to reveal their difference or equivalence with Armenian linguaculture. It is of great importance to teach the Armenian students adequate ways of expressing complaint in English in different communicative situations, avoiding communicative failure and conflict. In order to be culturally sensitive, Armenian speakers of English should know how to express complaint in a polite way.

### Successfully Expressing the Illocutionary Force of Complaint in Cross-Cultural Settings

Let us highlight again the focal idea supported in the present paper: experiencing the negative emotion of dissatisfaction and the ways of expressing it verbally, via complaining, may be different in different cultures, which comes to prove that the expression of complaint is culture specific. The linguistic expression of dissatisfaction can be discussed and interpreted in the English classroom cross-culturally, in order to reveal the similarities and differences between the English and Armenian linguacultures. It is one of the English teacher's task to teach the students adequate ways of expressing speech acts (as is the case with complaint) in different communicative situations, avoiding communicative failure and conflict. Emphasizing the necessity to teach language through cultural content, G. Johnson and M.

Rinvolucri single out the following four ways that the middle-class English use in complaint communicative situations:

- Inner monologue
- Sideways complaint
- Apologetic complaint
- Loud, aggressive complaint (Johnson,Rinvolucri, 2010 : 81)

This information can be used to enhance the Armenian students' cultural awareness. To be culturally sensitive towards the English middle-class speakers, Armenian speakers of English should know how they express complaint. First of all, the way the Armenian speakers are used to expressing dissatisfaction in the Armenian cultural context should be discussed in class, and then, the way it can be done at its best in the English cultural context should be explained.

Below I will present my vision of content-based teaching. The methodology of teaching the illocutionary act of complaint cross-culturally will be elaborated step by step.

**Step 1: Icebreaker**

The first step to teach the Armenian students of English ways of expressing complaint in English can be performed with the help of Icebreakers. An icebreaker is a communicative activity which is designed to warm up the conversation among the students. In order to encourage them to interact, the following questions can be suggested for a short discussion:

1. What is complaint? What does it mean to complain? What reasons can you name that might make you voice your complaint?
2. How will you describe the communicative situation of complaint? Can you remember a situation when you complained about something in a public place or privately?

**Step 2: Identification of the Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Peculiarities of Complaint as an Expressive Speech Act.**

This part of classroom work includes discussion of both theoretical and practical aspects of Cross-Cultural Pragmatics. The following instructive

statements can be used to develop the students' cultural awareness and communication skills:

1. Describe the pragmatic peculiarities of complaining as an Expressive speech act;

2. Define the ways of expressing complaint verbally and nonverbally in English and Armenian linguacultures; Try to find similarities and differences;

3. Identify the communication cues of expressing direct and indirect complaint in English and Armenian linguacultures; Try to find similarities and differences;

4. Describe the communicative situations that might arouse complaint in English and Armenian linguacultures; Try to find similarities and differences;

5. Illustrate the differences of expressing direct and indirect complaint in English and Armenian linguacultures. Try to highlight the adaptation mechanisms.

**Step 3: Simulating a Complaint Situation**

After introducing the four complaint situations proposed by G. Johnson and M. Rinvolucri quoted above, tell the students that they will have to use their knowledge in a simulated encounter where complaint is formulated as *Inner Monologue*.

Highlighting the linguacultural aspect of expressing displeasure, the teacher explains to the students that the English middle-class speakers are often too embarrassed to complain aloud and express their anger in inner talk. This means that despite the fact that they are annoyed by something, they think to themselves:

- I don't want to make a scene but this is annoying.
- I don't want to make a fuss...
- I don't want to draw attention to myself.... (Johnson,Rinvolucri, 2010 : 81)

Next, the teacher asks the students what they think about Armenian culture, whether it is customary for Armenians to express complaint in inner

talk. If so, they are asked to formulate some statements, expressing displeasure through inner talk in Armenian. The students will also share their own experience and notify whether they can see any differences or similarities between the two cultures.

### Step 4: Case Study

In this part of practice, a critical incident illustrating a communicative situation where the speech act of complaint can be used will be discussed.

*Assignment 1*: The teacher divides the students into two (or more) groups and asks them to read the following situation:

**Situation 1:** *Inner Talk*

*Complaint Situation 1*

*You are on a train going to Brighton (England)/Gyumri (Armenia). An elderly gentleman sitting near you is eating sunflower seeds noisily and spitting the peels into a paper packet. This is getting on your nerves.*

a) Each group of the students will have to think whether this situation would generate negative emotions and create a Complaint Situation for English/Armenian speakers. The teacher asks the students to interpret the difference between English and Armenian cultural dimensions.

b) The teacher instructs the students to write down some speech acts of complaint in inner monologue, one group in English, another group in Armenian. The students will have to motivate their language choice cross-culturally.

**Situation 2:** *Sideways Complaint*

The students discuss the same communicative situation (Complaint Situation 1), but this time they will try to practice *Sideways Complaint*. Highlighting the linguacultural aspect of expressing displeasure, the teacher explains to the students that the English middle-class speakers will often complain to someone sitting or standing near them but *not* to the actual person who can do something about the situation.

The teacher instructs the students to formulate speech acts expressing 'sideways' complaint in the situation described above:

*Express to your partner what you would say in Complaint Situation 1:*

a)   in English, in case of communicative situation in England;

b)   in Armenian, in case of communicative situation in Armenia;

Next, the students are asked to discuss whether the complaints they expressed in English and Armenian were structurally different or similar.

The same kind of work can be done with the other two complaint situations including Apologetic Complaint and Aggressive Complaint.

### Situation 3: Apologetic Complaint

In this part of practice, the students will be asked to collaborate and find the corresponding language strategies for complaining in Armenian. Highlighting the linguacultural aspect of expressing displeasure, the teacher explains to the students that sometimes the English summon up enough courage to complain directly to someone responsible for the situation. In this case they complain apologetically as in the following communicative situation in a restaurant:

*Complaint Situation 2*

*Having tried the soup, the customer calls the waiter and says:*

*Excuse me, I'm terribly sorry, but, er, this soup seems to be rather, well, not very hot – a bit cold really – sorry to be such a nuisance...*

The students are asked to discuss whether the communicative strategy of expressing indirect complaint and disguising one's negative emotions as politely as possible works in Armenian linguaculture. They will also be asked to share their own background knowledge and guess whether the Armenian speakers would decode that speech act as a complaint or an apology.

Next, the students are instructed to roleplay a similar complaint situation:

a) an English person complaining but very apologetically and indirectly;

b) an Armenian person complaining directly and non-apopogetically.

As a next step for discussion, the students are asked what words can be used in English and Armenian to hedge the illocutionary force of complaint. They can also be asked to define how loud, aggressive complaint can be expressed in English and Armenian linguacultures and bring their own examples.

**Step 5: Cross-Cultural Adaptation**

The students are given some cliches which are used to express complaint in English:

| English | Armenian |
|---|---|
| I'm sorry to say this but… | |
| I hate to tell you but… | |
| I'm angry about… | |
| I (am afraid) have a complaint to make… | |
| There seems to be a problem with… | |
| I'm afraid there is a slight problem with… | |
| Sorry to bother you but… | |
| I'm not satisfied with… | |
| Wouldn't be a good idea to… | |
| There appears to be something wrong with… | |
| I was expecting… but… | |
| Would you mind…? | |
| I don't understand why… | |
| Excuse me but there is a problem… | |

They are asked to identify some of the Armenian equivalents of these cliches and fill in the boxes. They will also have to give a reason for the choice of some of the variants in English and Armenian.

It is noteworthy that the ways of reacting to complaint are also triggered by culture-sensitive communicative factors. The following communicative practice can also be used to enhance the cultural awareness of the Armenian students of English and help them avoid communicative conflicts.

**Step 6: Giving Feedback**

The teacher asks the students how they can react to a complaint in English, accepting or rejecting it. The following cliches, which can be used for giving feedback in English, are presented:

| Accepting a complaint | Rejecting a complaint |
|---|---|
| I'm sorry, we promise never to make the same mistake again. | Sorry, there is nothing we can do about it. |
| I can't tell you how sorry I am. | I'm afraid there isn't much we can do about it. |
| I'm so sorry, but this will never happen again. | Sorry but it's not our fault. |
| I wish it never happened. | It's not my fault. |

The students are asked to identify the direct/indirect speech acts of accepting and rejecting, and to define their appropriateness in different contexts. As a next step, they are instructed to present some complaint situations where acceptance or rejection could be used. Lastly, the students are instructed to work out the corresponding Armenian cliches for different communicative situations.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to state once more that the teachers of English should pay attention to culturally appropriate language behaviour in the target language: what the native English speakers say and do in specific communicative situations, what strategies they use to express their communicative intent.

If Armenian learners of English are to communicate successfully with individuals from non-Armenian-speaking cultures, they need to know that the cultural patterns that trigger the behaviour of people may vary. They also need to become aware of the ways in which their own cultural background influences their own behaviour, and to develop a mindful tolerance for the behaviour patterns that are different from their own. Therefore, it becomes vital to increase the Armenian students' sensitivity to culturally different modes of communication. One of the ways of increasing the cultural awareness of the students is to highlight their metacognitive mind and provide information about differences in expressing the speaker's

communicative intent - illocutionary force. Hence, we can conclude that the linguistic expression of the illocutionary force is culture specific, and the students need to be encouraged to become aware of the subtleties of cultural behaviour.

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