**M. Kurbonova**

**(Tashkent, Uzbekistan)**

**PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING**

Inter-cultural language learning perspectives contribute to the overall education of learners, developing in them the capabilities to: communicate, interact and negotiate within and across languages and cultures, understand their own and others’ languages, thus extending their range of literacy skills, including skills in English literacy, understand themselves and others, and to understand and use diverse ways of knowing, being and doing further develop their cognitive skills through thinking critically and analytically, solving problems, and making connections in their learning. Such capabilities assist learners to live and work successfully as linguistically and culturally aware citizens of the world.

The term *intercultural* indicates a notion of an engaged exploration of difference between cultures. It implies a responsibility to recognize and reflect on the learner’s ‘home’ culture as much as on the target culture. It has conceptualized the successful intercultural language user’s identity as positioned in an independent ‘third place’[1], a vantage point of critical observation and understanding of both first and second (or target) cultures.

Education in a global community highlights the need to develop students with knowledge of different cultures and languages, and an understanding of the relationships between cultures and languages, referred to as *intercultural* (Corbett, 2003; Moran, 2001; Seelye, 1994). Intercultural learning helps students to understand commonality and difference, to question the relative nature of their own cultural identity, and to develop multiple perspectives. Language assumes an important place in this notion. Much language learning today aims to develop communication skills and literacy, self understanding, and to develop cognitive skills through critical thinking.

Fundamental to intercultural language learning (ILL) is acknowledgement of an inextricable link between language and culture. Liddicoat (2002:5) noted “culture shapes what we say, when we say it, and how we say it from the simplest language we use to the most complex. It is fundamental to the way we speak, write, listen and read.”[2. pp. 1-20] Language has a central role in the transmission of cultural codes; language forms and the messages conveyed by them provide cultural knowledge.

Hence the impossibility of separating language and culture. Culture can be understood in a variety of ways and the ways in which culture is constructed will impact on how teachers teach and how learners learn. Consequently, an ILL perspective challenges language teachers to identify ways of appropriately incorporating culture into language learning and language into culture learning:

**Principles**

ILL is developed through five general principles, which guide curriculum design and inform classroom pedagogy. These principles are:

• active construction

• making connections

• social interaction

• reflection

• responsibility.

**Active construction** explores language and culture through active engagement and developing a personal, multi-faceted intercultural space.

**Making connections** occurs when relevant bridges are built between home language / culture and target language / culture, with existing knowledge positioned in light of new input.

**Social interaction** involves communicating across linguistic and cultural boundaries, identifying the boundaries and why they are constructed.

**Reflection** involves engaging in critical, constructive analysis of linguistic and cultural similarity and difference; reflection on one’s own intercultural behaviors and naming one’s own identity.

**Responsibility** encourages learners to accept responsibility for contributing to successful communication across languages and cultures, and for the development of intercultural perspectives.

**Pedagogy**

Meaningful implementation of ILL aligns classroom pedagogy with the philosophy and the principles of ILL (Liddicoat et al, 2003:67-68). Aligning principles with pedagogy means that for **active construction**, classroom pedagogy is task-oriented, highlighting particular linguistic and sociocultural considerations. It refers back to previous learning, foreshadows future learning,and allows learners to demonstrate learningby use of graphic organisers such as mind maps to make links across concepts. Pedagogy aligned with **making connections** incorporates learners’ longitudinal development, builds on previous knowledge, combines learning of language and culture with learning across the curriculum, builds connections across texts and contexts and encourages learners to explain, integrate and inquire. **Social interaction** means that learners will be engaged in tasks that facilitate interaction, especially interactive talk. Teachers scaffold learning to extend the intercultural connections learners are making, drawing on multiple examples from different contexts.

Classroom interaction incorporating **reflection** asks learners to critically reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs and values and creates multiple pathways for bridging linguistic and socio cultural learning. **Responsibility** means that classroom pedagogy involves learners in setting personal goals, engaging positively with difference, taking a reflective stance, including self-monitoring, and developing an awareness of the ethical uses of knowledge.

**Philosophy**

Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco (1999) categorize four broad approaches to culture in language teaching:

• traditional (high culture) approach

• culture studies or area studies approach

• culture as practices/societal norms

• intercultural language learning.

**Traditional approaches** treat cultural competence as being able to identify an established target country canon. The canon is often embodied in the arts, music and literature of a particular group within the target country. Links between language and culture are tenuous, with texts being the object of study, rather than the expression of cultural positions being explored through the text’s language choices.

**Culture study approaches** treat cultural competence as knowledge about a target country (history, geography, institutions). It is possible to acquire this knowledge without engaging in the language. **Culture as societal norms** identifies cultural competence as knowing about what members of a particular cultural group are likely to do base upon known ways of acting or beliefs. The obvious limitation of this approach is culture being presented as static and homogenous.

ILLidentifies culture as the lived experience of individuals. Interactions between people are context-sensitive, negotiated, mediated and variable. In terms of learning, students engage in developing cultural competence from the beginning of their language learning. Learners develop an intercultural perspective where the culture and language contexts in which the student live (the First Place) are made apparent alongside the target culture and language contexts (the Second Place). Using this knowledge, learners move to a position (the Third Place) in which their developing intercultural competence informs their language choices in communication. Learners engage in understanding their own language(s) and culture(s) in relation to the additional language and culture.

Learners engage in processes facilitating negotiation of meaning, involving the recognition, mediation and acceptance of different perspectives. ILL is more than merely learning about a culture and comparing it to one’s own. Learners must make choices about what to hold on to, what to adopt and what to let pass when engaging in meaningful communication in another language.

# A sociocultural perspective on language and learning

A **sociocultural** perspective on language and learning entails a particular view of how language and social interaction are involved in the processes of human development and learning. From that perspective, education and cognitive development are seen as cultural processes, whereby knowledge is not only possessed individually but shared amongst members of communities; and understandings are constructed by people jointly, through their involvement in events which are shaped by cultural and historical factors. Language acquisition and use is seen as having a profound effect on the development of thinking. This does not mean that sociocultural researchers boldly assert that social experience rather than heredity shapes children’s development [3]. They may take different positions on that issue. But they share the view that we cannot understand the nature of thinking, learning and development without taking account of the intrinsically social and communicative nature of human life.

A sociocultural perspective sees education as taking place through dialogue, with the interactions between students and teachers reflecting the historical development, cultural values and social practices of the societies and communities in which educational institutions exist. The educational process which takes place within those institutions might thus be better described as ‘teaching-and-learning’, rather than there being separate processes of ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’[4. pp. 4-11, 37.]. This implies that educational success, and failure, may be explained by the quality of educational dialogues rather than being just the result of the intrinsic capability of individual students (or the didactic presentational skill of individual teachers).

**LIST OF USED LITERATURE**

1. Kramsch, C. (1993a) *Context and Culture in Language Education*. Oxford:

Liddicoat et al, 2003:50-54 Lo Bianco, A.J. Liddicoat, & C. Crozet (eds), *Striving for the Third Place: Intercultural competence through language education* (pp. 1-20). Canberra: Language Australia.

Kaplan, R.B. (1966) Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language Learning*,

1. Liddicoat , A. 2002, ‘Static and dynamic views of culture and

intercultural language acquisition’, Babel, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 4-11, 37.