



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ ΕΦΑΡΜΟΣΜΕΝΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
GREEK APPLIED LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION GRECQUE DE LINGUISTIQUE APPLIQUEE

11ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο: *Η κοιγωνιογλωσσολογική διάσταση στη διδασκαλία και εκμάθηση σύγχρονων γλωσσών*

11th International Conference: *The Sociolinguistic Dimension in the Teaching and Learning of Modern Languages*

11ème Congrès International: *La dimension sociolinguistique de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage des langues vivantes*

ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ - PROCEEDINGS - ACTES

ΤΟΜΟΣ - VOLUME No 7, 1996

Βόλος, 20-24 Δεκεμβρίου 1995

Volos, 20-24 December 1995

Volos, 20-24 Décembre 1995

418 0071

ΕΕΕΓ1995

K

1996

7

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΑΓΓΛΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ - ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ
ΑΡ. ΕΙΣ:.....35742.....

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΕΤΑΙΡΙΑ ΕΦΑΡΜΟΣΜΕΝΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
GREEK APPLIED LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION GRECQUE DE LINGUISTIQUE APPLIQUÉE

- 11ο Διεθνές Συνέδριο: *Η κοινωνιογλωσσολογική διάσταση
στη διδασκαλία και εκμάθηση
σύγχρονων γλωσσών*
- 11th International Conference: *The Sociolinguistic Dimension in
the Teaching and Learning of
Modern Languages*
- 11ème Congrès International: *La dimension sociolinguistique de
l'enseignement et de l'apprentis-
sage des langues vivantes*

ΠΡΑΚΤΙΚΑ - PROCEEDINGS - ACTES

ΤΟΜΟΣ - VOLUME (N° 7, 1996)

Επιμελητές - Editors - Rédacteurs: Α. Τσοπάνογλου
Α. Τσοπανογλου,

Ν. Τρύφωνα-Αντωνοπούλου
N. Tryfona-Antonopoulou

INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE CURRICULUM: A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Introduction

In foreign language learning there is a revived interest in the teaching and learning of culture. Whereas in the 70's and the 80's, culture has been primarily seen as an integral part of **social interaction**, the overall goal of present day interest is to teach culture as **difference**. Learners are expected to understand the **otherness** of the target culture not only as **product** i.e. outputs or facts about culture, but also as **process** that determines actions, beliefs and ways of thinking.

In this paper I will discuss a) how **culture** as **process** is best integrated in foreign language learning and b) how culture learning can enhance learners' **cross-cultural awareness** and understanding.

2. Culture in foreign language learning

On examining syllabuses carefully one notices that cultural issues have permeated them in an arbitrary way. They manifest themselves in one way or another in sections referring to sociocultural competence, compensation strategies and politeness issues, in the themes and topics suggested, etc. See for instance van Ek and Trim (1991).

On the other hand, McCarthy and Carter (1994) put forward a different categorization of culture in relation to language teaching materials. As a matter of fact, they provide specific definitions of culture as they are discerned in language teaching, namely, culture in art and literature, culture and the daily life of a group of people and culture as social discourse.

As I have argued in Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a), however, learners are provided with fragmented information of **facts** about culture as related to language in use. Knowledge of the linguistic structure and the sociolinguistic rules does not automatically carry with it 'any special insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system' of the target culture and country, which usually shapes the processes operating in the particular culture as well as the meaningful options available in the society.

Language learners need to develop a coherent understanding of the basic orientation of culture and the most characteristic processes, symbols and meanings operating in the target society in order to communicate successfully. An awareness of the cultural orientation of the target culture will help language learners to develop a

working hypothesis about the L2 culture for comprehension, production, interpretation and creativity purposes. See Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a) for a discussion on this issue.

However, an important question arises: How best can language learners develop a working hypothesis about the target culture? In other words, how can learners understand and appreciate the otherness of the target culture not only as product but also as process?

Native speakers rely on a particular conceptual framework to make sense of the construction of reality. This conceptual framework makes up their particular cultural identity. In fact, processes influence the way human beings cognize the world around them in a particular society and play an important role in setting up cultural frameworks for reference in order to interpret human action. In other words, processes help us to understand and explain why people think or act the way they do.

As I have argued in Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995b), if learners are given a chance to view the processes operating in the target culture and the native culture in perspective it is expected to be easier for them to build up a working hypothesis about the orientation of the target culture. In this approach to culture learning learners are viewed as critical observers and participants not only of the target culture but also of their own.

Thus learners are placed in a position to consider the L1 and L2 cultures objectively as realizations of basic human needs and of human civilization of equal importance. In this way they can understand, appreciate and tolerate cultural differences (as well as similarities) better.

However, before exploring this view any further I would first give a brief account of the various definitions of culture and whether they have influenced curriculum design.

3. On Defining Culture: An overview

In order to account for the diversity and complexity of culture several definitions of culture have been put forward. Such definitions reflect different theoretical perspectives about what culture is and how it can be studied. Furthermore, they point the way to the methodology to be adopted in the foreign language classroom (Robinson, 1985).

As I have argued in Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a) **behaviourist** and **functional** approaches to culture facilitate cultural description and awareness of how people act. In the language classroom, behavioural and functional approaches to culture often lead to the study of discrete behavioural practices such as how to do 'X' in the L2, where 'X' is replaced by specific functions, strategies and appropriate linguistic realizations or non-verbal behaviours, etc. in specific situations. Or what is 'Z' like in the target culture, where 'Z' is replaced by institutions such as the family, entertainment, social structure, etc. In other words, it presents learners with societal

and sociolinguistic facts about culture.² Behavioural and functional approaches to teaching culture, however, may lead to stereotyping and inflexibility on the part of the language learner (Robinson, 1985).

Culture, however, is characterized by **variation**. Within the same culture, groups differ from each other. After all, behaviours and functions are not static units. They change across time or place, across individuals, and even the same individual may behave differently from situation to situation. Culture as Isaacs (1975:44) argues, does not look "like a set of neat boxes" but "more like a cell of living matter with a sprawlingly irregular shape." Language users do not only act upon accepted cultural behaviours but they also **create** culture.

The **cognitive** definition of culture shifts attention from the observable aspects of what is shared to what is shared as a means of organizing and interpreting the world, of creating order out of inputs. In other words, culture itself is a process through which experience is mapped out, categorized and interpreted. In the words of Goodenough (1964), reported in Robinson (1985: 10),

culture does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is the forms of things people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them.

On the other hand, the **symbolic** definition of culture focuses on the product of processing, i.e. the meanings and symbols derived. Culture is not only a matter of accumulation of clearly defined knowledge of facts but also of historical experience, of attitudes and processes that have shaped a culture over the years. Culture is a dynamic system - an ongoing, dialectic process giving rise to symbols which may be viewed historically.

In foreign language learning, it can be very useful to know which are the processes, the meanings and the symbols operating behind the selection of behaviours, actions, beliefs, attitudes, likes and dislikes language users make, be it in L1 or L2. However, the potential implications of the cognitive theory as well as of the symbolic theory have not been applied to a pedagogy for developing cross-cultural understanding in second/foreign language learning although they seem to offer fruitful insights for using language in context appropriately (Robinson, 1985).

4. The categories of analysis and the curriculum

4.1. The categories of analysis

In a descriptive and evaluative study, a critical step is the selection of a framework within which the curriculum can be viewed from a sociocultural perspective. Following the rationale of the short discussion in sections 2 and 3 as well as the work of Triandis (1972), Brown and Levinson (1987), Hall (1976), Sifianou (1992), Ferraro (1994) and Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a) and (1995b) among others, I will attempt to construct a taxonomy of the basic sociocultural factors to be taken into account in curriculum design.

For a description of culture, be it L1 or L2, the **ethnographic** perspective is adopted. The ethnographic description of the culture can bring to the fore the

conceptual framework used by native speakers to make sense of the construction of reality and social life. It makes up their particular cultural identity and distinguishes them from one another (Cowan, 1990; also Saville-Troike, 1996).

Wider cultural issues deriving from the **symbolic** and **cognitive** approaches to culture are incorporated into the proposed taxonomy of factors. See Table 1 on p. 6 adapted from Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a). In particular see the two top categories which are of interest to us here.

Table 1

Categories of analysis

historical & geographical factors	experience, reality
processes	implicit versus explicit communication monochronic versus polychronic time politeness orientation of society etc.
macro-culture issues	class, status, ethnicity, public spheres,
national/ public domains	power and control, authority and anti-authoritarianism, social rights and opportunities
micro-culture issues	school, neighbourhood, church, work,
private/interpersonal domains	private spheres, etc.
role specifications and relationships	men, women, children, father, mother, doctor, taxi-driver, etc.
input factors	type of interlocutor, complexity of language and context of situation, complexity of task
contact factors	goals, duration, intensity, quality

(Adapted from Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1995a:139)

Symbolic and cognitive approaches to culture can demonstrate **why** people think or act the way they do. Historical and geographical factors seem to have played an important role in determining the experiences and the reality of a people (Triandis and Vassiliou, 1972.) It is from this experience and reality that cultures derive their myths, symbols and meanings, which comprise the symbolic perspective (Cassirer, 1953; Cowan, 1990; Street, 1993; Hodge and Kress, 1993). The symbolic perspective can be particularly instrumental in explaining the processes that seem to operate in the target culture. Processes influence the way human beings cognize the world around them and play an important role in setting up cultural frameworks for reference in order to interpret human action as well as verbal and non-verbal behaviour (cf. Seelye, 1984; Robinson, 1985; Brown and Levinson, 1987; also Sifianou, 1992). The two top categories of analysis constitute the backbone against which the other categories can be best traced and understood.

4.2. Sociocultural perspectives and the curriculum

Triandis and Vassiliou (1972:302) argue that the character and the culture of a people are consistent with analyses of the **ecology** and **history** of that country. Due to their experiences different people have developed a different worldview and cultural orientation. In other words, they have developed different ways of thinking

and distinctive behaviours. As a result, the processes operating behind the construction of social reality for them are different. In an attempt to place cultures in a perspective that will allow learners to consider L1 and L2 cultures objectively, I will discuss three processes, namely, explicit versus implicit communication, monochronic versus polychronic time and politeness orientation of society. I take processes to mean the distinctive features that characterize cultures. Similarities and differences between cultures depend on how many of these distinctive features they share and to what degree.³ In my opinion, processes can be instrumental for developing the learners' working hypothesis about the target culture, a better understanding of their own culture as well as more successful cross-cultural awareness.

A. Explicit versus implicit communication

Cultures vary in terms of how explicitly they send or receive verbal messages. In certain societies, for example, effective verbal communication is expected to be explicit, direct and unambiguous. Good communicators are supposed to say what they mean as precisely and straightforwardly as possible. Speech patterns in some other cultures are considerably more ambiguous, inexact, and implicit. Relying on this assumption Hall (1976) put forward the notion of high-context versus low-context cultures. He writes:

A high-context (HC) communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low-context (LC) communication is just the opposite, i.e. the mass of the message is vested in the explicit code (Hall, 1976:79).

Of course, the notions of high-context vs. low-context cultures are not 'either-or' categories. They can be found in any speech community, although one or the other mode is likely to predominate. Based on the writings of Hall (1976) and Kohls (1978), Ferraro (1994) has placed 12 nationalities on a high versus low context continuum as far as their explicit versus implicit communication practices are concerned. See Table 2 on p.9 adapted from Ferraro (1994:51).

Table 2

	COMMUNICATION	TIME	POLITENESS
Swiss German	low context	monochronic time	negative
German	.	.	.
Scandinavian	.	.	.
United States	.	.	.
French	.	.	.
English	.	.	.
Italian	.	.	.
Spanish	.	.	.
Greek	.	.	.
Arab	.	.	.
Chinese	.	.	.
Japanese	high context	polychronic time	positive

Low-context cultures rely on elaborate verbal codes and demonstrate high value and positive attitudes towards verbal language. The primary function of speech in these cultures is to express one's ideas and thoughts as clearly, logically and persuasively as possible, so the speaker can be fully recognized for his or her individuality in influencing others.

Verbal messages are important in high-context cultures, too. However, they are only part of the total communication context. Verbal language, in fact, is inseparably interrelated to social relationships, politics and morality. Verbal messages are used not to enhance the speaker's individuality but to promote harmony and social integration (Ferraro, 1994:52).⁴

B. Monochronic versus polychronic time

There are many kinds of times systems in the world. Two most representative ones are the so-called **monochronic** and **polychronic** time. Monochronic time means paying attention to and doing only one thing at a time. Polychronic time means being involved with many things at once (Hall, *et al*, 1990).

People culturally conditioned by monochronic time share certain characteristics. For instance, they like to do one thing at a time, take time commitments seriously and do not like to be interrupted. They also like to follow rules of privacy and consideration adhering religiously to plans. Monochronic time seals people off from one another and, as a result, intensifies some relationships while shortchanging others. Monochronic time people have developed low-context communication skills and need clear and explicit information while emphasizing promptness. Western cultures in general are dominated by monochronic time. German and Swiss cultures in particular represent classic examples of monochronic time (Hall, *et al*, 1990:14).

On the other hand, polychronic time cultures are characterized by the simultaneous occurrence of many things and by a great involvement with people. There is more emphasis on completing human transactions than on holding to schedules. They have developed high-context communication skills and change plans easily. They are more concerned with those who are closely related such as family, friends than privacy, base promptness on the relationship and have a strong tendency to build lifetime relationships. They consider time commitments an objective to be achieved, if possible whereas they borrow and lend things often and easily. Chinese and Japanese cultures, for instance, are good examples of polychronic cultures.

Of course, the generalizations mentioned above do not apply equally to all cultures, however, they help to convey a pattern (Hall *et al*, 1990). The continuum of cultures adapted for the purposes of this work can also hold true for the interplay of cultures in terms of monochronic and polychronic time. See Table 2 on page 9.

C. Politeness orientation of society

The last but not least important process I will discuss concerns the politeness orientation of a society. Here the notion of a predominant politeness orientation within a given culture may be of great value (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Sifianou, 1992).

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest a distinction between societies with a positive politeness orientation and societies with a negative politeness orientation, in other words, between familiar, friendly, 'solidarity politeness' and formal 'deference politeness' (Sifianou, 1992:214). This dichotomy between positive and negative politeness Brown and Levinson (1987:134) actually define as "where positive politeness is free-ranging, negative politeness is specific and focused."

In following Brown and Levinson (1987), Sifianou (1992:87) in her seminal work on politeness phenomena in England and in Greece, argues that Greek culture reflects a positive politeness orientation whereas English culture reflects a negative politeness orientation. She goes on to say that "negative politeness is narrower in that it addresses a specific act, whereas positive politeness is broader and considers the overall relationship between interactants. Thus, it appears that by definition negative politeness is more restricted than positive politeness in that the former reflects consideration for one of the addressee's basic needs -- to be independent -- whereas the latter reflects consideration for the addressee's perennial needs to be liked, approved of, admired, and so on." (Sifianou, 1992:87).

Politeness, of course, is not only a matter of verbal behaviour but also of non-verbal behaviour. Body contact, such as kissing, embracing, patting on the shoulder, handshaking and body posture, even the distance between interactants are an exemplification and realization of politeness as practised in different cultures. Generally speaking, people from high-contact cultures, such as Arabs, Latin Americans, and Greeks, feel more comfortable at shorter distances when interacting than people from low-contact cultures, such as Americans and North Europeans. (Morain, 1986:72; reported in Sifianou 1992:75).

Generally speaking, negative politeness, with its concern for territorial rights and freedom, is of obvious importance in cultures that place a high value on individualism and explicitness; positive politeness, on the other hand, which places much more emphasis on 'social relativism', 'comprising concerns about belongingness, empathy, dependency, and reciprocity' is of greater importance in cultures that emphasize collectivism and human relationships (Kasper, 1990:195; also Triandis, 1990). As with monochronic and polychronic time, it seems that the continuum of cultures presented in p. 9 can also reflect the interplay of cultures in terms of politeness orientation.⁵

In my opinion, an understanding of the interplay of processes operating in L1 and L2 can further enhance an awareness of the culturally conditioned orientation of the other categories of the curriculum which deal with the situational and pragmalinguistic contexts. The other categories incorporate discrete elements of culture in terms of **domains** pertaining to macro- and micro-cultural issues as well as **role specifications** and **relationships** culturally conditioned. The last two categories that comprise the **input** and **contact factors** reflect the learners' needs and interests in relation to their purposes. After all, it is important that we limit our search for the cultural orientation of the target culture to 'fields' pertaining to the needs, interests and purposes of learners. All categories are permeated by and are

realizations of the processes operating in the society.⁶

Concluding, the processes that shape and determine the cultural orientation of a culture, be it the L2 or the L1, are not in any hierarchical order. They are both constraints and resources for language users and are to be found across cultures realized in different and very often contradictory ways (cf. Halliday and Hasan, 1985).

5. Discussion

In section 4 I have discussed culture and the curriculum in F.L. from a sociocultural perspective. I have argued for the need to incorporate the cognitive and symbolic approaches to culture learning in the curriculum since they constitute the backbone that allow the functional and behavioural approaches to culture learning acquire coherence.

In particular I made reference to three of the major processes operating across cultures, namely, communication type, monochronic and polychronic time and politeness in society. The place that a culture occupies in the suggested continuum reflects the uniqueness of the L2 culture in relation to the culture of the learner in spite of the fact that the L1 and the L2 cultures "may be presumed to have more in common with each other, through sharing a common past and a common ethos (e.g. western societies)" (Reynolds, 1995:11). At the same time, the continuum of cultures and the distinctive features or processes presented in Table 2, p. 9, allows us to consider culture not only from the cognitive and symbolic perspective but also from the contrastive perspective. Differences and similarities across cultures may vary depending on which ones of the discrete features –i.e. low context vs. high context communication, monochronic vs. polychronic time, negative vs. positive politeness etc.– that characterize cultures they share and to what degree. See also notes 3 and 5.

The need to incorporate the cognitive and the symbolic perspective in the curriculum is argued for by other researchers, too. For instance, Robinson (1985:1) argues for the need to develop cross-cultural understanding in the ESL/EFL/bilingual classroom, too. She defines this understanding as empathising or feeling comfortable with another person, not merely as being able to decode someone else's verbal system or being aware of why someone is acting or feeling the way they do. Empathising, however, she very rightly claims, requires an understanding of the cultural orientation, of the processes, the symbols and the meanings the community adheres to and accepts at face value.

Arguing along similar lines Kramsch (1993) states that, all things being equal, we could easily understand each other provided we shared the same code as a system. And this view, she argues, has been promoted by functional and pragmatic approaches to foreign language learning. She maintains, however, that there are difficulties in understanding each other because culture comes into play, and culture as a system is not as easily manageable as the code. Culture, in fact, is always there when the learner is trying to use the L2 in real life.

Furthermore, McCarthy and Carter (1994) also maintain that one's own cultural learnings affect their perception of other people. Different cultures assign different meanings to the 'same' action and decipher these actions in different ways. It seems that the characteristics that are uncommon to the perceiver are often the most distinctive; therefore, perceptions of people from different cultures tend to reflect the differences, even though these differences may not be the most representative of the person or the group. What's more, the very term culture itself changes its meanings and serves different often competing purposes at different times, culture being an active process of meaning (Street, 1993.) And as Hodge and Kress (1993:5) argue language comes into this process, since it is involved in the storing of perceptions and thoughts. For speakers to communicate their perceptions and thoughts they must be coded in language. So language which seems to be intrinsically a psychological and social phenomenon, determines which perceptions and thoughts are potentially social ones (cf. Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1987). After all, language plays an important role in what has been called the 'social construction of reality' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). It seems therefore that culture transfer or culture ignorance can blur cultural understanding, and may lead to conflict and misunderstanding.

I have argued elsewhere that learners need to develop a working hypothesis about the L2 culture (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1995a). However, unless learners are aware of their own cultural presuppositions and their impact on social and interpersonal behaviours, they can be hardly expected to develop an insightful understanding of the target culture and avoid stereotyping (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1995b). The contrastive principle perspective can be instrumental for a better understanding of the L1 and L2 culture. An awareness of the interplay of the cultural orientation of the L1 and L2 cultures is expected to provide learners with the necessary input to develop cross-cultural awareness and a better understanding of the target culture (cf. Carter and Long, 1991). In other words, learners will be able to see "through language to the points of view and ideologies which language can reveal and conceal" (McCarthy and Carter, 1994:165).

Closer to the perspective argued for in this paper is the view of language that underlines the writing process and critical language awareness (Clark and Ivanic, 1991). Following Fairclough (1989) Clark and Ivanic (1991:168-170) claim that a critical view of language should integrate form, process and socio-historical context in a single model. The third layer, that of the socio-historical context which Clark and Ivanic postulate in the context of academic writing, incorporates to a great extent the two top categories -i.e. historical and geographical factors as well as processes- argued for in this paper.

Consequently, integrating culture in the curriculum requires something more than a demonstration of "the ways in which forms of language, from individual words to complete discourse structures, encode something of the beliefs and values held by the language user" (McCarthy and Carter, 1994:150). Culture is a reality that is historical, social, political, and ideological and the difficulty of understanding

cultural codes stems from the difficulty of viewing the world from a different cognitive and symbolic perspective. It is not simply a matter of grasping another lexical or grammatical code and the encoded values, beliefs and meanings that come with it (Kramsch, 1993:188). If learners are invited to interpret the processes operating in L1 and L2 and view them from the contrastive perspective they will develop cross-cultural awareness and understanding. Cross-cultural awareness and understanding will further contribute towards enhancing their working hypothesis about the L2, in other words, their awareness and understanding of the cultural orientation of the L2.

5. Practical implications

There are various ways to implement the sociocultural perspective for the teaching of culture in language learning. In this section I will briefly refer to learning materials, teacher training and translation.

Following McCarthy and Carter (1994:151) aspects of culture from such diverse sources as

- (1) **culture with capital C** -- this refers to art, music, theatre and, especially, literature;
- (2) **culture with small c** -- this refers to habits, customs, social behaviours and assumptions about the world of a group of people; and,
- (3) **culture as social discourse** -- this refers to the social knowledge and interactive skills which are required in addition to knowledge of the language system,

are especially welcome in learning materials. Incorporating cultural knowledge in learning materials relevant to learners' needs, interests and purposes does not mean to simply teach it as facts of *what* something is like or *how* someone is expected to behave in the L2. Learning materials should help learners to understand *why* things are done in that way rather than another, which can be entirely different from what learners are used to. In other words, Learning materials should help learners understand the otherness of the L2 culture. Hence the need to teach the L2 culture as process rather than product and consider it contrastively with the L1. The curriculum, therefore, should incorporate appropriate themes, i.e. time, place, body contact etc., as well as topics, i.e. responding to an invitation or confirming a business appointment etc., that can exemplify to learners the processes operating in the L1 and the L2 culture. Depending on the cultural presuppositions (whether of the L1 or the L2) the expected outcomes of a communicative event - of course, carried out in the L2 - may vary. Understanding and handling cultural miscommunication leads to cultural awareness and a better understanding of the processes operating in L1 and L2. Otherwise, it is a rather fragmented view of culture that is presented to learners often leading to stereotyping.

The next important issue to consider concerns the teacher and his/her training to cope with culture as process. Teacher training and development should incorporate relevant work for cross-cultural awareness activities and tasks to further enhance the teachers' working hypothesis about the cultural orientation of the L2. In

particular, teachers should be aware of the serious or humorous consequences of culture transfer or culture ignorance.

Last but not least, such an approach to culture learning will also help language learners to develop more effective translation skills. Miscommunication in translation is very often the outcome of differences in the cultural orientation of the target language and the source language. Abiding with a view of language 'as a socially and culturally constructed symbol system that is used in ways that reflect macrolevel social meanings (e.g., group identity, status differences) but also create microlevel social meanings (i.e., what one is saying and doing at a particular moment in time)' (Shiffrin, 1996:315), one can easily recognize the heart of the problem. Unless the translator is aware of the processes operating behind the macrolevel or microlevel social meanings in both cultures s/he won't render the 'text' successfully from the source language to the target language. The way we use language not only reflects our group-based identity but also provides situated indexes as to who we are, what we want to communicate, and why we have chosen particular ways and means, i.e., strategies, to achieve that end. The ability to render, i.e., translate, these indexical processes as they occur in a 'text' in the source language into a 'text' in the target language is part of a translator's competence.

Moving a step further Toury *et al.*, 1993 (reported in Connor, 1996:117-123) argue that a translation should be both "adequate" and "acceptable". A translation is adequate if it has got cohesion and coherence, but for the translation to be acceptable, it should be acceptable by the group members sharing the target culture in which the source-text has been rendered. It seems that translation can be an interesting way to further developing cross-cultural awareness and refining learners' working hypothesis of the L2 (cf. Hatim and Mason, 1990).

Such an approach to integrating culture in the curriculum can prepare language learners not only to express and interpret culture but also to create culture as participants in communicative events since learners will be aware of the conceptual framework of the L2 culture and its otherness.

7. Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to show that the integration of the target culture in the curriculum should aim to present culture as a process rather than a product. Processes, however, which reflect the conceptual framework of the particular society are better understood in contrast to the learners' own conceptual framework.

The suggested approach to culture learning can contribute significantly towards developing learners' working hypothesis about the L2 culture and cross-cultural awareness minimizing, if not eliminating, cultural misunderstandings between interactants (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1995a).

In my opinion, this approach bears an interesting educational value, too. On the one hand, it enables learners to develop tolerance and understanding towards the otherness of the target culture; on the other hand, it increases learners' understanding and appreciation of their own culture and its otherness in relation to

other cultures. It is hoped that such an understanding may lead to tolerance and peaceful cooperation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my colleague and friend Mary Sifianou who read and commented on an earlier version of this paper. It goes without saying that the shortcomings of this paper are all mine.

Notes

- ¹ For a discussion about the processes operating in the Greek culture, see Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a).
- ² For practical applications of these views, see, for instance, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993). See also Seelye (1984) and Valdes (1986).
- ³ In my opinion, apart from the three processes discussed in this paper, the notions of grouping vs. individuality, formality vs. informality, directness vs. indirectness, face etc. are also distinctive features of culture(s) that may or may not apply to a specific culture. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to devise an exhaustive list of processes across cultures.
- ⁴ Ferraro (1994:55-57) claims that terms of address constitute an interesting exemplification of this view.
- ⁵ Although Japanese and Chinese favour groups rather than individuals they are very formal. It has been argued that the distinction between positive and negative politeness does not apply to them (Ide, 1989; Matsutaro, 1988; Gu, 1990). Still this view does not overrule my argument that language learners need to develop an understanding of the politeness orientation of the L2 in the context of a working hypothesis about the L2 culture.
- ⁶ In my opinion, an integration of the cognitive and symbolic perspectives with the functional and behavioural perspectives may further contribute to a better understanding of how cultures operate in specific situational and pragmalinguistic contexts. For a discussion about these issues and the categories of analysis not discussed in detail in this paper see Papaefthymiou-Lytra (1995a).

References

- Berger, P.L. and T. Luckmann, 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Brown, P. and S. Levinson, 1987. *Politeness: Some universals in language usage. Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Carter R. and M. Long, 1991. *Teaching Literature*. London: Longman.
- Cassirer, Ernst, 1953. *Language and myth*. N.Y: Dover Publications INC.
- Clark R. and R. Ivancic, 1991. "Consciousness-raising about the writing process." In Carl James and Peter Garret (eds) *Language Awareness in the Classroom*. London: Longman.
- Connor, Ulla, 1996. *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second-language writing*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Cowan, J. 1990. *Dance and the body politic in Northern Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Fairclough, N. 1989. *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Ferraro, G. P. 1994. *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Goodenough, W. 1964. *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology*. N.Y.: McGraw-Hill.
- Graddol, D., Thompson, L. and M. Byram, (eds) 1993. *Language and culture*. Clevedon (UK) : BAAL and Multilingual Maters LTD.
- Gu, Y. 1990. 'Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 14 (237-257).
- Hall, E. T. 1976. *Beyond Culture*. N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Hall, E. T. and M. Reed Hall, 1990. *Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French and Americans*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and R. Hasan. 1985. *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford: OUP.
- Hatim, Basil and Ian Mason, 1990. *Discourse and the Translator*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Hodge, Robert and Gunther Kress, 1993. *Language as Ideology*. London: Routledge. 2nd ed.
- Ide, S. 1989. 'Formal form and discernment : Two neglected aspects of universals of linguistics politeness.' *Multilingua* 8 (223-248).
- Isaacs, H. R. 1975. *Idols of the tribe: Group identity and political change*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Kasper, G. 1990. 'Linguistic politeness: Current research issues'. *Journal of Pragmatics* Vol. 14. (193-218).
- Matsutato, Y. 1988. 'Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 12 (403-426).
- McCarthy, M. and R. Carter, 1994. *Language as discourse: Perspectives for language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Michaelis, J. and C. Coram, 1984. 'Doing business in Mexico: A step beyond language.' In P. B. Westphal et al (eds.).
- McKay Lee Sandra and Nancy H. Hornberger, (eds.) 1996. *Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching*. Cambridge: CUP
- Kohls, L. R. 1978. 'Basic concepts and models of intercultural communication.' In USIA Intercultural Communication Course:1977 Proceedings, Michael Prosser (ed.). Washington, D.C.:U.S. Information Agency.
- Kramsch, C. 1993. *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: OUP.
- Morain, G. G. 1986. 'Kinesics and cross-cultural understanding.' In J.M. Valdes (ed.).
- Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1987. *Language Awareness and Foreign Language Learning*. Athens: The University of Athens Press.
- 1995a. 'Culture and the teaching of foreign languages: A case study.' In James E. Alatis et al. (eds.), *Linguistics and the Education of Language Teachers: Ethnolinguistic, Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Aspects*. Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1995. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- 1995b. 'Culture and the teaching of foreign languages.' In the

- Proceedings of NELLE-PALSO Conference: European Trends in Foreign Language Teaching: Methods and Practice. August '95, Athens, Greece.
- Reynolds, M. 1995. "Where the trouble lies: Cross-cultural pragmatics and miscommunication." *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, Vol. 30 (5-16).
- Robinson, G. L. 1985. *Cross-cultural understanding: Processes and approaches for foreign language, English as a second language and bilingual educators*. N.Y.: Pergamon Press.
- Saville-Troike, M. 1996. 'The ethnography of communication.' In Sandra Lee McKay and Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.).
- Schiffrin, D. 1996. 'Interactional Sociolinguistics.' In Sandra Lee McKay and Nancy H. Hornberger (eds.).
- Seelye, H. N. 1984. *Teaching culture: Strategies for intercultural communication*. Lincolnwood (Ill): National Textbook Company.
- Sifianou, M. 1992. *Politeness phenomena in England and in Greece: A cross-cultural perspective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford.
- Street, V. B. 1993. 'Culture is a verb: Anthropological aspects of language and culture.' In D. Graddol, et al. (eds).
- Tomalin, B. and S. Stempleski. 1993. *Culture Awareness*. Oxford: OUP.
- Toury, G and J.Laffling, 1993. "Translation of Literary Texts vs. Literary Translation: A Distinction Reconsidered." In *Recent Trends in Empirical Translation Research*, edited by S. Trikkonen-Condit. Studies in Language no, 28. University of Joensuu, Faculty of Arts: Joensuu.
- Triandis, H. and V. Vassiliou. 1972. 'A comparative analysis of subjective culture.' In H. Triandis (ed.) 1972. *The analysis of subjective culture*. New York: Wiley.
- Triandis, H. 1990. 'Theoretical concepts that are applicable to the analysis of ethnocentrism.' In R.W. Brislin (ed.) *Applied cross-cultural psychology*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Valdes, J. M. (ed.) 1986. *Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching*. N.Y.: CUP.
- van Ek, J. A. and J. L.M. Trim, 1991. *Threshold Level 1990*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.