

# Intercultural Aspects of Lingo-Didactics of Contemporary German Language and Georgian Lingo-Cultural Reality

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Foreign language teaching has always been and will always be of concern for German Methodists and Didactics, especially when you have to set up a method of teaching German language to non-relative language speakers, where language learners have a different culture and mentality, and one has to study the language outside Germany, in a geographically remote country with a created artificial environment for learning German.

It is quite logical that all the time the country develop a more accessible and convenient method of foreign language teaching according to the country's political situation, social requirements, international contacts, as well as respectively taking into account the actual cultural values. From the prevalent methods in Germany at different times a few of the most popular can be mentioned: grammatical-translational, behaviourist, cognitive, structural-structural, audio-visual, etc. Naturally, each of them worked towards the absoluteness and if they still cannot fully occupy their place in every era, this is often not due to their inferiority, but in certain circumstances due to the impossibility of realization it in practice.

The last three decades and the on-going globalization processes developed a pragmatic interest in foreign language study. The response from the side of lingo-didactics to such approach was to develop a method oriented on communication and basic aims of teaching was the establishment of communication competencies. It was supposed that the foreign language student should be able to adequately use language in the appropriate situation. This method of learning process involved the allowance of situational-thematic authentic texts in teaching: excerpts from fiction, media materials, and firstly usage of practical texts: advertisements, travel routes annotation, the weather bureau reports, statements-announcements, exhibition catalogues, etc. In this way, the challenge was to conduct an adequate study of language and its linguistic equivalent action to establish competency in a foreign language.

The modern globalized world of growing economic, political, cultural and personal contacts promoted intercultural teaching methods of foreign language, as a logical continuation of communication oriented method and effort of its further improvement. The Individuality of this method was taking intercultural competences in teaching. Intercultural competence in itself is a rather complex phenomenon which involves a combination of various components, which are: self-aware and critical approach to the nation's mental stereotypes of the study

languages, the recognition of foreign culture, understanding of a foreign phenomenon, have a tolerant attitude and approach towards the foreign culture, etc., which may serve as a basis for successful future communication and cooperation. Martin Bauch [Bauch, 2010:63] and his intercultural training is considered as a foundation of theoretical methods of intercultural learning, which aims to improve the social interaction of the participants to cooperate with representatives of other cultures.

The purpose of this paper is on the basis and analysis of general description of intercultural method to separate their individual characteristics among German lingo-didactics and its regard to reality and its future prospects of development.

Intercultural concept was originally derived from an Anglo-American migration research. Its transplantation in German language methods began in the seventies of the last century, followed by a great discussion among the appraisers and opponents of the method. First of all, let's consider what this method assumes in Anglo-American contexts. American researchers Willis Edmondson and Julianne House [Edmondson..., 1998] reject the notion of intercultural in connection with foreign language classes. They believe those foreign language lessons are itself of intercultural nature and using the concept of intercultural is nothing more than tautology. Therefore, any method for teaching foreign language in itself already shows signs of interculturalism. In this context, Ditmar Rössler's approach is rather interesting, which notes that the only intercultural method during the language learning process due to interactive nature reveals a "new perspective" between the native language and a foreign language [Rössler, 2012:82]. These differences are always mentioned in intercultural language teaching method, when it comes to the development of reading, writing and other skills; similar comparative approach toward native and foreign culture conditions the study of Native and foreign languages.

The notion of Interculturalism can be discussed as a theoretical concept, which is based on the dynamic interaction between cultures, recognition of differences in their background, which is a precondition for successful communication between representatives of different cultures. Language reflects the nation's cultural values. It as a major component of intercultural communication in all the dimensions, may contribute to the nearing of individuals/nations, or vice versa, it can become a tool for misunderstanding and conflict. Very often, usually the verbal level misinterpretation precedes that of cultural misunderstanding. According to Lutz Götze, errors on intercultural level can be "fatal" compared to the "harmless" linguistic errors [Götze, 1993a: 232], and as a result, the lack of dialogue between individuals may not be only a linguistic phenomenon but due to the poor knowledge of the cultural implications. Thus, foreign language teaching involves not only studying grammar and vocabulary, but, above all, understanding the foreign reality,

explanation of the cultural values and teaching it. It refers to both verbal communication and non-verbal one (for example, body language: gestures, expressions, actions, sounds...). Many examples confirm that the differences in culture that arise on the level of non-verbal communication (bowing, greeting, bidding farewell, etc.) make it impossible to shift to verbal communication. A classic example of is the action of bowing and shaking one's head: In many cultures bowing one's head means agreement, while shaking one's head – denial, but in other cultures, this is the other way round. Naturally, this action is also accompanied by different cultures greeting-farewell rituals, and incorrect interpretation of this can lead the communication entities to social conflict.

Relations between Cultures (hence the languages) and their diversity is vividly described by Joerg Roche using the scheme of an iceberg [Roche, 2008:230][1]. He states that we, by our eyesight and hearing skills, perceive only the exterior moments of the people's culture: the rituals, traditions, folklore, poetry, painting, music, etc., but beyond our sight, like the underwater part of the iceberg, remains that what shapes the nation's culture and can only be perceived through mind: cultural values, views, mentality, concepts, ideas. Every Nation's Language reflects the values and beliefs that are important to the culture; the attitude is formed through semantics and in the end is manifested verbally. These values without knowing the language would become imperfect.

The existence of two parallel cultures does not mean that communication will be achieved automatically. It is necessary to convey values to each other in such a form that foreign becomes familiar, but not through neglecting of their own. In many cases this approach is called Third Place - Dritter Ort [Kramisch, 1995] or the transitional world, meaning the change of perspective, namely to broadening/spreading of perspective which means the co-existence and co-functioning of foreign and own.

Intercultural teaching method (which is an essential feature of this method compared with other communication methods) is not just getting knowledge about foreign culture, but the explanation of the vision and conceptual aspects, which making learning a multi-stage process. Intercultural communication skills, first of all, aims to eliminate the clichés of ourselves, mastering art of tolerance, understanding and knowledge of foreigners, the ability of based on different perspectives draw rational parallels between ours and foreign. Intercultural competence involves managing a high level of communication adequately and creatively. This is only possible on the grounds of intercultural skills. Learning a foreign language also develops intercultural social skills towards a certain (restraining from tabooed themes and verbal and non-verbal activities related to it). Intercultural learning is an active learning process oriented on the creative interaction between teachers and pupils. Intercultural learning is a dynamic process, so far as the lesson becomes a place of practical realization,

through the obtained information orientate in other cultures and understanding its multi-perspective.

During the intercultural teaching of a foreign language it is rather important to understand intercultural and multicultural contexts through the way of understanding foreign and new (Fremdverstehen und Fremdwahrnehmung). This approach started in the beginning of the 80s of the past century with the publication of the book "Didactics of Understanding foreign language" (Fremdverstehens didaktik) by the Giessen School (Giessener Graduiertenkolleg) lingo-didactics. It could be argued that this school gave individual German emphasis on the establishment of intercultural teaching methods. Lothar Bredella and Herbert Christ just twenty years ago stated in their publication that "Understanding of the foreign is a cornerstone in teaching and learning a foreign language [Bredella..., 1995:10–11]; It can be manifested in three ways: a) Language learners study the language; b) see foreign language as a part of foreign culture and expression; c) communicate with foreigners, who are parts of a foreign culture. Based on the conception the understanding and cognition of a foreign language has a different significance. A question is being posed: How can one conceive foreign language and culture based on one's own knowledge? Maybe there is some kind of strategy, for example to cognition of foreign and virtual projection as the same time, which so to say strengthens the foreseen understanding. The main idea of the process of understanding and cognition is readiness to alter one's position/approach [Bredella..., 1999:13] towards the solid idea she/he has.

Two faces of a different perspective are detected: Inner Perspective and Outer Perspective [Bredella, 1999:113]. Inner Perspective implies the understanding of foreign culture from inside, meaning that we should "sink" into other cultures; outer perspective means the seeing of foreign culture through one's own eyes. This means that we should not accept other culture unconditionally, but should provide critical reflex of it, the non-understanding of the foreign should be regarded as a lack of readiness for sharing other values. "The change of Perspective and Distancing from one's own balances the process of understanding the foreign" [Bredella...,2000:13]. The same idea is expressed by Christ [Christ, 2007:51], when he says, that based on own perceive the difference of the foreign means readiness for dialogue. This will occur when the language learner will develop the skill not to receive unconditionally either native or foreign (no matter whether the attitude is positive or negative), but will treat both analytically and rationally. In this process according to Joerg Roche, rather important is re-evaluation of one's self to achieve full intercultural communication [Roche, 2001:154].

From the above mentioned, intercultural teaching strives to transfer unconscious intercultural competencies into cognitive competence. A lesson of foreign language means teaching oriented on the development of cognitive as well as behavioural skills. It is noteworthy that the participants of

communication are of different identities, have their own social, age, professional and other experience, which affects the process of cognition and understanding. Therefore the texts that are being taught should be chosen carefully, especially if we want to avoid unwanted questions in the auditorium on behalf of the language learners. It is understandable that in the curriculum of country studies cannot fully cover the themes and contents which can be appropriate for all contexts. In this context noteworthy are several facts:

1. The level of language study: The lower the level is, the less does the individual have an intercultural experience and she/he should get such type of information from the teacher with a great amount; The higher the level of her/his language knowledge is the better she/he is aware of intercultural experience;
2. The relevance of study material for students of this or that culture. In this respect Müller-Jacquier advises to use daily themes in the curriculum, which is rather familiar for the language learners, for example: concrete themes (family, home, children, car....) themes denoting actions (promise, denial, introduction...), abstract themes (politeness-rudeness, responsibility, work, free time), and other [Müller-Jacquier, 2001:1231].

Although it should not be denied, that everyday themes may absorb curriculum so much that may leave out the important themes of intercultural communication. This is why themes should be chosen carefully, so that the learner gets motivation to learn more and understand more. In this respect the German Didactic Herman Funk states, that the creation of curriculum should be done by the principle of cyclic progress, from familiar to foreign, from individual to systematic and so forth. Also based on the principle of interactivity the perfection of the material should be achieved by utilizing grammar and appropriate vocabulary [Funk, 1999:97].

The discussion of intercultural teaching got a wide range of diapason. The German Didactic Klaus Altmayer gives us a list of sensible country's studies: Identity, Place, Time and Values [Altmayer, 2006:192; Altmayer, 2007:19]. Nearly the same points of contact has Andreas Ramin's list: place, time, distance, work, and climate [Ramin, 1989:232]. For Gerhardt Neuner the ultimate priority is language learning experience, in which he sees intercultural comparison [Neuner, 1989:360]. In own experience he means not one concrete individual but the general experience, that is universal for humans despite their origins and nationality, but in this case are thematically listed and gets different meanings according to different cultures. In the list of Gerhardt Neuner these themes are mentioned [Neuner, 1994:23]:

1. Birth and death;

2. Identity (personal data);
3. Marital cohabitation (kinship);
4. Social coexistence;
5. Relations between the partners (friendship/love);
6. Living conditions;
7. Environment;
8. Work;
9. Education/training;
10. Recreation/Leisure/Arts/Entertainment;
11. Consume/consumption areas;
12. Transportation/Mobility (finding place);
13. Mass communication (media sources);
14. Health care;
15. Spiritual Values (Ethics/Religion/Hygiene);
16. Perception of time;
17. Dimensions of Spiritual-Mental experience.

Naturally, these are daily, so-called generative themes [Zeuner, 1997: 50] and the list is of conditional nature and it can be generalized in accordance with relevance of teaching and taking into account the reality of the country. What is important is that the theme should satisfy the demands outlined above, should be interesting for learners and should be modified according to the specifics of the learning group.

It should be noted that the method of intercultural teaching is uniformly distributed on teaching separate themes, as well as studying related lexical and grammatical material connected to it. The basic requirement for a practical grammar is that the topics should not be a separate /abstract , "fallen out" from the content of the context given for assignment, but on the contrary organically combined with the socio-cultural context, is somehow "plaited" into it and contributes to the promotion of the student's motivation; on the other hand , it should be based on the comparison-confrontation or contrasting principles of grammar and in the mind of the language learner it should be associated with grammatical forms and norms of their native language.

Other types of problems for us arises the issue of vocabulary supply: because the word is associated with symbolism in the language, therefore we cannot be content with just its straight translation. Intercultural communication often fails due to the fact that quite usually the speaker is unable to understand the context, because the concept does not exist in her/his world view; she/he does not have the same icon/notably, neither the concept/word in the native language. It is therefore necessary that in parallel to linguistic-cultural progression on the vocabulary level develop contrast semantics, as Ulrich Zeuner thinks this gives you the opportunity to learn words in a more complex manner, through context, lexical units, taking into account cultural marks

[Zeuner, 1997:3]. To avoid conceptual chaos it is necessary to coherently explain each word or concept to be and not be content merely by the proposed dictionary equivalents. The raise the conceptual differentiation should be raised during the German language lesson, the teacher should be able to explain and the learners should understand.

From what is outlined above, naturally a question arises of what is the situation in learning German language in Georgian, on which methods are the teachers oriented, does Georgian School of German Philology use existing possibilities and what is the future development in this way.

Worth mentioning, on the one hand, is a pleasant fact that there had been no failure of the German grammar teaching in Georgia, German methods and practices in terms of implementation have been transferred organically into Georgian realm. In addition this is testified by the published solid grammatical literature: "German language textbook" by Tamila Sesiashvili and Bella Sesiashvili in the grammatical part translation and constructive methods of German grammar are being discussed [Seiashvili ... 2003]; "German language practical grammar" by Mzia Gventsadze is developed on the communication-oriented method [Gventsadze, 2009]; Four-volume book of "German language teaching grammar" by Marina Andrazashvili is based on the contrasting linguistic principles [Andrazashvili, 2008], which at the same time tries to bring German linguistic terms in to Georgian and find appropriate equivalents for them, also draws parallels of the similar level in the linguistic phenomena, and provides a rich cultural information about the German.

On the other hand, it is a pity that it has not been possible to provide similar regional course books on vocabulary nor country studies which lean on intercultural principles, take into consideration the mentality of Georgian language learners, who will get motivation and progress according to the principles of the Common European Framework at the A1, A2, B1, B2 levels. The situation is somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that in the learning process (Ivane Tbilisi State University, as an example) original German course books for foreigners are being used (Lehrbücher für DaF); There are additions and additional guidelines, drawn up by Tamila Sesiashvili and the texts are provided in thematically [Seiashvili, 2003]; teachers systematically get qualification in German-speaking countries, and get to know to the intercultural approach and try attempting its practical implementation: the lecture is enriched with authentic materials, with passages from literature, the press and other types of texts; possible using audio-visual and Internet material; In our reality it also became true to send students to Germany, where along with linguistic knowledge they will become aware of intercultural competence and will get the skill of co-operating in international projects; But one is the attempt and the second is the actual situation and the achieved results. It should be openly said that:

1. The proper material-technical basis still not created, therefore internet-teaching and internet-projects cannot be carried out;
2. The curriculum does not offer students essential disciplines of intercultural method: home-reading, conversation/thematic discussion, language studies, (which, traditionally has always been involved in teaching field) and is only limited to vocabulary and grammar;
3. Significantly are being reducing the number of hours for students of German Philology 8/6 hours a week multiplied on 6 semester, And for non-specialists 4 hours per week multiplied on 4 semester, which certainly is not a prerequisite that the teacher can use intercultural method, which is rather time-consuming and needs much time and correspondingly can the desired outcome be reached extended period of intended employment, and manage to arrive at the desired; It should be also noted that most of the students when started learning German have no previous basis and have to start from the very beginning, nearly zero level;
4. In addition to this Georgia, an apparent lack of lingo-didactics and Methodists can be seen and therefore there is lack of solid research in this area. Naturally, we mean works oriented on the global trends shaping.

In conclusion, we can note that intercultural teaching methods discussed in this publication are not an emerging process on "dry soil" and a mere prospect. Learning a foreign language cannot be done in isolation from the culture and language of the people. The individual cannot be forced either a foreign language or culture, if you do not encourage proper motivation in them. The whole advantage of intercultural learning is that new/foreign material is being discussed in the auditorium, grows interest in them, and begins the understanding of contrast-comparative approach to their own and other cultures, their own and foreign language. Growing interest in them is the initial step, which makes learning a creative process.

The intercultural method of teaching is a multi-complex phenomenon and has not been studied by German scholars, no detailed technology exists, neither is its effectiveness confirmed, as Klaus Gnutzmann notes, communicative and behavioral competences play an important role during intercultural teaching, but the linguistic dimension is not mentioned at all [Gnutzmann, 1994: 68]. Thus, on the other hand, its positive results are clear. According to the researches carried out in Germany [Bredella/ Delanoy, 1999] language learners due to this method not only get knowledge of linguistic competences but cognitively and consciously treat the culture of the foreign nation. Intercultural Didactics nowadays is on the road of seeking, development and perfecting not only in Germany, but in many non-German and non-European countries as well. We should hope that this process in Georgia will become reality in the near future.



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[1] This scheme was first used in the seventies of the last century by Katznelson, while describing implicit language events.

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