Chapter 10

Target Language, Target Culture: Intercultural Competence in the SSL (Spanish as a Second Language) Classroom

José Carlos Escobar
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico

ABSTRACT

Learning a language must result in becoming competent in a new culture because accessing the culture language stands for and being able to share its cultural content requires learning not just the meaning but also the historical and social background of its vocabulary. Words reveal the linguistic and social behavior of native speakers and give students a full understanding of the target language. This chapter deals with different concerns present in foreign language classrooms, a space where language and intercultural competence must be developed. It describes some linguistic competence-related concerns (Section 1), then it deals with specific intercultural related aspects of grammar and perception which are part of the linguistic competence to be developed in class (Section 2) and it finishes with a general description of three basic ways used in the Spanish-as-second-language (SSL) classroom in order to teach language and culture so as to help students to develop intercultural competence (Section 3).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1732-0.ch010

Copyright ©2017, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.
INTRODUCTION

*Globalization shrinks the world, bringing a wider range of cultures into closer contact than ever before* (...) *As a result, cultural diversity and intercultural contact have become facts of modern life, so intercultural competencies become a requisite.* (UNESCO, 2013, p. 7)

The issue of globalization has triggered an exceedingly high academic interest and it is addressed in the most diverse ways:

1. Buendía et al. (2004) focuses on the process of social integration of immigrants and the intercultural competence they need to reconstruct their identity in a new country.
2. Bourn (2011) deals with it from a point of view of the internationalization and effectiveness of graduates in a globalized world.
3. Huber and Reynolds (2014) address it by offering an educational rationale for the development of intercultural competence in and through general education.

In turn, second-language teachers have their own professional concerns regarding ways to help students to be linguistically proficient and culturally fit so they now see cultural knowledge and intercultural competence –recently referred to by several researchers in the ELT field as intercultural communicative competence– as a must (Oliveras Vilaseca, 2000; Byram et al., 2001; Alptekin, 2002; Kubota, 2004; Honna, 2005; Byram, 2009; Álvarez González, 2010; Nikleva, 2012).

Professionals teaching Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) now seem to favor the implementation of intercultural contents and objectives, but such contents may vary depending on the country chosen to learn it, since there is a wide range of different Hispanic cultures represented by both Spain and all Latin American countries. Based on what is usually done in case studies (Duff, 2014), this Chapter has a practical language-learning approach intended to describe the experiences, issues, insight and performance of instructors who:

1. Teach multilingual and multicultural classes at the Center for Foreign Students of the National University of Mexico (CEPE-UNAM), and
2. See the classroom as the space of both cultural and linguistic encounters having Mexican language and culture as the targets foreign students learn either because:
   a. They relate and interact with Mexicans and Mexican Institutions.
   b. They are sent to Mexico by their companies to take job positions, or simply because.
   c. They travel to Mexico.
Related Content

Organisational Conflict and Its Management
Saleem Gul and Michael Klausner (2016). *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (pp. 34-55).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/organisational-conflict-and-its-management/150037?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/organisational-conflict-and-its-management/150037?camid=4v1a)

Viral News Content, Instantaneity, and Newsworthiness Criteria
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/viral-news-content-instantaneity-and-newsworthiness-criteria/198021?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/viral-news-content-instantaneity-and-newsworthiness-criteria/198021?camid=4v1a)

Competency-Based Education and Assessment: A Proposal for US Court Interpreter Certification
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/competency-based-education-and-assessment/208883?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/competency-based-education-and-assessment/208883?camid=4v1a)
Exploring the Intersections of Individual and Collective Communication Design: A Research Agenda
www.igi-global.com/chapter/exploring-the-intersections-of-individual-and-collective-communication-design/185839?camid=4v1a