FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

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ABSTRACT. Cultural diversity has been one of the essential realizations of the globalized society. Once individuals have become interconnected they have also become aware of their being culturally diverse. However challenged today's globalized society may have become, the issue of overcoming cultural differences still remains actual. Following this line of thought, this paper starts with an overview of the status of English as a *lingua franca*, and then shifts the focus to the clarification of the concepts of *cultural diversity, cultural awareness* and *intercultural competence*, while emphasizing their complementarity. Finally, it explores how intercultural competence may be fostered and developed in a sector of the ELT such as English for Law Enforcement. Some instances of classroom activities, which teachers may use to trigger their students' awareness of police-related cultural aspects, will be analysed from a didactic perspective.

Keywords: cultural diversity, cultural awareness, intercultural competence, English Language Teaching (ELT), English for Law Enforcement (LEE)

1. The status of English world-wide and in teaching

Siemund, Davydova & Maier (2012) analyse the spread of English in today's global society, ascertaining that the spread of English was due to the colonialization of various territories by Great Britain and also to

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the status of the United States as an economic power in the 20th century. The authors are in keeping with Kachru's (1982) opinion that English is distributed in concentric circles, namely: the inner circle represented by countries such as the US and the UK, where English has always been the 1st language and the outer circle comprising countries such as India (which is a multilingual setting where English occupies the 2nd language position). Moreover, there is an expanding circle including, for example, Poland and China, where English has an important status as an international language, though colonialization has not occurred there and English is not used in administration (p. 15).

An opposing standpoint (Facchinetti, Crystal & Seidlhofer eds., 2010) views the use of English world-wide as both a process of localization and internationalization. The author (Crystal, 2010) explains that localization occurs, for instance, when English is used in new countries (non-native English countries) in contexts in which people talk about their everyday life or culture using English as an international language. Thus, varieties of English involve not only local cultural contents, but also influences from the accent and grammar of the speaker's native language (p. 21). As to the internationalization of English, Seidlhofer (2010) argues that the use of English as a means to communicate internationally has given rise to a "new" language, the so-called English as a lingua franca or English as an international language. This language includes speakers from all concentric circles (p. 51). The author supports the idea that English as a lingua franca is not a variant of the language, but a completely new phenomenon (p. 153).

In the light of the above discussions, we can conclude all variants of English have a rather complex status, as the original English language has evolved and transformed, giving rise to a new concept, which is that of "World Englishes" (Seargeant, 2012), which are employed in different contexts such as universities around the world which offer many English courses and degrees (p. 120), as well as publications and organizations which have English as a focus (p. 121). The approach of "World Englishes" to today's status of English language involves, as we have seen, the concentric circles which symbolize the different ways in which English has spread worldwide and also the localization of English in its various speaking environments, which occurs simultaneously with its internationalization, by becoming a lingua franca for the speakers who use it in their communication in different backgrounds.

Mansfield and Poppi (2012) suggest that the international dimension of English should be discussed in ELT also. The authors argue that, due to the changed position of English in today's society - its status as a lingua franca -, issues such as understanding different kind of accents and understandable ways of communicating should be learned by the students in class. Furthermore, students should be exposed to English spoken extensively by non-native speakers, as in real-life communicative situations non-native speakers will most likely have to talk to other non-native speakers, for which reason they have to be intelligible. As such, EFL teachers will have to teach learners to develop "pragmatic strategies of achieving understanding" (p. 163). The process of teaching students different native or non-native varieties of English is termed "awareness raising" (p. 163) by the two authors.

In the same line of thought, Burns (2013) exposes the aspects she considers teachers should take into consideration in class in regard to the international status of English. The aspects include open discussions with students about different concepts such as English as an International Language or English as a Lingua Franca, multi or plurilingualism, international communication, language learning experiences and strategies, as well as students' exposure to different Englishes and adjustment of the teaching materials to local needs.

To sum up, English language teaching should take into account the complex status of English today, promoting it to students as an international language or as a lingua franca, as a foreign or second language, while raising their awareness of all its varieties.

2. Cultural diversity, cultural awareness and intercultural competence in ELT

According to Shachaf (2008) culture is a complex concept with multiple dimensions and levels of analysis. It can be considered from various perspectives such as international, national, regional, ethnic and even organizational. The belief that a deep knowledge of culture is the facilitator of communication between people accounts for this multitude of perspectives of cultural analysis.

Therefore, in ELT it is also essential that learners of a second language have the opportunity to learn about, explore and understand the target language culture. Developing "intercultural competence" involves more than having some knowledge about that culture. It implies developing the ability to comprehend that culture instils our beliefs and shapes our behaviours in relation with ourselves and others (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009).

Cultural diversity represents different ways of thinking and communicating. It overcomes discrimination and adheres to the inclusion of people irrespective of their differences in terms of education, gender, age, location, nationality, language or culture. Cultural diversity implies learning from others and about others. However, learning about another culture does not entail the internalization of the target culture norms, but it only means that one is offered the ways to manage and overcome cross-cultural differences.

For teachers of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) there is an issue of how to introduce into their English language classes some aspects related to the knowledge and understanding of the culture pertaining to the language they teach. As such, it has been argued that language teachers are increasingly recognizing the need to incorporate socio-cultural factors into their classrooms (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007).

However, there is no consensus among language instructors as to what approach they should adopt in teaching culture-related issues in their classes. Cohen et al. (2003, p. 53) refer to Michael Paige's culture learning model, of which dimensions are grouped in the following categories: the self as culture, cultural elements, intercultural phenomena (general learning about culture), particular cultures (specific learning about culture) and strategies for culture learning. His model can be used by teachers in their classes, and by exploring these dimensions they can help students relate to the target language culture, while raising awareness of cultural differences and developing their "intercultural competence" (Byram, 1997).

Among the attempts to define intercultural competence, Harden and Witte (2011) resort to the definition of the two terms considered separately. Thus, "interculturality" is something that emerges in a "third space" between two cultures, while "competence" represents a set of abilities or skills. Another definition of the concept of intercultural competence belongs to Risager

(2005), who states that it is created as a result of the knowledge, abilities and attitudes gained at the meeting point between the learners' culture and the target language culture. In short, in ELT intercultural competence can be viewed as something that appears at the junction between the students' own culture and the culture of the target language.

Intercultural language learning is not an addition to the processes of teaching and learning, but it is rather part of the interactions that occur both inside and outside the classroom**.** Liddicoat (2005) argues that the learners' engagement in a culture other than their own will allow them to distance themselves from their assumptions rooted in their own culture and, thus, develop an intercultural identity, which allow the exploration of the borders between the two cultures. Culture involvement in language teaching is based on the distinction between a "cultural perspective" and an "intercultural perspective". The cultural pole means the learner's knowledge about another culture, the intercultural pole is the learner's transformational engagement in the process of learning.

There are specific strategies for becoming more culturally competent (according to Paige's cultural learning model) and they involve the students' learning about a particular culture from native informants or the development of their cultural observation skills, as well as learning about the target language culture by means of authentic materials that reflect that particular culture. By using such strategies, the students may be stimulated both to identify and deepen their understanding of the cultural differences, thus developing their cultural awareness, both relative to the target language culture and their own. Byram (1997) considers that people who possess "intercultural competence" are able to have a deep insight into their culture and the way it shaped them, which further allows them to recognize the way cultural elements are expressed in behaviours in various cultures.

Such strategies may include authentic materials such as cultural collections or cultural observations (such as role-plays), culture journals or web quests. Cultural collections represent cultural information in various formats such as magazines, newspapers, online sites, literature, music, everyday items, movies etc. Exposure to "cultural collections" items offers students the opportunity to listen or see "real" things or events etc. from a different culture and, thus, allows them to tap into the underlying

meaning of that culture. Therefore, authentic materials bring along a wealth of resources for a variety of classroom activities that may contribute to increasing the students' awareness of the target-language culture. Such assignments may include: researching on a particular cultural aspect and reporting in class, asking questions or comparing their perceptions on the target culture so as to be able to detect certain cultural patterns and, thus, enlarge their understanding of the English-speaking culture, or describing various criteria etc. However, teachers need to set the goals they want to achieve at the end of a lesson focused on cultural learning and have them in mind when designing class assignments.

3. Intercultural competence in teaching English for Law Enforcement

As a rule, the language instructor teaching in an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) environment faces a challenge when it comes to the English teaching resources he/she needs to use in class, as, most often than not, these resources are not already available due to the novelty of the field or the sheer lack of language resources for that particular subject. Therefore, the ESP language teacher in general, and the Law Enforcement English teacher in particular, has to develop his/her own teaching materials for the field their students specialize in their basic studies.

An alternative that the language teacher has at his/her disposal is to teach Law Enforcement English from the cultural awareness perspective, that is to integrate in his/her teaching a comparative approach in which various law enforcement issues are viewed, analysed or discussed in different cultural environments. For instance, in our Law Enforcement English teaching experience we often resorted to comparisons between the Romanian and the English-speaking countries' milieus, mostly the UK and the US. In this way, we could raise our students' awareness of the state-of-play extant in these countries, while allowing them to contrast and compare various police-related issues, such as symbols associated with police organization, police ranks, police education and training, police uniform and equipment, as well as police recruitment requirements and promotion conditions, criminal codes, police ethics etc.

As such, we have developed teaching materials based on extensive documentation and research in order to select the appropriate Internet resources for our teaching aims, which was to stimulate students' reflective and debating skills, as well as their synthesis and analysis, while familiarizing themselves with cultural aspects and lexis specific to the law enforcement environments in various English-speaking countries.

The tables below display some instances of the activities we developed for our Law Enforcement students enrolled in English language classes with a focus on developing the students' ability to analyse and reflect not only on their own culture, but also on the target language culture. Thus, the classroom experience demonstrated the adequacy of these tasks in eliciting interesting and complex ideas and reflections on the part of the students when it comes to comparing different police forces in the world, as well as the role of stimulus that the visual aids brought about.

Furthermore, there is a specific teaching aim underlying each of the activities displayed in the tables below, which we had in mind in the design process. Besides the aim of practising and developing the students' language learning skills, the adjacent purpose was to provide the students exposure to authentic materials, which showcased various aspects pertaining to the culture of the police as an organisation from different English-speaking regions. The subsequent description of the tasks below will highlight the way in which students will have become aware of a range of cultural similarities and differences between varied police forces across the globe by the end of the teaching sequences suggested.

The activity in table 1 will give the students the opportunity to contrast and compare different images representing items of police paraphernalia such as a patch, a badge and a coat of arms, which are usually associated with various symbols and slogans that carry deep meanings emblematic for the police forces in the three different countries they represent. The learners will be able to identify symbols such as the scales, the eagle, the sword, the olive branch, the cross, the crown or slogans such as "Lex et Honor" (Law and Honour) or "Lest we forget" etc., which are related to the police organisation's values and mission. Thus, the activity raises the students' awareness of the police culture and some of the universal symbols that are traditionally illustrative of this kind of organisation and its role in society.

By asking the questions under Activity 1 (Table 1), teachers will elicit from their students the intrinsic meanings these universal symbols carry such as bravery, justice, Christian faith, audacity, peace etc., which are but a few of the values fostered by the police organizations world-wide. Such a semantic analysis will allow students to realize that the police organization is founded on similar values and guided by identical principles, regardless of the geographical area they belong to. This awareness raising of cultural similarities will help students understand police organizations in English-speaking environments in the light of their own.

Table 1.

Symbols associated with police organizations

Activity 1 Contrast and compare & Discussion – Symbols associated with police organizations
Look at the pictures below. Do you know what they represent or symbolize? Can you find any similarities or dissimilarities between them? Can you explain the symbols associated with them?
 ("Romanian police coat of arms", 2019; "Patch of the NYPD", 2019)

Likewise, the students will be stimulated to become "interculturally competent" by engaging in classroom activities (shown in Tables 2 and 3) focused on the comparative discussion of police ranking systems and

police uniform and equipment items both in their own and the English-speaking territories. Thus, not only cultural aspects can be discussed and understood, but also the specific lexis related to such topics. In this way, students are also exposed to context-specific authentic language, thus enabling them to fulfil another aim of the lesson, which is the practice and acquisition of police terminology.

The students will have the opportunity to discover whether the evolution of police uniforms and equipment and the police ranking systems are rooted in history or culturally dependent. By contrasting and comparing, they may identify the common ground between all police forces under analysis, in respect to the topics discussed. Furthermore, they will be able to comprehend what makes police organizations in these environments different and what brings them together, culturally speaking.

Table 2.

The Romanian and British Police Ranks

Activity 2 Reading & Matching exercise - The Romanian and British Police Ranks Compared

Exercise 1 Match the shoulder insignia to the corresponding Romanian rank and then identify the British rank equivalents from the diagram and fill in the charts below. (Keep in mind that there is no one to one equivalent and there may be some overlapping).

Shoulder insignia – Romanian Police (Commissioned Officers)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Commissioned Officers' Ranks	Shoulder insignia	British Police rank
Chestor-general de poliţie		
Chestor-şef de poliţie		
Chestor principal de poliţie		
Chestor de poliţie		
Comisar-şef de poliţie		
Comisar de poliţie		
Subcomisar de poliţie		
Inspector principal de poliţie		
Inspector de poliţie		
Subinspector de poliţie		

("Romanian police", 2019)

Shoulder insignia – Romanian Police (Non-commissioned Officers)

1 2 3 4 5
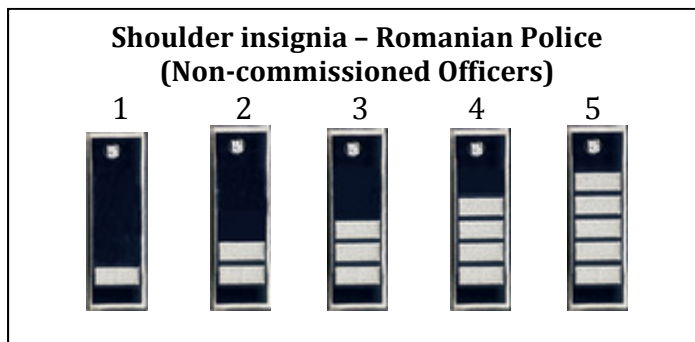
Non-commissioned Officers' Ranks	Shoulder insignia	British Police rank
Agent-şef principal de poliţie		
Agent-şef de poliţie		
Agent-şef adjunct de poliţie		
Agent principal de poliţie		
Agent de poliţie		

Table 2 bis

UK police Ranks and Shoulder Insignia

UK POLICE RANKS AND SHOULDER INSIGNIA

(Metropolitan Police Service)

Non-commissioned Officers

BA
253

BA
24

Constable   Sergeant

Commissioned Officers

Inspector   Chief Inspector   Superintendent   Chief Superintendent

Commander   Deputy Assistant   Assistant   Deputy   Commissioner
            Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner

("Badges of rank", 2019)

Table 3.

British, American and Romanian Police Uniforms

Activity 3 Discussion & vocabulary reinforcement - Romanian, British and American police uniforms and equipment items

Look at the diagram of the *Police officer's uniform and equipment items*. Consider also the box displaying instances of the British Police uniform. Now point out the main similarities and dissimilarities between the *Romanian*, *British* and *American* police uniforms and equipment (by taking into consideration the visual aids and the information in the diagram).

POLICE OFFICER'S UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT ITEMS			
CLOTHING	**UNIFORM ACCESSORIES**	**EQUIPMENT**	**MISCELLANEOUS**
Blouse - 100% Wool (dress uniform) Cap - 100% Wool, Round Crown Cap - Cloth, Round Crown (field uniform) Coat - 100% Wool Reefer (dress uniform - police officers; alternate field uniform - sergeants) Footwear - Military Oxford Gloves - White Jacket - cloth (field uniform) Necktie Shirt - Long and Short Sleeve (Light Blue) Socks (black) Trousers - 100% Wool	Ammunition pouch and/or magazine case/ speedloader Baton holder Belt – Trouser Belt – Equipment Handcuff case Holster Insignia - Cap shield, star, field training officer patch insignia, chevrons Nameplate Patches - PD and City Flag shoulder patches Personal aerosol OC chemical device holder Portable radio transceiver Raincoat/cap cover attachment Service bar/star Unit assignment designator Traffic Safety Vest	Ammunition - Department authorized/issued Ball point pen (black ink) Baton – Department issued Body Armour – Department issued/authorized Handcuffs Helmet – Department issued Firearm – a. Revolver (before 1991) b. Semi-automatic pistol (after 1991) Prescribed flashlight Personal aerosol O C chemical device	Baton tassel Beat Binder (Portfolio) Department Photo – Identification Card Watch Whistle

Table 3 bis.

Romanian, British and American police uniforms and equipment items

(Uniforma poliției române, 2019; British Metropolitan Police Officers, 2019)

4. Conclusions

Culture study must be integrated in what Kramsch (1993) calls "the third culture" of the classroom. This means that the teachers have to create opportunities so as the students can both examine and reflect on the target and their own cultures. It is believed that these processes of cultural examination and reflection are derived as a desideratum of the globalized society we live in, which, for this reason, has become ever interconnected.

That is why teachers have to emphasize to their students the importance of cultivating their "awareness" of both their own culture and the other cultures of the world. Similarly, in an English for Law Enforcement class students are exposed to authentic materials that allow them to tap into the culture of the police organization in English-speaking countries, while reflecting on their own culture through the mirror of the target language culture, thus developing their "intercultural

competence". In real-life job-related situations, such ability will allow them to effectively communicate and cooperate with their fellow police officers from English-speaking environments.

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