The Importance of the Foreign Language Learning Contributing to World Peace

Yusuf Şahin

Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkey

The aim of this paper is to determine the elements which hinder peace, and emphasize the importance of the contribution of foreign language learning to international peace. Language affects the thought and behavior of human beings. The attitude of a person knowing more than one language of a position is not the same as a person not knowing a foreign language because of that the first person can comment about the position in different standpoints. He can see and evaluate the events in a much broader perspective. As knowledge gives comfort, peace and confidence to the human beings, ignorance causes repulse and revulsion. Knowing a foreign language means entering a world of human beings thinking and believing differently, accepting different life-styles, illuminating, clarifying the obscurities which cause prejudice and revealing human behaviors which seem not comprehensible whereas they are actually very easy to understand. A theory can be developed from all explanations emphasizing the contributions of knowing a foreign language to the international communication. The theory is called "push and pull theory in communication". The huge building of ignorance, which is the place of big wars and conflicts, can be eliminated through the power of love and peace language. To obtain international peace, all the nations in the world should try to maintain and create legal and social background in order to realize their common goal "international peace". All the governments should come together and develop a common program which provides a contribution to the improvement of the international peace language, which should be taught as a lesson called "common peace language" in all countries. Foreign language teaching should be started at the very early stage if possible. The children's books must contain differences that are natural but not the things to be ashamed of or things to boast about. With the contributions of all countries, a foundation can be set up so that all successful students and teachers, especially those who will be employed in education, can experience different cultures. The way to meet different cultures, named "peace tourism", should be unhampered opened. Countries should cooperate in education, and teachers' and students' exchange programs should be widely extended.

Keywords: international peace, foreign language learning, common peace language, communicative barriers, cross-cultural communication

Introduction

The history of humanity is full of wars and conflicts of people, groups, societies and nations. From the most primitive society to the countries which have the most modern technology, it is seen that they are all open to the fights and wars. Although all the scientific studies conducted and technological appliances produced

Yusuf Şahin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Erciyes University. E-mail: yusufsahin@erciyes.edu.tr.

intend to the comfort of humanity, peace and a more comfortable life, it is also witnessed that the science and technology are used for destroying each other and devastating the environment they live in. It is emphasized that half of the scientists and engineers work for the military, military expenditures exceed two billion dollars per day and it is stockpiled thousands of nuclear weapons that would destroy all civilization on the Earth (Sanderson, 2010). Each kind of attempt that symbolizes peace and protects the environment stays in the shadow of devastating actions.

When the reasons that lead people to the war and conflicts are searched, it can be said that the basic reasons are the prejudices derived from peoples' sense of not knowing each other, not approaching to the different beliefs and cultures tolerantly, and the sense of dominating other people and wishing to have more resources.

Establishing people's sense of knowing each other, removing their prejudices and being able to accept depends on their knowing about the languages and cultures of each other, and developing their senses of empathy. One of the best tools that can contribute to this is to know a foreign language. Genç (2004, p. 111) stressed that learning a foreign language at an early age contributes to the person not only to be able to know the foreign cultures, understand them, be aware of what the origin is and develop the person's consciousness, but also to the growing of the young people who feel the peace and comfort inside them.

Language and Interaction

Language is a tool for understanding, but sometimes it can be the source of misunderstanding. The language, which is used for uttering every kind of feeling and thought, is a whole of symbols. Understanding via the language depends on that the people who speak the same language give the same meaning to the same symbols or understand the same meaning from the same symbols (Porzig, 1971). Using the different symbols or giving different meanings to the same symbols forecloses understanding. For instance, the Greek state the color of the meadow (green) and honey (a color totally unrelated to green) with the same word (Ülkü, 1995, p. 77). According to Humbolt, the real differentiation between the languages is not on the sounds or signs; it is on the differentiation of the world conception (Zıllıoğlu, 1993, p. 128). Pre-condition of understanding each other is being aware of these differences and being able to behave according to this.

This handicap on the first step of communication can be passed over by perceiving the functions of the symbols and their relationship between each other, in other words, by knowing the foreign language. Knowing a foreign language is necessary but not enough to learn the objective usage of the language and social acceptances. There is also a person-related and subjective usage of language that the problems in understanding are generally occurring here.

Language is not a work of art that a specific person created in a specific place at a specific time. Language is a dynamic and social structure upon which the society using it agrees for thousands of years and includes every area of life. The existence of language is social but using it is personal.

Social structure, culture and the way they live and believe are reflected directly to their languages. While the person is learning the language symbols, he/she has to learn the characteristics of the society that uses the language he/she learns, otherwise only knowing the language does not serve to a perfect communication. Using "Interactional Sociolinguistics", which studies the language with its society and cultural trait, as a source, will help the people from different languages and cultures understand each other. Interactional sociolinguistics includes the problems of sociology, culture and language studies and their methods (Erdem, 2009, pp. 116-117). The most important characteristic of interactional sociolinguistics is that it is a general and wide theory for

interpretation, explanation and contextualization in interaction. According to this theory, the meaning is set up and interpreted correlatively; and this happens with the information about the theory of the people who participate in the interaction (Eardmans, Prevignano, & Thibault, 2003). According to the linguists John Gumperz (1982), the meaning, structure and usage of the language change depending on the culture and the society. Gumperz tried to explain how people use linguistic knowledge in spoken language and how different messages are conveyed and interpreted, with the help of the facts that he called "contextualization clues and processes". Contextualization clues are the signs which help the interpretation of the language by the assumptions they have for a specific interactional context in the society and culture, with the view and hearing of the people who participate in the communication. They are the elements that increase or reduce the effects of the speech, or help it gain different meanings except for its original meaning, and determine the direction of the communication with the help of the speech patterns special to intonation, stress and special occasions; and they are important points that should be focused on in foreign language learning. In communication among people the way that the speaker and the listener uses his/her body language is one of the society based means of communication. The body language which is used as a supporting element of communication varies according to the societies. The researcher witnessed that in an international meeting, even though the hand signal that a teacher from Cameroon used during his presentation is accepted as a shameful act in Turkish culture, it is used with the meaning of "wonderful" in Cameroon. During the conversation after the presentation, it is understood that how the same act has different meanings in different countries. Also, two different events that the researcher has experienced during his duty abroad show that how a foreign person's social acceptances of which he/she is not aware can be a reason for misunderstanding.

Event 1: One weekend, I took my son to the park in the afternoon. There were children with different colored skins playing in the park. A jet black, 3-4 years old child, who has bright eyes, attracted my attention among them. The child looked so cute that I couldn't help patting his head. At that time, one of my Arabic neighbors with whom I have good neighborhood relationships and who was sitting in the park with her child walked up to me and said: "Here when a stranger pats a child's head it means that he/she has different feelings for the mother of the child. I want you to know that". I couldn't know what to do and what to say. In the society I live in, a movement like that is only a sign of loving children.

Event 2: Like every morning, while I was going out of the dormitory for jogging and running through the gardens with colorful flowers, I saw a young married couple working in their garden even though it was early in the morning and I said "Grüss Gott!" as a greeting which I observed from the people living there and went on my jogging. When I came back, they were both on the road and were kind of waiting for me. After they had greeted me smiling, they asked me a few questions to get to know me and we met on the run. Both of them were architects. They invited me to dinner and I agreed gladly. In the evening, I knocked at their door with a bunch of flower. That I went there with flowers made them very happy. They stated that since I was a Turkish man and there was a possibility that I was a Muslim, they had not used pork meat in their meals, they had bought venison especially for me, and they had bought root bear. This made me very happy. In the following conversation, we started to talk about the adaptation problems of Turkish people living in Germany and they stated that Turkish people did the laundry, cut firewood, picked up flowers on Saturdays and Sundays, but these days were the holy days of German people, so those behaviors were regarded as disrespectfulness to their culture and beliefs.

From these events, it is understood that misunderstandings are not always linguistic; it is also about social

acceptances, culture and the way they are expressed, and subjective evaluations aiming at finding a reason for any behavior of this person. Like the relationship between the mind and reality, the relationship between the person and the environment also affect each other correlatively (Toomey & Korzenny, 1991, p. 262).

International Peace and Language

First of all, when we try to answer the questions "What are the factors that threaten national peace? Why do nations fight with each other?", the economical, political and cultural factors turn up. When economical and political factors combine with dominating other people, and cultural factors combine with thinking their own values more superior than others, international clashes become inevitable. In the effect of international peace, the light of knowledge should be thrown on ideology and religion shield that the government hides behind; in this way, the truths come up and people can realize how the religion is being exploited (Ebadi, 2005). Both political and cultural agreements are necessary for international peace (Peres, 2002).

Peace is a way that a person lives with himself/herself and environment coherently. The person's being in a conflict with himself/herself and the environment refers to the opposite of peace. Peace is the sign of knowledge and virtue and war is the sign of ignorance and selfishness. Obscurity disturbs the person. While ignorance is a factor that arouses shyness, anxiety, abduction, fear and disturbance on the person and encourages the person to abduct, take a stand, defend, attack or destroy; knowledge is a factor that enables accepting, getting close, caring, protecting, producing and sharing.

According to "structural conflict theory", one of the theories that try to explain the sources of the conflicts between persons and groups, conflicts are derived from the groups' competing with each other for the same purpose. According to Mayer (1990), the reason of the conflict is derived from the wishes to feed the persons' egos. Groups fight for guarding their interests; they punish the acts and words that contrast with their interests. According to "psycho-cultural theory", conflict is derived from psychological and cultural differences (Karip, 2003, pp. 26-32).

When it is discussed in terms of language, the factors that threaten international peace are:

(1) Styles of expressing the dogmas and ideologies (Popper, 1986);

(2) Prejudices and fixed judgments of the parties;

(3) The words they utter to each other and the way they are said (hints, swearwords, exclusionary statements, humiliating statements, insulting statements and closed statements which can cause misunderstanding).

The best way to prevent misunderstandings and the conflicts coming out because of that is face-to-face communication. In face-to-face communication, perception of the other persons can be controlled and misunderstandings can be corrected immediately. In the conflicts in which the communication is limited between the persons, when the persons do not share their real thoughts, emotions, purposes and intentions, process and results of the conflict are negative and damaging for the persons and the society. In negative conflicts, communication and relationships are one-sided, defensive, and they are based on power and frustrating, misleading and intimidating the other party (Murphy, 1994).

The language, which is both used in starting and preventing the conflicts, has a very important place. Using a constructive language in both communications of two parties from the same culture and different cultures both prevents the conflicts and simplifies the resolutions of the conflicts that have come out. This can be possible by getting to know the other side and taking their sensibilities in communication into account. Not

knowing the other side or not being aware of their sensibilities is the conflict that the person can cause unintentionally. Teaching these sensibilities is the most important mission of the foreign language teachers. Since foreign language teachers are going to teach the cultural differences in foreign language courses (Kramsch, 2001, p. 47), linguistic and cultural competences of foreign language teachers are important.

Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication refers to the message transactions of the parties whose past experiences are quite different. Cultural differences cause obscurities in the parties' message transactions, statements and behaviors which are open to interpretation. This causes anxiety and loss of self confidence in the parties (Gudykunst, 1988; Lalljee, 1987).

Intercultural communication can be written or oral. Science of translation is important in understanding written documents; competence in interpersonal communication skills is important in oral communication. In interpersonal communication, understanding and interpreting the body language are also related to the cultural deposition. The words used in communication mostly help strengthen or differentiate the meaning by body language. Saying "How are you?" with a smiling face and "How are you?" with a sullen face causes the person to answer them in a different way as the person is going to interpret these two questions differently.

Also, communication atmosphere and status of the persons are the factors that determine the meaning and interpretation of the words and manners (Israel-Turkey chair crisis: Hürriyet Journal, January 13, 2010).

The style of perceptions and expressions of the concepts such as terror and terrorism is also one of the linguistic factors that threaten the international peace. Despite the legal and political efforts under the name of United Nations, there is not a definition of terrorism or terror organization which is accepted by all the countries. The biggest reason why a common definition has not been accepted is that the different international threat perceptions, the countries have not reached an agreement about the distinction of terrorism and struggle for freedom.

Intercultural Education and Language

Intercultural education is an education type which has been formed to reduce the tensions which exist culturally or probable tensions and prejudices, and enable different communities, living in a country or a region, to participate in symbiosis completely (Oğuzkan, 1993, p. 92). While forming the contents of intercultural education and giving the cultural differences in mother tongue, their ways of expression should be given in a foreign language to arrange a complete settlement. Essinger and Graf (1981, p. 95) discussed intercultural education in terms of communication and life. Life aspect means using advance information about cultures, and communication aspect means using the information properly. Intercultural education is a process which rises on the basis of equality of the cultures, tolerance, the majority and minority's being ready to understand each other (Tumat, 1992, p. 102).

Esssinger (1987) pointed out that intercultural education should be carried out based on these principles:

(1) Education aimed at empathy;

(2) Education aimed at cooperation;

(3) Education aimed at reciprocal respect in intercultural area;

(4) Education against national thought (Education against national thought should be taken as keeping away the idea of thinking own values more superior than the others' and developing a manner according to this.

On the other hand, as it was the reason of the previous conflicts, it will go on being the reason of the conflicts in the future). While Binyazar (1983, p. 65) was giving his opinions about teaching mother tongue, he pointed out that the child needs to be brought up in the way that he can evaluate not only the efforts of the people who live in his hometown but also the efforts of all the civilizations ever; a person who realizes his own values can gain a mentality to protect other countries' cultural depositions; avoids the wars which devastate all the civilizations; does whatever he can to protect the world peace, so nationality helps globalism culturally.

In forming global values and determining the reasons of cultural based conflicts and removing them, the role that education will play is very important. According to the symbolic communication theory (Krapmann, 1978, p. 132; Tillmann, 1989, p. 37), by education and teaching activities, the persons can gain these abilities which can contribute to the international peace: (1) Interpreting and perceiving custom and usage; (2) Putting oneself in someone's shoes; (3) Assimilating contradictory situations properly; and (4) Using language effectively (Coşkun, 1996, p. 16).

Peace as a Global Language

Just as people are affected badly by the negative words said to them, and they defend themselves, get afraid, bear enmity and hatred, attack, withdraw, get angry, feel sorry and offended; they are affected equally by the complimentary and appreciative words said to them and they feel happy, embraced, close, loving, accepted, respectful and peaceful. Peace as a global language should work on the basic laws of all the countries to change their first item into that especially all the humans should have equal rights without any race, language, religion and culture discriminations. The fact that all the sources in the world are common properties of people should be accepted, and that a group which possesses the geographic advantages that the nature presents us; science and fiction, which should be a common property of all humanity and uses this as a power on the less powerful people should be accepted as a crime against humanity by everybody and should be behaved according to this spirit. When it is looked at the individual and massive crimes in the world, it is understood that it is the result of the efforts of either eliminating a disadvantageous situation or increasing an existing advantageous situation to a higher degree. Language affects thought (Hudson, 1993, pp. 103-105; Vardar, 1999, pp. 51-52). Even though this idea is criticized by some linguists, it is a fact that there is a relationship affecting each other between the language and thought. Changing the fact and associating it with the violence happen via language. If philosophers, poets, scientists change the world with their thoughts, it happens by means of language (Brosse, 2010). The words that show a nation, a religion, a language or a culture superior reflect directly the behavior. It represents either an acceptable or a repudiate behavior. Both of the situations prevent the peace. Because of this, peace as a global language includes living together according to the equal rights and the honor principles within the frame of different cultural identities' identifying each other reciprocally. Since every society protects and transfers its cultural values with the help of language, it can establish and develop peace as a global language within the frame of global peace education, and transfer it to the next generation. The first step for this is increasing the usage of the daily peaceful statements that can serve as a model for the children and increasing the usage of the words that can serve to the global peace in the children's books. Peace as a global language can be formed by a language that focuses on collaboration and cooperation instead of the idea of domination, and does not express the differences by humiliating and insulting words. As a result, a person who knows a foreign language is aware of the differences and can use this awareness for the peaceful goals.

Views About Language and Peace

In the system of international peace, the statements which do not remind enmity and hatred about persons, groups and nations, and which do not include provoking expressions are very important. That the persons who know a foreign language reach to the sources of these kinds of statements and translate them to their nations' language fulfill an individual and massive function that serves to peace.

> Peace is the best way to convey the nations to welfare and happiness. But when this concept is taken over once, it needs every nation's preparation separately with a permanent attention and care. (M. Kemal Atatürk)

Biruni, had been a defender of humanist view throughout his life, and pointed out that as a precondition of loving the people who are not from his own race, language, religion, culture, it is necessary to learn their language, traditions and thoughts and especially religions should be respected (Binbaşıoğlu, 1982).

Roux, said in his work of art *Türklerin ve Moğulların Eski Dini*:

> … without showing a small religious aggression, they show a tolerance which cannot be seen in the history, they make a constant effort to keep alive the supporters of the most contrast and the most venomous religious creeds and make them live together harmonizingly. Probably there should be something about the universality in the deep down of these people's hearts, in the structure of their minds, teaching items they believe in, beyond the creeds they believe in. Actually, despite religious hesitations, and differences of ceremonies and customs, everything on this picture that we can only see a part of, proves that this universality exists. (Kazancıgil, 1994, pp. 237-238)

Melikşah, as long as he got the management, he treated every religious and sect equally, and followed a policy that focused on freedom of thought and freedom of conscience (Turan, 1996, pp. 195-201).

In Armenian and Georgian sources, it is stated that the heart of Melikşah was full of affection to all Christians, he treated everybody equally, and tried to establish peace everywhere, instead of war and violence, he built the empire by making conquest of people and he did not upset anybody (Anili, 1876, pp. 196-201; Brosset, 1864, pp. 182-183).

Yunus Emre said, "If you are in love be a victim of 72 nations, I hope you can be an Imam in the rank of lovers, loyal person" (as cited in Tatcı, 2008).

Mevlana Celaleddin pointed out,

> Mevlana Celaleddin said, "If you want to like your enemy and be liked by your enemy, wish his goodness and favor, then that enemy becomes your friend; because just as there is a way from heart to speech, there is a way to heart from speech, too". (Gölpınarlı, 1951)

Turan (1996) said, "Listen to the reed which complains about the discrepancies" (p. 131).

Sultan Mahmut also pointed out that, "After that, among my citizens I want to know the Muslims only in the mosques, Christians in the church and Jewish in the synagogue" (as cited in Turan, 1996, p. 259).

In his booklet *Zum ewigen Frieden* (eternal peace), Kant built the basis of his moral philosophy on international relationships; stressed that peace is not a natural thing, so it should be established. Also he stressed that countries should be dependent on the common law of connective nations (Höffe, 2004; Hackel, 2000; Gerdhardt, 1995).

Conficius said, "We shouldn't behave in a way that we don't like to be behaved", and stated the importance of the language like this:

If the language is inaccurate, words cannot express the thought well. If the thought is not expressed well, the things that should be done cannot be done accurately. If missions cannot be done correctly, customs and culture destroy. If customs and culture destroy, justice goes astray. If justice goes astray, the confused people cannot know what to do and what will happen. That is why nothing is more important than language. (Kavcar, 2002, pp. 8-9; Schwarzova, 2010, p. 1)

In his "Yeşil Bayrak" (Green Flag) poem, Zamnhof read in the first Esperanto congress: He sees the green flag as a symbol of goodness and beauty, and stresses that the goodness inside the humans should be come out and there should be an effort for the sake of brotherhood (as cited in Rössler, 2006).

Result

It is possible to develop a theory from the views that are mentioned about language related to stressing the importance of knowing a foreign language in international communication: "push and pull theory in communication". While knowledge gives peace, comfort and trust to people, the lack of knowledge causes anxiety, discomfort, concern, pushing and withdrawing. Knowing a foreign language means going into the worlds of the people who think, believe differently from him and adapt different life styles; enlightening the darkness, clarifying the obscurities that are the causes of prejudices revealing the truth of humanistic applications that are perceived as if they are vague even if they are clear and understandable.

The unawareness building, which is the home range of wars and conflicts, can only be broken down by the power of love and peace language that the knowledge builds.

Suggestions

To provide the international peace, all the nations in the world should gather around with the same common aim; they should be aware of their mission and responsibilities to accomplish this mission, and try to form the social background.

All the governments in the world should develop a common program and make an effort for a lesson "common peace language", which can contribute to developing the peace as a global language to take place in all the curriculums of all the countries.

Teaching of foreign languages should start at an early age; in the children's books it should be thought that differences are normal and they are not anything to be proud of or be ashamed of.

With the help of a fund that is going to be set up by countries' contributions all over the world, successful students and teachers, especially the teacher candidates who are going to be assigned to educational services should be supported to meet different cultures under the name of "Peace Tourism".

Countries should participate in educational cooperation; teacher and student exchanging programs should become more prevalent.

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