TILKA Education Model and Nonviolent Communication

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to present the development of the TILKA education model. This new L1 and L2 teaching model integrates language and literature teaching through research and activity, as well as the principles and methods of intercultural education and transactional analysis. Our main research question during the model development was how nonviolent communication can be included into the intercultural language teaching. The analysis of various discourses (science, tourism, politics, literature) with regard to intensity modification has shown that verbal aggressiveness can be related to the expression of intensity modification. Building the competence of nonviolent communication with the use of specific intensity modificators can be included into the language teaching model as one of the most important intercultural goals.

Key words*: drama triangle; intensity modification; intercultural education; language and literature teaching; transactional analysis.*

Introduction

The aim of the article is to present an intercultural approach to language and literature teaching, which integrates intercultural education through research and activity, as well as the principles and methods of transactional analysis, especially the power game in the drama triangle. The TILKA model, which is based on the years of research in the field of intercultural communication and intercultural education (Čok, 2006; Mikolič, 2009, 2011, 2012) was firstly presented in Mikolič (2016a). Later, the linguistic patterns of (non)violent communication in Slovenian language connected to the drama triangle have been deeply analysed (Mikolič, 2016b). Some of the results of this analysis have been translated and adapted in English and are presented in this article.

Our research focuses on studying the Slovenian linguistic situation in the Northern Adriatic region, which represents a linguistically complex region and cultural hub between the Central European and Mediterranean regions. To research the language

and literature in cross-border areas of Slovenian culture represents a special challenge for our research. Such work in the field of cultures and languages in contact causes constant comparison, verification and development of the existing theoretical concepts as well as concrete cultural and linguistic practices regarding the relationship among majority population and various ethnic minorities.

The position of a minority is always an unprivileged position, so that is why a positive discrimination is required to empower the minority and to ensure at least an approximate equality with the majority population. Actually, the aim of the intercultural education is the empowerment of the unfairly treated, weak population, hence ensuring more equality in the human relations.

The need for equality between various ethnic groups was quite clear during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008. But what has happened afterwards? It seems significant that it was the same year when the global financial crisis began. And today we really live in a time of sharp differences: economic, environmental, social, religious, racial and ethnic. The ethnic element is certainly a part of all divisions and conflicts, which are produced by global consumer capitalism, radical climate changes, class discrepancy between a handful of the rich and the growing number of the poor, religious terrorist movements, racism and nationalism of all kinds.

Globalization can be understood both as an economic and a broader social homogenization process. Its neoliberal tendencies towards a single, monopolized economic market and increasing profits of a small circle of large corporate companies are affecting the perception of ethnicity and the development of inter-ethnic relations. Despite the ever-closer integration of the global society in which globalization is also supported by online communication, the relations between the world's civilizations and cultures are not productive anymore; instead, we are witnessing war conflicts of global proportions.

Ethnicity, whether it falls within the national context or within the international context, constitutes a barrier to a single market rather than an advantage. Interculturalism seems to be more of a superfluous expense than a useful investment at a time of global crisis. Due to the lack of intercultural and solidarity policies, culture clashes are therefore escalating: the West against the East, the North against the South, the developed world against the third world, etc. In addition, more and more frequent ethnic, religious and racial conflicts are also a direct result of globalization pressures. The growing ignorance towards the intercultural issues is not an unusual phenomenon, it is moving from the spheres of power to all aspects of society and is reflected in the emergence of increasingly extreme nationalist movements (Mikolič, 2016a).

Moreover, as the ignorance, on the one hand, and resistance toward the intercultural issues, on the other hand, bring us to even fiercer ethnical conflicts, solidarity and interculturality are seen even more as an expense. Thus, the way to globalisation pressures is wide open. Therefore, this is a vicious circle that we are entering all the time.

Consequently, the interculturality as a value could be considered as the only way out and one of the most important tests of democratic social relations (Figure 1). Our research question was what the linguistic expression of intercultural and nonviolent communication looks like and how it could be included into the language teaching.
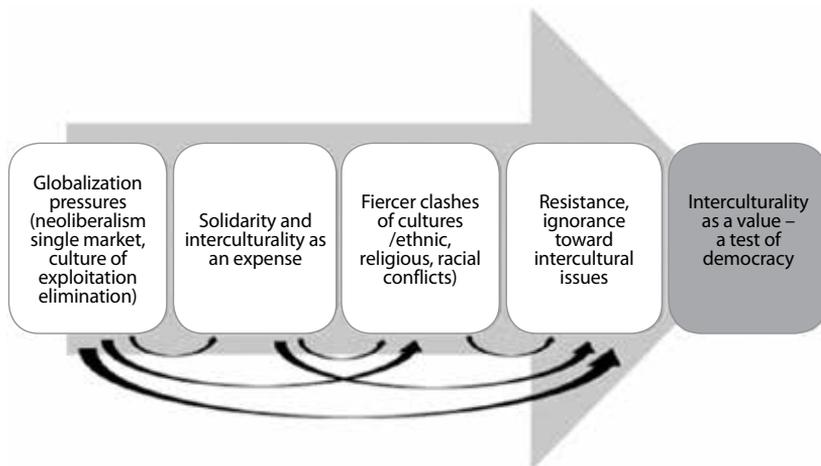

Figure 1. Interculturality in the Era of Global Consumer Capitalism (as cited in Mikolič, 2016a).

Methodology and Theoretical Insights

Our research applies several modern approaches to ethnic studies, sociolinguistics, intercultural pragmatics, intercultural education, and transactional analysis. During the construction of intercultural model of the language teaching one of the most elaborate concepts of intercultural communicative competence has been considered, i.e., the model developed by an established British expert in the field of intercultural education, Michael Byram (1997), and his research groups (Byram & Fleming, 1998; Byram & Grundy, 2003; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens, 2001). Moreover, the concept of drama triangle within the framework of transactional analysis (TA) has revealed so much regarding social relations and relations of power, especially when different roles in the drama triangle are observed with regard to the intensity modification specific for every singular role.

TA is a theory of personality and a theory of communication founded by an American psychiatrist, Eric Berne, at the end of the 1950s. Berne described the behavioural styles of people as Child, Parent and Adult. The Parent Ego State is divided into the Critical Parent (CP), that is negative, unsupportive, and critical, and the Nurturing Parent (NP), that is supportive, helpful, nurturing and comforting. The Child Ego State is divided into the Free Child (FC, sometimes referred to as Natural Child – NC), that is spontaneous, free-wheeling, playful, self-indulgent, curious and rebellious, and the Adapted Child (AC), that includes toned-down behaviour which has been learnt in response to the reactions from other people towards us and our

own behaviour. Only the Adult remains as a single entity. In fact, the Adult can be seen as our 'thought' concept of life, the Parent as our 'taught' concept of life, and the Child as our 'felt' concept of life (Berne, 1996).

TA offers an individual the possibility to change the recurring patterns that inhibit him/her in everyday life while recognizing his/her own ego state and a life script adopted in the past. The script contains our judgments about the world and ourselves, it is a life plan, made as we grow. Berne (1996) determined that people habitually adopt certain ego states, not necessarily consciously, and "play games" in the way they communicate with others. A life script can contain several different games. Games can also be analysed according to the Karpman drama triangle or power triangle, which was described by the American psychologist Stephen Karpman (1968), within the frame of transactional analysis.

From the Parent or Child Ego States it is very easy to assume one of the three roles in the drama triangle: Persecutor, Victim or Rescuer. The Persecutor takes the role of an attacker, an aggressor. In a wider context, the Persecutor acts as an innovator, an initiator, or anyone who disturbs the equilibrium. The Victim represents a player who is subjected to the Persecutor's attacks. In a wider context, the Victim can be the one undergoing the change, struggling against the change, or the one whose equilibrium has been disturbed. The Rescuer is a protector, a servant knight. In a wider context, the Rescuer is the one who strives to restore the disturbed equilibrium (Figure 2).
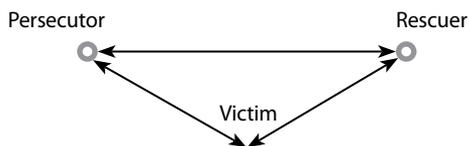

Figure 2. Karpman drama triangle.

Depending on the context, we will either consciously or unconsciously choose one of the three roles. The drama triangle is usually not static, but in motion. The players move quickly and reactively from one role to another and they swap their roles. A starting gate position (from which we generally enter the triangle) is the primary or the most familiar role assumed by each participant. We first learn our starting gate position in our family of origin. All three players are tightly connected and all of them are victims in fact. The point of view is changed only if one of them steps out of the power triangle.

In order to get out of the triangle, we must first take responsibility for ourselves. We then begin to acknowledge and express our true feelings, even if this is uncomfortable. Becoming honest with ourselves and others is a primary way to get out of the triangle and telling the truth is a key way of taking responsibility. We must then be willing to take whatever actions are necessary for whatever that truth reveals. When you are ready to be responsible, you begin sorting your true motives and feelings in consideration of your present situation. You experience your own uncomfortable

feelings and allow others to have theirs without rescue. We act responsibly, tell the truth, liberate ourselves and we therefore get an opportunity to transform our lives. We form the observer consciousness as a state of alignment with and acceptance of reality. Namely, observer consciousness is the state we are in when we see and act in accordance with the way things are (Forrest, 2010, 2011). Such a personality remains independent, entering into communication and interpersonal relations with sovereignty and empathy. The method of communicating as a sign of the life script is the centre of the modern interpretation of the TA descriptive model.

In any case, transactional analysis is undoubtedly a wonderful way to increase self-awareness and advance self-development. This goal is also included within the Tilka education model, which is presented in the following chapter.

Concept of the TILKA Education Model

TILKA is an acronym for Teaching Interculturality through Language and Literature for Conflicts Avoidance. This new L1 and L2 teaching model integrates language and literature teaching through research and activity, as well as the principles and methods of intercultural education and transactional analysis, i.e., the power game in the drama triangle model. At the conference organized by the International Association of Intercultural Education in Zagreb in 2013, the approach of intercultural education based on the use of drama triangle was presented at the workshop held by Sanja Španja (n.d.; Hartvingson, Mc Kee, & Španja, 2013). It seemed interesting to us to connect the drama triangle to a more linguistic approach and to include it into the intercultural education model.

Moreover, Tilka is also the name of the main character of the eponymous novel by the Slovenian writer Simon Jenko from the 19th century, which tells the story of a marriage attempt by a clumsy and physically weak peasant boy Tilka from a small Slovenian village. Because of his physical disability he cannot serve in the army and becomes the subject of ridicule and exclusion from society. When he turns 25, his father wants him to get married and sends him to the chosen bride with a marriage proposal. Despite his fear, he sets off. When he approaches her house, the bride and her parents make fun of him and, ashamed, Tilka flees and returns home. Nevertheless, he later solves the problem with humour: "Once I almost got married ..." The short story is a great psychological sketch of a little man, who, on the one hand, warns against society's inadequate attitude towards the different and, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the social skills development for interpersonal contacts and overcoming conflict situations.

Within the interdisciplinary TILKA model, both theories, intercultural education and transactional analysis, help us develop the methods which are a way to increase self-awareness, empathy and advance self-development. Teaching language and literature is based on real-life situations and authentic materials. On the basis of fiction

and non-fiction texts, we develop students' language, both in terms of communicative and reading competence, as well as using them as a starting point for discussions on various topical issues in contemporary society. In this way, we can compare the differences and similarities of different cultures and societies relating to very complex and problematic social areas such as the role of gender, family, upbringing, education, marginalized social groups, etc. Starting from the topics related to an individual's immediate environment, we traverse to socially relevant issues at the national and supranational level. In this way, the students develop critical cultural awareness or awareness of the first and other cultures on the cognitive, emotional and active level, which will be developed simultaneously with the communicative and reading competence. Thus, the students will be achieving intercultural communicative competence. Language, therefore, is taught through talking about culture, including literature, in both the original and the target culture. In other words, language is taught simultaneously with culture, regardless of whether it is the first or the second/foreign language. From the perspective of teaching literature (along with learning about literature), we know the first and other cultures and learn the language. Methods may be changed and we can remain only at the level of separate treatment of literature, culture and language; the methods which establish simultaneous comparisons of cultures and languages can be used or, in the language of art or non-artistic texts, we recognize the expressions of culture. The first group of methods brings pupils to the first level of intercultural communicative competence, the second type of methods brings them to the second level, and the third one to the third, the deepest level of intercultural communicative competence (see Mikolič, 2011). Moreover, learning language through literature allows students to identify and acquire communication patterns, which, according to the theory of transactional analysis, are essential for effective communication. In doing so they can evaluate their own role in the interaction (the Persecutor, the Victim or the Rescuer) and are able to stand out from harmful relations in the power triangle or at least to avoid entering it (Mikolič, 2016a).

Linguistic Tools for Violent and Nonviolent Communication

TA primarily speaks about the following clues for recognizing the roles in the power triangle: tone and tempo of speech, facial expressions, postures, gestures, breathing, etc. (Transactional Analysis, 2015). Our question was: could the roles of Persecutor, Victim, and Rescuer also be recognised by the specific linguistic tools? Firstly, the advertising texts in the corpus of tourism TURK, as well as the selected scientific, political, and literary texts were analysed with regard to the intensity modification at the verbal and argumentative levels (Mikolič, 2007a, 2007b, 2014, 2015). Afterwards, we compared the communication patterns from the analysed texts in terms of more or less aggressive discourse. The analysis results have shown that verbal aggressiveness can also be related to the intensity modification (see also Greenberg, 1976).

Actually, Bowers claims that language intensity is a quality of language that "indicates the degree to which the speaker's attitude toward a concept deviates from neutrality" (Bowers, 1963). The intensity modificators, i.e., intensifiers and mitigators, not only express the sender's relationship toward the message content, they are also the expressive tools of politeness or impoliteness strategies. Brown-Levinson politeness theory highlights that mitigation means more possibilities for the receiver to react and express his own opinion (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Hence, the analysis of the mentioned types of discourses with regard to intensity modification and politeness theory has shown us which linguistic tools are related to three roles in the drama triangle. Table 1 shows that there are superlatives and other intensifiers, modal verbs and other emotional expressions, words to impress, etc., that prevail among the typical linguistic tools for all three roles.

Table 1

Linguistic Expression Related to the Three Roles of the Drama Triangle

ROLES	Persecutor	Victim	Rescuer
LINGUISTIC EXPRESSION	superlatives and other intensifiers: *the biggest, magnificent, always, never, once and for all, absolutely, nobody, everyone, everything, nothing, etc.*; imperatives: *shut up, do it, etc.*; critical words, judgmental words: *you are wrong, you are right, etc.*	baby talk; superlatives: *the biggest, the best, etc.*; emotional expressions: *I want, I'm gonna, I don't care, oh no, not again, things never go right for me, the worst day of my life, etc.*	patronising language: *what did I tell you, do you hear me I'm talking to you, listen to me, etc.*; words to impress: *of course, no problem, without problem, I completely understand you, etc.*

On the other hand, there are nonviolent communication patterns which offer the possibility to relativize some arguments and to leave space for the receiver to react. The patterns consist of intensifiers only when there is a real need to make a strong argument. Otherwise, there are mitigators that help establish some rational distance toward the message and receiver (Table 2).

Table 2

Linguistic Expression of Nonviolent Communication

questions: *why, what, how, who, where and when, how much, in what way,* etc.;

comparative expressions: *in comparison with, as ... as etc.*;

expressions to articulate your opinion: *I think, I realize, I see, I believe, in my opinion,* etc.;

hedging, tentative language: *probably, possibly, maybe, approximately, about, it seems to me,* etc.

intensifiers (with solid arguments): *very, always, pure, hundred percent,* etc.

Taking into account the fact that in literature, especially in novels and dramas, there are many examples of violent and nonviolent communication, it is very useful to approach literature from this point of view during the language teaching.

Learning Units within the TILKA Model

Considering the above-explained approaches, each learning unit in the TILKA model contains four steps:

1. approaching the topic,
2. linguistic and stylistic part,
3. becoming absorbed in the topic,
4. applying the topic.

In the first step we present the material that functions as the starting point for teaching a certain communication unit. Socially relevant topics are chosen, which are close to the students' age and experience. Thus, the students, already in this first step, establish a personal relationship with the topic. The material includes a selection of images (such as a map, a housing plan, etc.) or a text that can be fiction or non-fiction (professional, scientific, journalistic, etc.). In any case, it is an authentic or partially adapted original text or other material. The first task of the students is to read the text with understanding. It is important for students to get as close to the text as possible. Approaching the text means studying it carefully, focusing on details, hidden meanings, and Linguistic peculiarities.

In the second step, the linguistic-stylistic part, style analysis is linked to linguistic analysis, both of which require typical concrete communication situations. The selected topic can therefore be used to introduce a grammatical issue. Grammatical structures are used in natural communication situations (e.g. the imperative is displayed in the requirements and requests that students often hear). In addition to the synthesis of grammatical paradigms and grammatical rules, this chapter also includes exercises for revision and language drills.

Observing all levels of language, from phonological to semantic and textual, may also be associated with the stylistic analysis of literary texts or with elements of literary theory. Through the analysis of different linguistic elements in a literary work, the richness of the linguistic possibilities is presented, as literary creators are almost unlimited in their linguistic creations and thus extend the boundaries of a language. Additionally, linguistic analysis and the resulting knowledge that students obtain from the analysis of translations or through searching for parallels of certain linguistic phenomena in different languages are very welcome. Students in this part of the learning units also acquire the linguistic and communicative patterns that will help them remain in a position outside the power triangle or go beyond conflict situations.

In the third step, which we call Becoming absorbed in the topic, comparative and cross-cultural aspects are included. In addition to learning about civilization, i.e., providing information on the individual elements of a source or target culture, the focus is primarily on comparisons of cultures, identifying their differences and similarities, which is the main method and objective of intercultural education. In the first part, we begin working from the students' experiential field and, in this

section, we will also include comparisons related to culture in the broadest sense of the word. Therefore, the discussion is expanded in terms of interethnic differences, intergenerational differences, changes in culture through time, gender differences, etc. Thereby, a critical cultural awareness is being developed. The method of role playing or observing a reality from different perspectives can, in classroom settings, be applied when we want to expand the subject matter to the problem of violence and undemocratic relations. In this case, the teacher can decide to use either the source text or additional material, or even a simple simulation of roles to raise awareness of the negative dynamics resulting from the drama triangle or the power triangle, and also to show the students the possibility of escape. They need to recognize the power relations in the triangle and realistically evaluate each of the roles. The voices and gestures of each of the roles need to be evaluated in order to realize when someone wants to lure us into the power triangle. With such awareness, we can decide what we really want. The ultimate goal is to be honest with ourselves and others, as well as with our feelings and the feelings of others. We have a responsibility to express our true feelings and listen to the true feelings of others. Students must be ready for such consistency and authenticity in relation to themselves. For this purpose, a teacher in intercultural language and literature teaching can organize the recognition of different roles and role play. The teacher asks some key questions relating to real-life situations that occur in the classroom and trigger students' considerations by encouraging power games involving different relationships, such as: the relationships between a non-migrant/majority pupil in the role of the Persecutor, a migrant pupil in the role of the Victim, and a non-migrant pupil in the role of the Rescuer, or relationships among them in any other combination.

The fourth part, Applying the topic, comprises the tasks that present the potential for the synthesis of new skills and knowledge, as well as motivation for further research. All three components of interethnic/intercultural awareness must be used: cognitive, emotional and active/dynamic. In addition, such awareness is also shown in the relevant communication skills and language use. At the same time, the student has the opportunity to self-assess his/her knowledge or his/her intercultural communicative competence. As this step is the most demanding one, the methodological choices that are most efficient in such work are those related to the written texts. On the other hand, we must consider all the learning opportunities offered by new technologies and form the learning methods in accordance with the characteristics of young people. This is extremely important at this stage where the teacher wants to direct young people to adopt certain values and act upon them (Mikolič, 2016a).

Conclusion

Thus, the intercultural competence on the individual level is crucial for avoiding conflicts and creating an inclusive society based on equality and solidarity, rather than on unequal power relationships. Communication takes an important role in

this processes, hence the language awareness and the intercultural communicative competence are very important as well. As the intercultural communicative competence includes both an in-depth reflection and the ability of interaction and communication, school system can develop that mission very effectively within the sphere of teaching language and literature. In this framework the TILKA model (summarised in Table 3), in which the linguistic tools of nonviolent communication are highlighted, can be very convenient.

Table 3

The Innovative Approaches of the TILKA Model

- Teaching based on life situations and authentic materials
- Teaching on the basis of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Language is taught simultaneously with literature
- Learning culture discussing various topical issues of contemporary society
- Identifying the drama triangle
- Acquiring communication patterns, which are essential for effective nonviolent communication (culture of dialogue)
- Intercultural teaching/learning methods through research and activity

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Odgojni model TILKA i nenasilna komunikacija

Sažetak

Cilj članka je predstaviti razvoj odgojnog modela TILKA. Taj novi model nastave materinskog/prvog i stranog/drugog jezika s jedne strane obuhvaća poduku jezika i književnosti s pomoću istraživanja i aktivnosti, a s druge spaja smjernice i metode interkulturnog odgoja i transakcijske analize. Naše najvažnije istraživačko pitanje vezano je uz nenasilnu komunikaciju koja bi mogla postati sastavni dio interkulturne jezične nastave. Da bismo odgovorili na pitanje kako uključiti nenasilnu komunikaciju u okvir interkulturne jezične nastave, analizirali smo četiri različita diskursa (znanost, turizam, politika, književnost) iz perspektive modifikacije intenziteta. Analize su pokazale da je verbalna agresija povezana s modifikacijom intenziteta u jeziku. Kod nenasilne komunikacije modifikatori koji jačaju intenzitet prisutni su samo onda kad postoje realna potreba i mogućnost da se pojača argument. Inače se više upotrebljavaju modifikatori za slabljenje argumenta koji uspostavljaju neku racionalnu distancu prema sadržaju i primatelju poruke. Kompetencija nenasilne komunikacije sa specifičnom upotrebom modifikacije intenziteta može biti uključena u jezičnu nastavu kao jedan od najvažnijih interkulturnih ciljeva.

Ključne riječi: *interkulturni odgoj; modifikacija intenziteta; nenasilna komunikacija; poduka jezika i književnosti, transakcijska analiza,.*