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## LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE AND CULTURE IN TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

© Ildiko CSAJBOK-TWEREFU  
(University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana)

[ictwerefou@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ictwerefou@ug.edu.gh)  
[twerefou@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:twerefou@yahoo.co.uk)

*Most of the time people learn foreign languages for communication – to be able to speak and understand. In the early stages of the teaching of any foreign language, teachers introduce language etiquette of the studied language for better understanding and appreciation of aspects of the culture. This is partly due to the fact in many cases language learning starts from “Hello”, or “My name is...” etc., and also there are major differences between the studied and native languages which describe these languages and their speakers. This indicates that language etiquette should be a part of any language teaching and learning process. The learning of foreign languages at any level is characterized by the interplay of many factors such as mother tongue, culture, educational background, psychological factors, among others. A difficult task that faces an instructor is the development of the socio-cultural competence in teaching a foreign language. In the University of Ghana, students have the opportunity to study Russian language and literature as part of the course content. This paper discusses some challenges in the teaching Russian language in the University of Ghana. Analysis shows that irrespective of the fact, that many Ghanaians speak one other Ghanaian language in addition to their mother tongue, and English which is the official language, and some people also speak French, there is a major challenge in teaching Russian in Ghana as a foreign language. Thus, multilingualism is a useful but not sufficient condition for the effective learning of a language. The paper argues that one reason that makes it difficult to teach Russian as a foreign language is the social and cultural differences and the wide geographical distance between Ghana and Russia.*

**Keywords:** language etiquette, foreign languages, language teaching, culture, politeness.

Technology and globalization of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries has opened up the world. Today, within a few minutes one can be in a country and chat with others in other countries using media such as internet, wireless, fixed phones and mobile phones. Furthermore, in a few hours, one can travel from one country to another. All these have helped change the basic objectives of learning a language. Whilst in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main aim of learning languages was to be able to read and write and to understand written forms

of a language, in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries people are learning foreign languages for communication – to be able to speak and understand (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1996) in its *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* stated that communication is at the heart of second language study.

These days there are many ways and conditions of teaching and learning a foreign language. These among others include individual or group learning with or without an instructor. Irrespective of the method one uses during the teaching and learning process in a second language, the cultural aspect of the language and studies of the cultures that use the language should be included. Through these, learners can understand that there are different people, languages and cultures in the world and may better appreciate those differences. Moreover teaching the culture should be introduced right from the beginning, because “beginning foreign language students want to feel, touch, smell, and see the foreign peoples and not just hear their language” (Thanasoulas, 2001:15)

This paper attempts to provide information on the importance of developing the socio-cultural competence in teaching a foreign language and assesses language etiquette in language teaching and learning. The paper has 5 sections. Section 2 gives a situational analysis of the Culture in Foreign Language Teaching; Section 3 discusses etiquette and language etiquette; Section 4 provides information about the teaching of Russian language in the University of Ghana, cultural differences of the two countries and how greetings are different in Russia and Ghana and the last section concludes the paper.

## Culture in Foreign Language Teaching Culture and Communication

Culture has been defined by different people in different ways. According to Richenkova (2008:411) *culture* can be defined as “the qualitative characteristic that enables people to get over their unsophisticated usual biological nature in order to give preference to their second one – the social nature”. Therefore Richenkova draws a parallel between the natural and studied behaviors.

In Thanasoulas (2001:10) definition the accent is on the heritage. He noted “*culture* is our social legacy as contrasted with our organic heredity. It regulates our lives at every turn.”

Cooke (2008:187) combines the modern life of people in his definition: “*Culture* is the composite of economic, industrial, social and spiritual achievements. It is the high level of development achieved; a skill; mastery”.

Henrichsen (1997:1) brings different definitions of *culture* depending on the discipline which defines it. In the humanities and fine arts it applies to the “enlightenment or excellence in taste which has been acquired by exposure to training in the arts”. So a person is “being “cultured” if he or she appreciates opera, ballet, “good” art, literature and music.” This is the culture with “big C”. For anthropologists and sociologists *culture* applies to “behaviors and beliefs which seem typical of a group or class.” This definition may include typical food, clothing, values, activities, manners, practices, etc. of a group. This is the culture with “little c”. For lay persons, culture is used to “study the arts of groups of people. These people think culture refers to the things that people from other places do which seems unusual and curious. This definition is based on stereotypes most of which

are quite exaggerated and not very true". This is the culture with K from "kooky".

From all these discussions, culture can be considered as a 'video' which portrays the visible and audible life of groups of people. There, one can see the natural and learnt behaviors; the heritage, which is brought from generation to generation, the modern life of people, the taste and their beliefs are all part of that tape. However, in spite of the fact that culture is "fixed", it is changing from time to time.

There is a fundamental connection between *culture* and *communication*. Communication is creating and maintaining culture. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1996:3) described the way of teaching and learning a foreign language as "Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom". This means that not only the grammar of the language – *how* – and its vocabulary – *what* – are important in the teaching and learning process but the culture, the way of communication, the etiquette – *when, why, whom* – should be also included. "So, while grammar and vocabulary are essential tools for communication, it is the acquisition of the ability to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways with users of other languages that is the ultimate goal of today's foreign language classroom." (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996:3)

There is a set of spectrums of the functions of language communication. These spectrums help to establish the contact between the speakers; attract the attention of the listener; help to show respect; help to define the status of the communication (formal, informal etc.); form an auspicious environment for the communication, etc. Philips (1983) called the culture of everyday etiquette and culture and its expressions of right and duties through norms and communications as "invisible culture".

Those, who study foreign languages, should be aware of the socio-cultural rules and demands of the target language. They should know, how to use the meta communication tools, and how those tools can affect the communication. Without this awareness, the students will not be able to communicate in the foreign language as expected.

*Culture* and *communication* are inseparable. In communication, culture speaks, decides who talks to whom, about what, and how. "It also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication." (Samovar & Porter & Jain, 1981:24)

That *verbal communication* is different for different cultures is clear. But there are many different *non-verbal* communication signs which in different cultures have opposite meanings. Many of us know that in most parts of Europe if one bows his or her head then the person wants to communicate counteractive meanings: "Yes". But the same nod means "No" in Bulgaria. Something similar can be seen with some examples of gestures in Ghana and Russia or Hungary. The waving gesticulation in Europe means "bye-bye", while in Ghana it means the opposite "come". These really demonstrate that foreign language teaching should have components of cultural teaching, because no communication can be done without culture.

### Cultural aspect of language teaching

The view that in foreign language teaching the culture of the nation whose language is being taught should also be studied is not new. In spite of that Politzer in 1959 (100-101) expressed that "if we teach language without at

the same time teaching the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning...”, teaching culture took place in the language teaching process in different parts of the world only in the 1980s (Thanasoulas, 2001).

In Russia, the cultural aspect of language teaching in practical course of foreign language teaching and theoretical course of methodology of teaching Russian as foreign language was introduced around 1980 by Vereschagin and Kostomarov (1983). In their interpretation, the cultural aspects of language teaching is a didactic analog of socio-linguistics, which is developing the theory and concept necessary to link foreign language teaching and studies of the social and cultural life of native speakers. We can just agree with their opinion: two different national cultures will never coincide absolutely, because both of them are made up of national and international elements. Azimov and Schukin (1999) noted that in the 1980s, the cultural aspect of foreign language teaching was just a new field of methodics, while in the 1990s it has become a methodical discipline, which brought a new practice in foreign language teaching such as the introduction of the national-cultural specifics of communication in the teaching process.

A basic requirement for including cultural teaching in the teaching of foreign languages is the cultural competence. Thanasoulas (2001:3) defines *cultural competence* as “the knowledge of the conventions, customs, beliefs, and systems of meaning of another country”. One cannot teach or learn a foreign language without the culture of the speakers of that language. However, it is essential to notice that, “teaching culture” does not only mean to give information about the culture of the native speakers of the studied language. It is also very important but not enough for the appreciation of the target language. Henrichsen (1997) proposes three areas which can help to improve the communicative competence of learners, 1) conventional behavior in common situations; 2) the ways language and social variables interact and 3) the cultural connotations of words. These areas could be applied in the development of the cultural competence of the learners.

Since all human behavior is culturally based, teachers and learners of a foreign language should pay attention to the needs of language learning together with the culture of the native speakers. Such needs should link the four skills of language teaching. We agree with Kramersch (1993) who noted that the teaching of culture is not the fifth skill in the language teaching and learning process in addition to speaking, listening, reading and writing, but culture is part of those four skills. The following are some examples of how Kramersch proposed idea could be built in those four skills.

- Culture of speaking in a specific language. For example, in some languages like Spanish and Russian the tempo of speaking is faster than in other languages and therefore teaching culture in speaking should address this issues.
- Culture of listening. For example, in some cultures like in Ghana it is acceptable for a child to only listen and not interrupt when an elderly person is talking; but in other cultures like in many parts of Europe a child is required to listen but may interrupt at any time.
- Culture of writing. In Russian for example, the written form of letters should be joined but in many other cultures, for example, in the United Kingdom printed forms are used.
- Linked to the culture of reading is the intonation aspect of the language that is differences in different cultures. For example, reading poems is quite different in different cultures.

Therefore one can agree with Thanasoulas (2001) who argues that foreign language learning is foreign culture learning. Otherwise one can be in a strange situation: the students will be surrounded by people whom they do not understand and who do not understand them even after spending several years on learning a foreign language. That is simply because what is considered normal for one cultural group may be strange to another as a result of intercultural communication barriers. In a gist cultural competence should also be considered in the teaching of foreign languages.

In spite of the fact that many linguists argue that language and culture of native speakers are inseparable, Dobrenov-Major (2008:35) in her research revealed that Samoans view cultural and linguistic identity as separate categories.

### How to teach culture?

Foreign culture learning process has many different areas such as verbal and non-verbal communication, traditions, every day habits, history, literature, etc. It shows how the language can and should be used, for example, in persuading, motivating, constructing an argument, problem solving, decision making, negotiating and resolving conflicts. It is important that learners are familiar with the communication norms, rituals and taboos of the culture of native speakers because each culture has specific communication practices and behavior. The practical use of the intercultural communication can be applied in business, education, health care, diplomacy, the arts, etc.

Kramersch (1993, cited in Thanasoulas, 2001:6) proposes that culture classes should be “interpersonal”. Teachers should help students to accept and understand the foreign culture, which is better than to give cultural facts. As Genc and Bada (2005:75) noted, culture classes have a humanizing and a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process.

In learning a foreign civilization, students compare the home and target culture. It is unquestioned that foreign language teachers should be foreign culture teachers, having the ability to experience and analyze both the home and target cultures (Byram & Morgan et al., 1994:73).

The teaching of culture should be introduced right from the beginning. This enables students to understand the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996:4).

Teachers can use different ways to teach culture. Those ways depend on the age and proficiency level of the students. For young students in any proficiency level one can use songs, pictures, cartoons or “things” which are used in the target culture. For others teachers can use songs and cultural items for beginners and movies at the advanced levels (Csajbok-Twerefou, 2010). In any level and for all age groups, teachers may use special texts or narratives with cultural information on the target language about the target culture. Thanasoulas’s (2001:14-19) and Henrichsen’s (1997:7-12) works provide more practical considerations to incorporate culture into the foreign language classroom.

### Etiquette

Etiquette is a code of behavior that delineates expectations for social behavior according to contemporary conventional norms within a society, social class or group (Wikipedia). Every culture has its own requirement of etiquette. This etiquette is accepted and used by the community. As a norm,

every child is acquainted with the rules of etiquette. Like culture, etiquette is fixed but sometime changes in a manner acceptable to members of the community.

A difficult challenge that faces a foreign language teacher is the establishment of dialogue between cultures. This requires that the development of the socio-cultural competence in the teaching and learning process results in students interpreting different verbal and non-verbal aspects of a specific cultural setting, such as etiquette. To achieve this goal is not an easy task. While other aspects of a language such as vocabulary, grammar, literature or the history of the country whose language is being taught could be obtained from books, nuances of the human behavior according to the etiquette are mostly brought from childhood. In spite of the fact that norms of the etiquette are “fixed”, they can change in response to societal changes. Therefore members of the society are going through a “life learning” experiment. In a gist, if students do not acquire etiquette of the target language, they are likely to cause problems for themselves. Even a simple translation can cause problems if the “translator” is not familiar with the required etiquette of the two languages from which and to which the translation is being made.

## Language Etiquette

Speech (or language) etiquette is an accepted set of requirements of forms, contents, orders, characters and situational relevance of utterance or expression. Language etiquette relates to words and phrases used for greetings, to ask for permission, to ask something, to address someone, to give proper intonation to express politeness, etc. To understand and be understood – this is the major aim and reason of teaching and learning language etiquette in the foreign language classrooms. To be able to communicate with representatives of other cultures, one need to speak a foreign language as means of communication following the norms of the foreign culture. This requires that one follows the different forms of verbal and non-verbal communication very well. Regular use of language etiquette in a speech is considered to be an appropriate behaviour. However, irregular use of speech etiquette is taken as a desire to offend or insult, or as bad manners.

As noted above, etiquette and language etiquette as parts of culture are fixed, but are always changing. However, the literary language in most cases is quite conservative. This is due to the long process involved in the selection and close examination of the language tools.

Language etiquette is a part of linguistic routines which Agyekum (2005:1) defined as “the sequential organizations beyond a sentence either as activities of one person or as the interaction of two or more people”. Many of these routines are used in our everyday life during interactions. As a student starts learning a foreign language, he or she is introduced to the etiquette of that language during the first lessons because most of the time conversations start with greetings, introduction, etc. All these are elements of the etiquette of a culture, though they can differ in the studied and target languages. Dzameshi (2001, cited by Anderson, 2006), who undertook a study in Ghana with Ewe (it is a local language in Ghana, West-Africa) and English speakers, confirmed that different cultures view politeness differently. Also, in different cultures different factors require politeness.

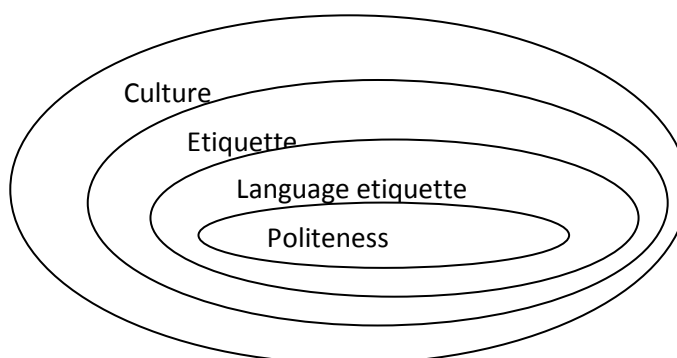
Language or speech etiquette is a holophrastic system. The elements of this system generally may be realized at different language levels.

- On the lexical level these are the phraseologies, special words and expressions, address forms such as *Thank you, excuse me, See you, Mr.* etc..
- At the morphological level of question forms, imperative forms can be used to express politeness such as *Could you give me your pen, please? – Give me your pen, please.* Also, in address forms in many languages, such as Russian or Hungarian and others, one can use plural instead of singular (*T/V system* – called after the French *Tu* and *Vous*).
- At the stylistic level it is in the request of literature, cultural speech; rejection of use of abusing words etc.
- At the level of intonation, one can see it in the use of polite intonations. For example some phrases could have different meanings depending on the intonation. The same sentence can be a direct order or a polite request.
- At the level of orthoepy the request is not to clip the words (*Give me-Gimme*)
- At the level of organization of communication, it is not polite to interrupt the interlocutor and to cut into other's conversation.

The above characteristics are general of language etiquette. On the other hand speech etiquette is on the basis of each culture and language, therefore it can be different. It is important for all foreign language students to know the differences between native and studied languages. In English for example *Dear* is used in official letters as address. While in Russian or in Hungarian it is a very familiar form *Дорогой/Дорогая – Drága/Kedves*. In England or USA for the question *How are you* the answer is likely to be: *Fine, Good* etc. The answers *Bad* or *Not so good* are not the requested polite answers, while in Russia the same question should be answered neutrally *Normal, Nothing* etc (*Нормально, Ничего*).

To be polite is sometimes quite difficult, but it is important in the learning of foreign languages. Sometimes in daily behavior common sense and good manners can help overcome these differences. In summary, the relationship between culture, etiquette, language etiquette and politeness can be described as follows: politeness is a subset of language etiquette, language etiquette is a subset of etiquette and etiquette is a subset of cultures as shown in the diagramme below.

Figure 1: Relationship between culture, etiquette, language etiquette and politeness



As we stated earlier, the introduction of speech etiquette should be done in the first language class. But as students expand their knowledge of cultures and traditions through language learning, they continually discover perspectives (traditional ideas and attitudes), practices (patterns of behaviour



– rites, forms of discourse etc.) and products that are similar and different from their own culture and traditions (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996:6). At that stage the speech etiquette of a second language should be studied deeper. This is because if the current organizing principle for foreign language study is communication, it is essential to really know *when, why, whom, where, what* and *how* to say.

For language teachers the communication competence of students is very important. In foreign language classes students should be made to talk. As we have different cultures in the world, so also we have different people with different socio-cultural and psychological backgrounds, different temperament or character, different human behavior and different religious, beliefs. Therefore “teachers need to know and understand what the reactions of their students from various cultural groups are likely to be, or they will not be effective teachers.” (Henrichsen, 1997:2) We can agree with Cazden (2001:67), who emphasises that, one should not forget about an important influence of all talk: about the participants themselves and their views on other participants, and what they expect from the interaction. To be able to test the knowledge of the learners it is important to accept all those human characteristics. All those could be achieved if the communication competence of the instructor is high.

## Russian and English Speech Etiquette in Russian Language Classes in Ghana

### Why study Russian in Ghana?

The first question one may ask is why do students study Russian language and literature in Ghana?

The simplest answer is: speaking Russian should give the learner the opportunity to see the world through “Russian eyes”. Another response may be that Russian is a foreign language such as French, Arabic, Chinese, Swahili or Spanish which are taught in many universities as well as in the University of Ghana. If these answers are not satisfying, the next question is, what can one do with Russian language in Ghana? Students who completed the course can read Russian, watch and enjoy Russian movies, understand Russian arts and published works, etc. There are also job opportunities in some areas such as International Relations, Business, the Military, Oil and gas and governmental and industrial organizations which often give preference to job applicants who are proficient in a foreign language)

In Ghana there are several dialects. The official language of the country is English. Ghana is bordered by French speaking countries. This could explain why some people speak French in addition to their mother tongue and English. The learning of a foreign language like Russian at the university should not necessarily be a major problem in a multilingual society like Ghana. However, the psychology of learners is also influenced by geographical space and socio-political issues. Lecturers of the Russian Section of the Department of Modern Languages in all courses spend time to motivate students (Csajbok-Twerefou & Arthur, 2008).

As Richenkova (2008:413) noted, the geographical space and the climate of a country define its life, economy and traditional relations, knowledge of worldwide history, major events in the history of the country and life of its people, religions of the citizens, etc. In our case all these issues are quite different in the studied cultures: Russian and Ghanaian and consequently make the teaching of Russian language difficult.

## Russian Language in the University of Ghana

In Ghana students may study Russian language in two institutions: either at the Institute of Languages or in the University of Ghana. The University offers a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Russian. Many of the students study Russian language only for two years. Since in language courses the first stage is the foundation of all future knowledge, the students are given a well-founded base in all four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing and culture as well. At the end of the second year students have some knowledge not only in the language but also about the Russian culture itself. They study language, history, culture and literature.

In four years students who have no background knowledge whatsoever in the Russian language, start with the Russian alphabet, writing, some limited vocabulary and simple sentences, and at the end are able to communicate and understand the main ideas of advanced spoken and written texts in contemporary standard Russian.

On the cultural aspect, students study Russian culture from medieval times to the Revolution, with some attention to the social and political forces in Russian culture. They also study Russian History, which traces the major landmarks of Russia from the Kievan Rus period to the period of Great October Socialist Revolution and the creation and development of the Soviet Union up to the time of Mikhail Gorbachev. They look at the changes that were set in motion by Gorbachev, the collapse of the Union and the political and socio-economic transformations in post-Soviet Russia.

In Russian literature studies focus on the development of literary Russian from its beginning through the end of the 18th Century, the Romantic period with S. Pushkin, N. I. Gogol, M. Yu. Lermontov, the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Realism with Lev Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoyevsky, the Russian Drama with Griboedev, Ostrovsky, Gogol and Chekhov, the Russian Poetry and the Russian/Soviet Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century capturing the major debates and activism.

Though students are given good knowledge about all these cultural issues one can hardly conclude that at the end of the course their socio-cultural competence in Russian issues is well developed. One reason may be that in Ghana students are not motivated to study other foreign languages apart from English. Ghana's official language is English which is widely spoken around the World. Many people therefore do not see the need for other foreign language. Some people speak French, but most of them did not learn it in the classroom. As was noted above, Ghana is surrounded by French speaking countries. In border towns there are strong interrelationships between Ghanaians and their French counterparts. This has made it easy for Ghanaians living in and around these areas to speak the language. All these to some extent has contributed to making it easy and motivated the learning of French in the class room. However, the same cannot be said about learning other languages like Russian where there is a wide geographical space and consequently no direct motivation for the learning of the language.

## Nations, tribes, cultures

Cooke, who is an American educator in Russia, emphasizes that although we have "global culture", which is unified and could be understood by all human beings, every nation has its own culture as well. In Ghanaian classrooms both global and tribal cultures can be observed since students have knowledge of native cultures and are being taught international culture.

In this case their dialogue is even wider since the classroom is full of different cultures – English, Russian and a host of other Ghanaian cultures.

Though Ghana is one country, there are many different tribes and therefore different cultures and traditions. In the teaching of culture in foreign language classes the instructor faces the challenge of choosing the culture from which examples should come from in order to make comparison or to show the cultural differences between the nation of the studied language and the student's culture. Usually, comparison of Russian culture is made with the Akan language (it is the most dominant and apparent culture in present-day of Ghana) since majority of Ghanaians are Akans but it is possible to have a class where students are more from other tribes than Akan. In such a case comparison becomes difficult.

In spite of that, the official language in Ghana is English and therefore it is spoken in many places – offices, institutions, etc., Ghanaian traditions and the culture of the different ethnic groups are also used in many communications. It is therefore important to compare Russian in Russian language classes not only with English but sometimes with “Ghanaian English” in order to increase understanding of the topic being discussed. As some Ghanaian researchers noted, speakers of English in Ghana transfer models from their mother tongue to English (Anderson, 2006; Obeng-Gyasi, 1999).

According to Cooke (2008:189), in a “culturally sensitive programme” it is important that educators go through some stages. Most of those stages may be adapted to a Russian studies class in the University of Ghana. These are: “Ethnic psychological captivity”, where students behave on the basis of internalized beliefs about Russia; “Ethnic encapsulation”, where students “are ethnocentric and practice ethnic separation; ethnic identity clarification”, where students “have clarified their attitudes towards” Russia; “bi-ethnicity, where students have attitudes, skills, and commitment to participate in their own or other ethnic groups; Multi-ethnicity, where students have a reflective ethnic and national identification; globalization and global competency, where a student's capacity for multi-ethnicity transcends national barriers.” It is important for the instructor to take into consideration all these in the teaching process. Moreover, since students are from different tribes, these stages can be seen not only in their Russian studies, but in the student's everyday life as well.

### Greetings in Russia and Ghana

Just as there are many languages in the world, so also are there many types of greetings (Ponomaryova, 2010). Universally, communication starts with greetings. Both in Ghana and Russia greetings are very important. This signifies that a person has or wants contact with another person. In Russian for example the phrase: ‘He/she has stopped greeting me’ means that ‘He/she has broken our relations’.

“The Akan protocol of greetings requires that everyone is greeted with humility.” (Kyerewaa Opokuwaa, 2005:32) In Ghana people are greeted according to their positions in life and the community. For that reason, among Ghanaians and Non-Ghanaians very often there can be misunderstanding on who should greet first. The major rules in Ghana are the follows: “Royals are greeted by non-royals first; juniors greet seniors first; children greet adults first. When two people meet and are of the same status or age group, the person who sees the other first greets first. If one person is standing or stationary and the other person is in motion, the person in motion greets first. If any person enters a room, regardless of status,

where people are already standing or seated, the person must greet first.” (Kyerewaa Opokuwaa, 2005:34)

In Russia the rules are not usually followed though they exist. Younger ones by age and status should greet first. If one enters a place it is incumbent on him to greet first. However, if people in the room are younger by age, it is polite to greet the one entering before he or she does it. In Russia men should greet women first in spite of their age. Only very old men should be greeted by young women first.

In Russian and English there are formal and informal speeches. Their usage as in the Ghanaian culture depends on many factors, such as gender, social status, age of the communicants, situation, place and others. The following Russian greetings are stylistically neutral. They are used in many – mostly – formal situations and can be easily converted into English as follows.

- *Здравствуйте!* How do you do? Hello!
- *Доброе утро!* (Good) Morning.
- *Добрый день!* Good afternoon.
- *Добрый вечер!* Good evening.

The next ones are archaic and can be used only in formal situations in both languages.

- *Приветствую вас!* You are welcome!
- *Добро пожаловать!* Welcome!

Listed below are used in informal or familiar situations. They need to be explained to students and used in some dialogues so that students can practice their usage.

- *Здравствуй!* How do you do? Hello!
- *Привет! Салют! Ни!*
- *Приветик!*
- *Здорова!* (Mainly used by young men.)
- *Хэлло! Хай!* (Borrowed from English. Mainly used by the youth.)

Although more time is spent by lecturers to illustrate the differences in greetings in Russia, more specifically, that a young person with a higher status cannot be greeted with *Привет* ‘Hi’, students usually commit this mistake. This is quite strange since in Ghanaian society the status of a person is very important. One reason could be the influence of American culture on Ghanaian society. This notwithstanding Russian language etiquette has changed slightly since 1982 and the greeting *Привет* is widely used in our days. Formanovskaya (1982) in her work emphasised that: this greeting ‘privet’ is very unceremonious therefore its use is not advised for foreigners. This is a good example of the fact that language etiquette is changing.

In spite of the fact that syntactically and grammatically none of the above greetings is a sentence, they are units of the communication, which are used not to give information to the interlocutor, but to react to the situation or the speaker’s words. Russian language etiquette requires that one responds to greetings in the same manner. This can be different in Ghana, where someone with a higher status may respond to greetings but in a different way. For example you may greet someone ‘good morning’ and he may respond ‘fine’. This does not indicate that the person is not being polite or does not know how to behave. It is just conventional in the Ghanaian culture. However, if in Russia someone is not responding in the same manner, the person is considered as lacking respect or not respectful (Krilova, 2001).

The correct intonation is also very important during greetings. Greetings pronounced with rude or cold tone may hurt someone's feelings. Greetings should be clear and relatively loud. These are general in Russia and Ghana. However, there are some differences in non-verbal communication during greetings. When we greet someone, verbal communication takes place most of the time. Some non-verbal gestures, such as smile, nod, hug or kiss etc, are used in Ghana and in Russia. In Ghana as in Russia men shake hands, but in Ghana women also do it as well. If there are more people around, one should start shaking and greeting from the right to the left. Another difference is that, Ghanaians will only hug each other, if they are good friends or have not met for a long time. While in Russia friends may give 2-3 kisses to the cheek of each other. In Ghana nobody will kiss someone's hand. The opposite prevails however in Russia where a man can kiss a woman's hand, though this tradition is becoming an old-fashioned.)

It is also worthy of note, that both in Ghana and Russia 'simple' greeting can be followed by a set of phrases and questions about someone's life, health, children etc. However, comparison and analysis of these can be a subject of further researches.

## Conclusion

As has been shown, teaching culture as part of teaching foreign language is very important and the dynamic nature of culture should not be lost in the process. In classrooms the native culture of the students and their cultural differences should be known and respected by teachers. It helps all participants to pick up the foreign language and its culture as well. If the socio-cultural competence of the learner is well established and developed during the language teaching process, one can be almost equal with the native speakers in the cultural aspects. But at the same time it should be noted that, although etiquette as part of culture is fixed the norms are always changing. Finally, the main aim of foreign language teaching and learning is to communicate, to understand and to be understood. To achieve these objectives, the teaching of culture and language etiquette plays a major role.

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