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CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS A MEANS OF INTENSIFICATION

The aim of the given article is to cast the light on the problem of cultural competence and intercultural awareness as a means of intensifying the teaching process. The main content of cross-cultural communication and the aims in teaching cross-cultural communication have been specified. The article claims that intercultural communication has become one of the themes of modern society which calls for emergence of culture teaching. The teaching of culture should become an integral part of foreign language teaching.

Key words: *cultural knowledge, cultural competence, teaching a foreign language, highlight the difference, overcome cultural barriers, successful communication, stimulate intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness.*

There is an urgent need for upgrading the system of teaching foreign languages in high school. The problem of improving teaching in higher education puts forward certain tasks for the teachers of foreign languages. Among them are: the necessity to increase the intensity of the educational process, to develop interest to the subject through cultural competence and cultural awareness, to activate learning and independent activity of students, to increase the efficiency effect of all training activities in close connection with cultural, scientific, educational and professional objectives of the study. Anthropologists and other behavioral scientists believe that culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns [1, p. 50].

Thus, the role of culture in teaching process has been given more and more attention for the last years. Scientists come to the conclusion that cultural aspect plays an indispensable role in teaching and learning foreign languages. Successful cross-cultural communication requires both linguistic competence and cultural competence. Insufficient cultural knowledge may in some way lead to misinterpretation of facts, misunderstanding between interlocutors and even conflicts of cultures. The learners of the foreign language must very well understand that there is a whole range of differences characterizing the communicants of different cultures. Teaching cultural competence and awareness is closely connected with learning to compare different cultures, modes and patterns of behavior. This will enable the students to broaden their linguistic horizons as well as to maintain successful communication. To reach this aim teachers should impart on their students the necessity to differentiate between their own culture and the culture of the people whose language they are mastering. Students must learn to take into account some paralinguistic factors of communication, such as age, sex, social status, the part of the country people reside, etc. Another way to overcome difficulties in cross-cultural communication is to consider the most generally accepted or recognized patterns of people's behavior, to learn the words and phrases used as clichés and to learn idiomatic expressions and set phrases which might prevent them from free understanding of the foreign language. Teachers are supposed to motivate their students to consider all important cultural aspects in order not to fail while communicating in a foreign language.

It seems very essential to implement cultural awareness in teaching process. With this purpose teachers need to provide their students with the sort of intellectual challenge – the information concerning the culture of the people whose language is taught. This may acquire different forms like watching films, listening to the recordings, reading articles, getting acquainted with the works of literature and art, conducting discussions, role playing,

round tables, etc. Teachers may want to draw their students' attention to some things which do seem somewhat bizarre or to some legends and myths connected with a certain culture, whose aim is to avoid misunderstanding and be equipped with background knowledge. Teaching cultural awareness must necessarily have a systemic character otherwise students will fail to see its importance in learning a foreign language.

Cultural awareness presupposes the following parameters:

1) knowledge of everyday life which involves the ability to socialize in various routine situations such as in the post office, at the airport, in a shop, at the customs or at the conference; the ability to maintain the conversation on various topics, like talking about the weather, your family, fashion, fast food, etc.

2) the ability to differentiate idioms, set phrases and to find their equivalents in their mother tongue so as to avoid misinterpretation.

3) knowledge of general culture including history, literature, arts, etc.

The intercultural communication has become one of the themes of modern society, which calls forth emergence of culture teaching. According to discourse approach to intercultural communication each person is situated within more than one discourse in any given time [3, p. 76].

The main direction in the activity of higher school teacher presupposes improvement of the quality of teaching foreign languages and strengthening the connection of teaching with advanced science, production and social practice through cultural competence and cultural awareness. At the present stage, only the joint collective efforts of psychologists, teachers, trainers allow educators to develop the most effective system of learning based on specific requirements to the types of speech activity: speaking, listening, reading and writing, namely:

a) fluency in speaking, achieving the necessary communicative competence in the most common situations of communication – establishing and maintaining contact in conversation, the motivation of the student to a response. The speech must be clear and phonetically correct, designed from the point of view of phonetic peculiarities of the target language;

b) listening skills involve full understanding of text and the adequate response to it, the ability to extract meaningful information;

c) the level of proficiency in reading in a foreign language implies the achievement of necessary competencies which provide the student with the ability to read authentic texts of different functional styles of the language. Reading should be done with full understanding of the content of the text, highlighting the main thoughts and ideas. The tempo of reading should match the tempo of reading in the native language;

g) possession of the writing skills of a student should be at the level providing the ability to fill out forms, write letters, essays, reports, lectures, translate texts without significant distortion.

Modern innovation processes underlying the system of higher education modernization, necessitate revision of all the components of teaching university students process. Significant transformations are taking place in the sphere of language education, aimed at shaping a new generation of linguists [4, p. 246].

The teacher should act as the author, developer, researcher, user and promoter of new ideas, theories and concepts. It stands to reason that a teacher must necessarily be aware of the cultural issues of language teaching and plan his work accordingly. The creation of artificial foreign environment is one of the factors activating learning activities in the classroom where a foreign language is taught and learnt. When learning a foreign language, professionally oriented technologies must play an important role – the teacher is expected to take into account the factor of creation of the foreign environment. It was established experimentally that this factor creates a situation where the student, being placed

in a foreign environment, is forced to seek resolution of all communicational problems through the use of knowledge of a foreign language. The peculiarity of the process of teaching foreign languages at present is the lack of the original foreign language environment. Due to the fact that in the classroom the students mostly hear only the speech of the teacher, the latter should model his speech close to the original. To stimulate students to really focus on the semantic content of the foreign speech, its content should always be new and interesting. Immersion into foreign language environment must be achieved progressively and to give students maximum enjoyment.

Communication in the classroom where a foreign language is learnt is divided into types and can be educational, imitative, simulating (mimetic) and authentic, i.e., genuine. To be efficient, the teacher should create a subjective relationship between himself and students. In this case, the teacher becomes a partner in communication, a participant in a joint creative activity in the field of information and in implementation of language means and sources of important and interesting information. He must assist in a challenging work on the subject. Joint search of problem solution will promote stimulating intellectual activity of students and increasing the work efficiency. A simulating type of communication is highly recommended to start learning a foreign language with, because it lays the foundation of communicative competence of students. The purpose of this type of communication is twofold – the experience of everyday communication and acquiring cross-cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness on the basis of which the norms and the culture behavior of communicants are established. Simulating in communication is primarily motivated by cognitive principals: exploring the characteristics of communication between native speakers in terms of linguistic and socio-cultural aspects and interest in the depicted communicative acts. To achieve this purpose it is necessary to create a situation similar to the real life in which the students perform different social roles. The aim of this communication is to involve students into active interest and study of the life of the country of the target language. The act of communication is motivated by interest in the content of the depicted scenes and the desire to play their role well. The methods of oriented technology are: dramatization, sketch and role-play. Dramatization – role playing of certain scenes is considered the easy simulation of communication as theme and plot are set in advance, the students only need to employ them in an act of speech. The sketch is prepared in advance and is based on a scene suggested by the teacher and involving problematic situation with the indication of characters, their social statuses and role behavior. The fact that the sketch and dramatization are prepared in advance, enables the teacher to activate rich language material on the one, and on the other hand – this enables the student sound natural. Role play is characterized by freedom and spontaneity of speech and non-speech behavior of the characters. Role-play can represent a single communicative act (introduction, greetings, shopping, etc. – resorting to speech etiquette), as well as a complex communicative act consisting of a series of elementary communication acts united by a common communicative purpose and situation. The outcome of the game is the solution of the problem. Cross-cultural competence and cross-cultural awareness seems indispensable for conducting successful communication acts. Simulative communication teaches natural communication in a foreign language, helping to recreate various situations of everyday life and the communicants themselves determine their role behavior.

The speech of students and the creation of artificial foreign language environment makes communication more natural. Such communication acquires a certain minimum of authenticity, i.e. students begin to speak like natives. Thus, one of the characteristics of the authenticity in the English language is a restraint in the description of anything or anyone and the use of euphemistic expressions as the English tend to avoid «calling

a spade a spade» and prefer to resort to evasive statements and words. For example, if you want to say that the movie is bad, English people usually use the phrase: «This is not the best film I've seen». Widely used euphemisms, i.e. mild expressions are a feature of modern culture. The authenticity of the speech is inseparable from the authenticity of the behavior. It is essential to get acquainted with some rules of behavior that characterize native speakers. To achieve this, acting out typical situations (talking on the phone, use of services, etc.) seems very useful. This strategy of teaching foreign languages involves the actual immersion of students in authentic language environment.

The purpose of teaching foreign languages involves first and foremost teaching cross-cultural communication which promotes understanding between the communicants. When learning a foreign language students acquire the means of communication in order to acquire direct access to the values of the world culture, especially cultural values of the country of the target language – its history, geography, science, literature, and art. Mastering a foreign language is associated not only with cultural awareness, but also with the formation of the ability to understand the mentality and psychology of native speakers as well as their national peculiarities. Cross-cultural misunderstanding / misinterpretation is in the least degree provoked by linguistic mistakes, but in a much more extent – by strategic errors in communication connected with the ignorance of cultural aspects. Under the existing conditions of modern life learning a foreign language requires, first of all, functional approach to its learning. It is necessary not only to know how to implement the language means on practice – that is to construct utterances and texts in a foreign language, it is as much essential to be able to respond to the native speakers' cultural characteristics appropriately. Cultural issues of foreign language teaching are not connected only with educational purposes but they also reveal specific practical purposes. One of the most important tasks of the teacher is the necessity to develop socio-cultural component in the content of foreign language teaching. First and foremost students must know facts from their own cultural patterns of behavior, possess background knowledge as far as history, art, political system, economic situation in their own country is concerned. This will enable them to learn to compare since only in this case students will become aware of the peculiarities of world perception by representatives of other cultures. When learning a foreign language the learner is faced with a number of facts related not to the vocabulary used, grammar rules to follow, phonetic peculiarities or style, but rather to the areas of historic, social, domestic environment. Correct use or understanding of some words or phrases sometimes presupposes knowledge of their origin, the situations in which they can be used, or basic information from history, literature, political reality of the country of the target language. Knowledge about the culture, history, facts and traditions fosters a positive attitude to foreign languages and provokes curiosity to the culture of the people whose language is learnt.

No doubt, lack of cultural competence can be a real barrier in understanding between the communicants. In order to overcome it, it is necessary to prepare students for real communication in a foreign language with native speakers of the language. There exist several methodological approaches which found its practical implementation – linguistic, linguo-cultural, socio-cultural, cross-cultural. Socio-cultural awareness is the ability to perform interpersonal and intercultural communication resorting to the knowledge of national cultural characteristics of one's own country and the country / countries of the target language. It involves the knowledge about the importance of native and foreign languages in the modern world, the information on socio-cultural portrait of the world, its symbolism and cultural heritage. What plays an important role is – common vocabulary and the realities of the country of the target language: traditions: ways and habits, common samples of folklore (tongue twisters, sayings, proverbs, idiomatic expressions); representation

of the similarities and differences in the traditions of the country and the countries of the target language; the ability to recognize and implement the knowledge on practice – orally and in writing, in formal and informal situations of communication.

Socio-cultural competence is the willingness and ability to conduct dialogue of cultures which implies the knowledge of one's own culture and the culture the country of the language learnt. The cultural background of the language is so important and a language cannot be studied in isolation from cultural issues, that is, only as a set of lexical units and grammar rules. One of the tasks of teachers of foreign languages is to get students acquainted with the generally accepted rules and norms of behavior of native speakers as well as of their culture.

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КУЛЬТУРНА КОМПЕТЕНЦІЯ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИМ МОВАМ ЯК ЗАСІБ ІНТЕНСИФІКАЦІЇ

Стаття торкається проблеми культурного знання та культурної компетенції (обізнаності) у викладанні іноземної мови як засобу інтенсифікації у викладанні іноземних мов, Автор пропонує шляхи і методи підвищення культурної компетенції у студентів та засоби подолання міжкультурних перепон з метою вільного володіння іноземною мовою. Викладання культури має стати невід'ємною частиною навчання іноземної мови.

На думку вчених, процес підвищення культурної обізнаності має бути спрямований на вирішення наступних завдань: 1) допомогти студентам розвивати розуміння того, що всі люди мають культурно-зумовлені моделі поведінки; 2) допомогти студентам розвинути розуміння соціальних чинників, таких як вік, стать, соціальний клас, місце проживання, ситуація, в яких відбувається акт комунікації і які безпосередньо впливають на цей акт; 3) допомогти студентам підвищити їхню обізнаність про культурні конотації слів і фраз; 4) допомогти студентам розвинути здатність оцінювати і переробляти узагальнення про цільову культуру, застосовуючи докази; 5) допомогти студентам розвинути необхідні навички пошуку та систематизації інформації про об'єкти культури; 6) стимулювати інтелектуальну зацікавленість щодо культури людей, мова яких вивчається.

Великою проблемою є подолання міжкультурних комунікативних бар'єрів. Часто комуніканти відчують розчарування після спілкування з людьми, що належать до інших культур. Ця проблема може виникати саме через те, що група, до якої належить особа, є «іношою». Нерозуміння відбувається через припущення про схожість. Багато людей припускають, що між людьми світу існує достатня

подібність, яка полегшує спілкування. Вони очікують, що потреба людини в їжі, притулку, безпеці тощо, є спільною і достатньою, для того щоб зблизити їх, або навіть зробити усіх однаковими. На жаль, вони не помічають того факту, що форми адаптації до загальних біологічних та соціальних потреб, а також цінностей, переконань та ставлення до них значно відрізняються у різних культурах. Нерозуміння також відбувається через різницю між мовами. Словник, синтаксис, ідіоми, сленг, діалекти і т. д. створюють додаткові труднощі. Існують і інші мовні проблеми, наприклад, стилі використання мови. Різні стилі можуть призвести до неправильного тлумачення намірів та оцінок серед комунікантів. Іншою причиною непорозуміння є уявлення та стереотипи, особливо останні перешкоджають об'єктивному сприйняттю інших людей. Мовні бар'єри нелегко подолати, оскільки вони міцно укорінені як міфи з власної національної культури. Тенденція до оцінки є наступним фактором, який викликає непорозуміння. Замість того, щоб намагатися осмислити думки та почуття від сприйняття світогляду інших, ми припускаємо, що наша власна культура або спосіб життя є найбільш природними. Це упередження перешкоджає відкритості, необхідній для вивчення ставлення та поведінки з точки зору інших.

Викладання культури має стати невід'ємною частиною навчання іноземної мови. Культура повинна бути нашим посланням студентам та мовою нашого середовища. Викладачі іноземної мови повинні оволодіти знаннями, що містяться в навчально-методичному матеріалі, повністю та глибоко. Вони мають стимулювати у студентів внутрішні мотиви та викликати зацікавленість. Створення внутрішнього мотиву спонукає студентів взяти на себе ініціативу в навчанні. Для того, щоб отримати достатній рівень міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності, студентам потрібно опанувати довідкову культурну інформацію в процесі вивчення мови. Вони можуть навчитися закономірностям повсякденного життя у цільовій культурі та застосовувати їх на практиці, беручи участь у інформаційно-орієнтованих заходах. Це дозволить їм дізнатися про сучасний спосіб життя у цільовій культурі та порівняти цей спосіб життя з власним, щоб знайти подібності та відмінності.

Таким чином, студенти можуть краще підготуватися до повсякденного спілкування, з яким вони можуть зіткнутися, покращити навички, необхідні для ефективного спілкування, а також підвищити рівень обізнаності та чутливості у сфері культурної компетенції.

Ключові слова: культурне знання, культурна компетенція, міжкультурні перепони, міжкультурне спілкування, іноземна мова, соціокультурна інформація, стимулювати інтелектуальну зацікавленість, культурна свідомість, подолання комунікативних бар'єрів.

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A. Mustakas

LANGUAGE INVESTIGATION FROM THE PSYCHOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

The article deals with the problem of language investigation from the psycholinguistic perspective. Psycholinguistic is determined as a combination of two older sciences, linguistics and psychology. The author focuses on relatively new study psycholinguistics and states language research implementation of a set of specific parameteres and certain factors such as