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## **TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACTS**

**Annotation:** A foreign language is not only a tool for communication between representatives of different nations, but also representatives of different cultures with different mentalities, habits and customs. Therefore, when studying a foreign language, it is important to understand not only its structure and grammatical features, but also the cultural and psychological characteristics of the speakers of the language being studied. This article reveals not only the specifics of teaching students of non-linguistic specialties of higher education institutions a foreign language, but also the importance of competent intercultural communication of students in the language being studied.

**Keywords:** foreign language, intercultural communication, communication skills, native speaker, culture, society, everyday life, speech constructions, cultural differences

**Introductions.** The new time and conditions for the development of society and the process of globalization of society required an immediate and radical revision of both the general methodology and specific methods and techniques of teaching foreign languages. These new conditions: rapid changes in politics, economics, culture, ideology, mixing and movement of peoples and languages, changes in relations between Ukrainians and foreigners, completely new goals for communication – all this poses new problems in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages.

Modern students, when they are asked about why they study foreign languages, are increasingly saying something like “Because I want to talk with foreign colleagues”, “Because I want to work abroad or with a foreign company” or “Because I need to call foreign customers”. These are answers that indicate the use of foreign languages in the professional field.

The unprecedented demand for learning foreign languages demanded an unprecedented supply. Therefore, teachers of foreign languages were in the center of public attention. A huge number of specialists in various fields of science, culture, business, technology and all other areas of human activity required immediate training in foreign languages as an instrument of production. They are not interested in either theory or the history of the language – foreign languages, primarily. They need English only functionally, for use in different spheres of society as a means of real communication with people from other countries.

But we should remember that the study of a foreign language in the conditions of complete isolation and the absolute impossibility of real acquaintance with the world of the language being studied and the practical use of the knowledge gained, as it was in the previous education system of our country, was an ineffective process. Therefore, at the higher school level, we understand foreign language teaching as a means of communication between specialists from different countries not as a purely applied and highly specialized task of teaching physicists the language of physical texts, geologists - geological, etc. A university specialist is a well-educated person who has fundamental training. Accordingly, the specialist's foreign language of this kind is both an instrument of production, and part of culture, and a means of humanizing education. All this implies fundamental and versatile language training.

**Aim.** The purpose of the paper is to recognize the importance of studying foreign languages concerning the mentality and the culture of native speaker and to define the ways of such studying.

**Materials and methods.** The level of knowledge of a foreign language by a student is determined not only by direct contact with his teacher. In order to teach a foreign language as a means of communication, you need to create an atmosphere of

real communication, establish a connection between the teaching of foreign languages and life, and actively use foreign languages in live, natural situations. It can be scientific discussions in the language with the involvement of foreign specialists and without it, abstracting and discussion of foreign scientific literature, reading individual courses in foreign languages, students participating in international conferences, translator work, which consists precisely in communication, contact, and ability to understand and convey information. It is necessary to develop extra-curricular forms of communication: clubs, circles, open lectures in foreign languages, scientific societies for interests, where students of different specialties can gather.

So, highly specialized communication through written texts does not at all exhaust language skills as a means of communication, a means of communication. The maximum development of communication skills is the main, promising, but very difficult task facing teachers of foreign languages. To solve it, it is necessary to master new teaching methods aimed at developing all four types of language proficiency, and fundamentally new teaching materials with which you can teach people to communicate effectively. In this case, of course, it would be wrong to rush from one extreme to the other and abandon all the old methods: from them it is necessary to carefully and carefully select all the best, useful, tested by teaching practice.

The main answer to the question of solving the urgent task of teaching foreign languages as a means of communication between representatives of different peoples and cultures is that languages should be studied in inextricable unity with the world and culture of peoples speaking these languages. To teach people to communicate, to learn to produce, create, and not just understand foreign speech is a difficult task, because communication is not just a verbal process. Communication also involves knowledge and understanding of the conditions and culture of communication, etiquette, knowledge of non-verbal forms of expression, i.e. facial expressions and gestures.

Overcoming the language barrier is not enough to ensure effective communication between representatives of different cultures. To do this, overcome

the cultural barrier. National-specific features of the most diverse components of cultures - communicants may be a reason of difficulties in the process of intercultural communication. Most scientists consider the components of culture that bear a nationally specific colour include at least the following [4, p. 2] [5, p. 127]:

- a) traditions, as well as customs and rites;
- b) everyday culture, closely connected with traditions, as a result of which it is often called traditional-everyday culture;
- c) everyday behavior (habits), as well as mimic and pantomimic codes associated with it, used by carriers of some linguistic and cultural community;
- d) “national pictures of the world”, reflecting the specifics of perception of the world, national characteristics of thinking of representatives of a particular culture;
- e) an artistic culture reflecting cultural traditions one or another ethnic group.

Also in intercultural communication, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the national character of the communicants / speakers / speakers, the specifics of their emotional state, and the national - specific characteristics of thinking.

In the new conditions, with the new formulation of the problem of teaching foreign languages, it became obvious that a radical increase in the level of teaching communication, communication between people of different nationalities can be achieved only with a clear understanding and real consideration of the sociocultural factor.

Long-term practice of teaching living languages as dead has led to the fact that these aspects of the language were in the shadows, remained unclaimed. Thus, there is a significant gap in the teaching of foreign languages.

One of the most important and radical conditions for filling this gap is the expansion and deepening of the role of the sociocultural component in the development of communication skills. “Every cultural system and every single act of social behaviour explicitly or implicitly implies communication”. [1, p. 79]

Thus, we are already talking about the need for a deeper and more thorough study of the world of the native speakers, their culture in the broad ethnographic

sense of the word, their lifestyle, national character, mentality, etc., because the real the use of words in speech, real speech production is largely determined by the knowledge of the social and cultural life of the speaker speaking a given language. “Language does not exist outside of culture, that is, outside of a socially inherited set of practical skills and ideas that characterize our way of life.” [1, p. 79] The basis of linguistic structures are sociocultural structures.

Knowing the meanings of words and the rules of grammar is clearly not enough to actively use the language as a means of communication. You need to know as deeply as possible the world of the language being studied.

In other words, in addition to the meanings of words and grammar rules, you need to know:

- 1) when to say / write, how, to whom, with whom, where;
- 2) as a given meaning / concept, this subject of thought lives in the reality of the world of the language being studied.

The study of the world of native speakers is aimed at helping to understand the features (speech usage) of speech constructions, additional semantic loads, political, cultural, historical and similar connotations of units of language and speech. Particular attention is paid to realities, since a deep knowledge of realities is necessary for a correct understanding of the phenomena and facts related to the everyday reality of peoples speaking this language.

The definition of intercultural communication follows from the term itself: it is the communication of people representing different cultures. In the book of E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov “Language and Culture” the following definition is given: “this term refers to adequate understanding between two participants in a communicative act belonging to different national cultures” [2,p.37].

The consolidation of intercultural communication as an educational discipline was originally determined by the interests of American politicians and businessmen. An obvious problem was outlined: a simple knowledge of foreign languages could not prepare specialists for difficult communication situations when working abroad. The need was recognized not only to learn languages, but also the cultures of other

countries. The question arose about appropriate training, in which the main emphasis would be on developing practical skills and intercultural communication skills.

The date of birth of intercultural communication as an academic discipline is considered to be 1954, when the book by E. Hall and D. Trager “Culture as Communication” was published, in which the authors first proposed the term “intercultural communication” for widespread use, reflecting, in their opinion, a special area of human relations. At first, intercultural communication was formed as an interdisciplinary discipline. In the 1970s the practical nature of this course was supplemented by the necessary theoretical generalizations. As a result, it acquired the form of a classical university course, which combines theoretical principles and practical aspects of intercultural communication [3, p.164].

**Results and discussion.** In recent decades, it has become quite obvious that effective contacts with representatives of other cultures will not bring the desired result without practical skills in intercultural communication. That is why in some universities such discipline as “Intercultural communication” is included in the curriculum.

When learning intercultural communication in the process of learning a foreign language, it is necessary to take into account the so-called hidden difficulties of speech production and communication. They are due to the uniqueness of the lexical and phraseological compatibility of each word within a specific language. This specificity becomes apparent when comparing languages. Therefore, when learning foreign languages, it is important to memorize words not individually, but in natural, stable combinations. Another difficulty is the conflict between the cultural ideas of different peoples about the phenomena and objects of reality, which are indicated by the equivalent words of the corresponding languages.

One more difficulty should be mentioned. Misunderstanding in intercultural communication is often due to a violation of communicants' expectations, which is explained by cultural differences. This causes negative emotions in relation to the communicative partner and the whole culture that he represents, which makes the whole process of communication unsuccessful. We base our interpretation of the

received signals on our own life experience and culture. That is why other people's behavior, based on a different experience and culture, may be misinterpreted by us. In this case, we have anxiety, insecurity due to the inability to predict the further course of the communication process and its results.

In this regard, in addition to mastering foreign languages, it is important not only to know the principles of intercultural communication, but also to apply and improve them in practice. A specialist graduating from a university today is a comprehensively educated person with fundamental training. A foreign language for such a specialist is both an instrument and a part of culture. The professionalism of a university graduate with knowledge in intercultural communication is based not only on excellent knowledge of all aspects of the language, but also on deepening the sociocultural component in the development of communication skills.

**Conclusions.** New technologies, materials, opportunities require professionalism from a person – the ability to engage in activities at a high professional level, regardless of conditions, constantly and effectively. The concept of professionalism is not limited to the characteristics of highly skilled labour, it implies the presence of a special worldview and lifestyle.

In the modern world, the problem of mutual understanding between nations remains acute, therefore it is very important to overcome barriers in the clash of different cultures, which are caused by different historical, political, cultural differences. To enhance the role of a foreign language is necessary not only as a source of knowledge about the countries of the language being studied, but also as a source of knowledge about your country. We should remember about the inferiority and danger of a one-sided passion for the country's culture of only the language being studied. This can lead to self-denial of students from their native culture, their moral infringement and self-humiliation, underestimation of their native culture, and the formation of an inferiority complex among young people. For the English language to truly become a means of intercultural communication, it is necessary to supplement the content of the training course with a national-regional component.

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**Анотація:** Іноземна мова є не тільки інструментом спілкування між представниками різних народів, а й представниками різних культур з різними менталітетом, звичками і звичаями. Тому при вивченні іноземної мови важливо розуміти не тільки її структуру і граматичні особливості, але і культурно-психологічні особливості носіїв мови, що вивчається. Дана стаття розкриває не тільки специфіку навчання студентів немовних спеціальностей вищих навчальних закладів іноземної мови, а й важливість грамотного міжкультурного спілкування учнів мовою, що вивчається.

**Ключові слова:** іноземна мова, міжкультурна комунікація, комунікативні здібності, носій мови, культура, суспільство, повсякденне життя, мовні конструкції, культурні відмінності