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DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE THROUGH INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

In the article the author analyses how intercultural competency can provide realization of the main purpose of foreign language education, namely developing intercultural communication competence. The author concretizes the content of intercultural communication competence, its components, and frames the educational potential of intercultural communication in the development of this competence. The principal ways of through which educators can foster students to take part in intercultural communication were defined. In particular, the paper delves into study abroad programmes, study trips, exchange projects, cultural mobility, as well as ways of students' involvement in intercultural communication by means of modern technologies and in the home country environment. The discussed key approach to foreign language education with the aim to develop intercultural communication competence is experiential learning approach.

Keywords: foreign language instructor, cultural mobility; intercultural communication competence; intercultural communication; foreign language learning, experiential learning approach.

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РОЗВИТОК МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ШЛЯХОМ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО СПІЛКУВАННЯ

Проаналізовано, як міжкультурне спілкування може забезпечити реалізацію основної мети іношомовного навчання – формування міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності. Конкретизовано сутність міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності, її компонентного складу та окреслено дидактичний потенціал міжкультурного спілкування у формуванні цієї компетентності. Визначено основні способи залучення студентів викладачами до міжкультурного спілкування у процесі іношомовного навчання. Розглянуто програми навчання за кордоном, навчальні поїздки, проекти-обміни, культурну мобільність, а також способи участі в міжкультурному спілкуванні за допомогою сучасних технологій та в умовах перебування в рідній країні. Провідним підходом в іношомовному навчанні з метою оволодіння іношомовною комунікативною компетентністю визначено «навчання через досвід».

Ключові слова: викладач іноземної мови, культурна мобільність; міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність; міжкультурне спілкування; навчання іноземних мов, підхід «навчання через досвід».

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РАЗВИТИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОМУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ ПУТЁМ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО ОБЩЕНИЯ

Проанализировано, каким образом межкультурное общение может обеспечить реализацию главной цели иноязычного обучения – формирование межкультурной коммуникативной компетентности. Конкретизировано сущность межкультурной коммуникативной компетентности, её компонентного состава и указан дидактический потенциал межкультурного общения в формировании этой компетентности. Определены главные способы вовлечения студентов преподавателями в межкультурное общение в процессе иноязычного образования. Рассмотрены программы обучения за границей, учебные поездки, проекты-обмены, культурная мобильность, а также способы участия в межкультурном общении с помощью современных технологий и в условиях пребывания в родной стране. Ведущим подходом в иноязычном образовании с целью овладения иноязычной коммуникативной компетентностью определено «обучение через опыт».

Ключевые слова: преподаватель иностранного языка, культурная мобильность; межкультурная коммуникативная компетентность; межкультурное общение; обучение иностранным языкам, подход «обучение через опыт».

Intercultural communication is obviously the inevitable condition of one's educational, professional and social experience of Ukrainian students. The new generation of students should fulfill the requirements for a contemporary specialist regarding establishing intercultural connections, whether they are related to professional or other aspects of life. To become successful communicants in foreign language they must develop intercultural communication competence up to the level which will enable them to freely use the language in the context of foreign culture or in the context of different cultures interaction. Rising demands to the standards of foreign language education, the necessity of harmonious development of linguistic personality increase students' motivation to visit different countries, participate in various international programs of study, professional internships and exchanges where they experience live intercultural situations. The above mentioned grounds the importance of the research paper topic.

The purpose of the article is to analyze intercultural communication as regarded to its potential to develop students' intercultural communication competence in the process of foreign language learning.

The issues of intercultural communication competence formation have been studied by many Ukrainian and foreign scientists, such as J. Passov, S. Nikolaeva, I. Zadorozhna, H. Jelizarova, B. Freed and others.

The questions of intercultural communication from foreign language teaching perspective as well as from linguistic and sociological perspectives have been investigated in the works of O. Muratov, E. Rogers, L. Sercu, E. Banduras, P. Castro et alii. S. Greenblatt devoted his work to the problem of cultural mobility which is an educational priority in the European policies nowadays.

According to the position of specialists in the field of Foreign Language Teaching, intercultural competence includes the following knowledge, skills, attitudes and traits:

- culture specific and culture general knowledge;
- knowledge of self and other;
- knowledge of interaction: individual and societal
- insight regarding the ways in which culture affects language and communication savoirs;
- ability to interpret and relate savoir-comprendre;
- ability to discover and/or interact;
- ability to acquire new knowledge and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction;
 - metacognitive strategies to direct own learning savoir-apprendre/savoirs-faire;
 - attitude to relativize self and value others;
 - positive disposition towards learning intercultural competence savoir-e'tre;
 - general disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own savoir-s'engager [3, p. 3].

The intercultural competence builds on the communicative competence in foreign language learning and enlarges it to incorporate intercultural communicative competence, implying that communicative competence is the ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, sociolinguistically and pragmatically appropriate way.

The components of intercultural competence – *saviors* – constitute the frame of reference of the people living in a particular culture, that is the words and gestures which they use, the behaviours they display, the values they believe in, the symbols they cherish are always culture-bound and carry meaning within a particular cultural frame of reference and hence, in intercultural communication it is of paramount importance to be sensitive to potential referential differences. Apart from culture-specific knowledge, the interculturally competent person also needs to acquire a certain amount of culture-general knowledge, which will allow them to deal with a large diversity of foreign cultures [3, p. 4].

Savoir-apprendre and *savoir-comprendre* together constitute the skills and capacity to learn cultures and assign meaning to cultural phenomena in an independent way and to interpret and relate cultures.

Savoir-faire refers to the overall ability to act in an intercultural competent way in intercultural contact situations, to take into consideration the specific cultural identity of interlocutors and to act in a respectful and cooperative way.

Savoir-e'tre and *savoir-s'engager* refer to a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one's own, to the ability and willingness to abandon ethnocentric attitudes and perceptions, and the ability to establish and maintain a relationship between one's own and the foreign culture [3, p. 4–5].

The above analysis of the intercultural experience and intercultural communication competence in foreign language education suggests that intercultural learning process should be supported more effectively. Primarily, it should be implemented by tertiary level language instructors and educators.

Foreign language instructors themselves need additional professional knowledge, attitudes, competencies and skills in the insistence on the development of learners' intercultural skills, attitudes and knowledge. They need an adequate sociocultural knowledge of the target language community, frequent and varied contacts with it and a thorough command of the pragmatic rules of use of the foreign language in contexts that may be considered to belong to their professional sphere. They should understand how cultural models differ and be familiar with the levels of communication at which intercultural misunderstandings may occur, and negotiate meaning where they sense cross-cultural misunderstanding. Apart from that, instructors can foster the development of intercultural communicative competence in various ways [3, p. 5–6].

Instructors are empowered to define the objectives of foreign language education in terms of language learning and of intercultural competence acquisition.

Instructors can be skilful creators of cross-curricular learning environments that promote acquisition of intercultural communicative competence, employing teaching techniques that promote the acquisition of *savoirs*, *savoir-apprendre*, *savoir-comprendre*, *savoir-faire*, *savoir-s'engager* and *savoir-e'tre*.

Instructors can help pupils relate their own culture to foreign cultures, to compare cultures and to empathise with foreign cultures' points of view. They are knowledgeable about their pupils' perceptions of and attitudes towards the foreign peoples and cultures associated with the foreign language they teach.

Instructors can design the learning process choosing input materials with a view to modifying any wrongful perceptions learners may have.

Instructors can assess learning materials from an intercultural perspective and adjust these materials should they not allow them to achieve the aims of intercultural competence teaching.

Instructors are able to use experiential approaches to language-and-culture teaching.

With respect to attitudes, instructors ought to be favourably disposed towards the integration of intercultural competence teaching in foreign language education and willing to actually work towards achieving that goal.

Instructors of intercultural communication competence also need to be acquainted with basic insights from cultural anthropology, culture learning theory and intercultural communication.

Instructors need to be willing to teach intercultural competence and need to know how to do so.

The above suggests that instructors meet the demand to broaden students' minds through familiarizing with culture-specific information and passing that information on, yet the expectations in the intercultural domain require them to acquire quite a different and more substantial body of cultural knowledge and develop a range of new skills that will promote acquisition of intercultural competence. Nowadays instructors are supposed to already leave the traditional foreign-culture teaching approach, and to move in the direction of multicultural and intercultural teaching.

The above suggests that developing intercultural communication competence through intercultural communication should be encouraged and introduced into the language learning process by the instructors themselves as they are supposed to be the immediate driving force for the students and hence, serve primary triggers for participation in intercultural communication situations. Yet, it is possible and desirable for the students to acquire intercultural communication competence within intercultural communication framework in the autonomous learning mode as well.

Among numerous ways of immersing into intercultural communication situations there are those of particular interest and value: the ones that are easy, cheap and/or quick to create and involve

in; the ones that proved the greatest efficacy; the newly-immersing ones due to the development of information technologies. The leading approach suggested for acquiring intercultural communication competence through intercultural communication is experiential learning. In intercultural situations it offers opportunities which cannot be provided with a classroom.

Pupils can really experience the relationship between language and culture and engage in the foreign culture in a way they cannot when remaining physically inside the classroom. In most cases, experiential learning activities are viewed as taking place abroad, in the foreign country. The way in which school trips and exchange projects are conceived, however, determines to a large extent how effective in terms of intercultural competence acquisition these activities can be [3, p. 111].

One way to ensure intercultural communication experience is through *study abroad* settings, in particular – language learning abroad. This “fish-out-of-water” experience when placed in a completely different language environment is a so to say survival situation whereas a student has to implement specific communicative strategies. Study abroad programs combine language and/or content learning in a formal classroom setting along with the immersion in the native speech community [2, p. 3].

Study trips (like school trips) tend to be short in duration and very often place the students in the role of tourists; their potential for promoting intercultural skills and an intercultural identity may be limited. Such trips remain the responsibility of foreign language instructors, sometimes in co-operation with history, geography or arts educators [3, p. 111]. The particular reasons that stand behind such trips vary, but generally remain as follows. They are [3, p. 113]:

- Cultural – have new experiences, first hand experience fostering understanding of foreign country and culture; meet students from different countries; broaden horizons; learn more about themselves; challenge perceptions of their own values and cultures; become more open-minded; increase tolerance of other cultures and people, break down stereotypes; promote cultural awareness; inform others about own country; to learn a foreign language also means learning about its culture and people; direct contact with foreign culture, experience and deal with cultural diversity.

- Linguistic – practice the foreign language, part of the curriculum; understand usefulness of what is learned.

- Other – have fun; get motivated; develop group spirit, tradition; establish friendships; foster independence.

That offered by *exchange projects*, which are, generally speaking, longer in duration and involve home stays and real contacts with peers and other insiders of the foreign culture is potentially larger, on the condition that pupils have received adequate preparation. Exchange projects tend to involve educators of other subjects as well as foreign languages instructors [3, p. 111]. Interestingly, in connection with exchange projects, EU instructors also make reference to ‘European citizenship’ and ‘international understanding’ as well as to the skills dimension of intercultural competence [3, p. 115].

The effect of study trips and exchange projects on students’ perceptions and attitudes towards foreign cultures, countries and people appears such that experiential activities are mainly believed to have a positive effect, though some remarks regarding the negative effect and the reinforcement of stereotypes could also be found yet few in number due to the fact that students embark on intercultural contacts without adequate preparation. A more adequate preparation of pupils and a more thorough debriefing after having come home may contribute to diminishing the danger that students adhere to or reinforce existing stereotypes [3, p. 118].

Another specific condition for intercultural communication is conditioned by *cultural mobility*. It aims at reorienting traditional understanding and serving as a framework for new research in many fields [1, p. 2]. From sociological perspective, mobility heightens tolerance of difference and intensifies awareness of the mingled inheritances that constitute even the most tradition-bound cultural stance, but it can also provoke intense anxiety [1, p. 7]. In the context of modern language education, cultural mobility is a recent strategic priority of the EU government and particular European policies and funding are directed to realize various projects in the cultural sector. This pure real-life experience including studies and professional work in the new or strange surroundings ensures the opportunity for developing intercultural communication competence while a highly-qualified breadwinning specialist in one’s field.

Contacts with foreign cultures mentioned above appear out of travelling to foreign countries. They are effective in terms of creating environment for students to fully immerse in the language and culture of other peoples. One disadvantage of such programmes is their cost which often leaves out those students who cannot afford them.

But some contacts with foreign cultures are possible even while at home: media contacts; visits to cultural institutes representing the foreign country in one's own country; contacts with people originating from the foreign country who live in their country; contacts with foreign language assistants (usually natives from the foreign country) in one's educational institutions; or contacts with foreign teachers or pupils who visit one's educational establishments.

Contacts with foreign cultures which are possible namely due to communication technologies that are constantly being improved are of the utmost importance in the process of acquiring intercultural communication competence. They offer free access to develop instant and long-term contacts and hone one's competence individually under the only condition of possessing the necessary device and Internet access. This contributed tremendously to the all-inclusiveness of modern education and more harmonious development of intercultural qualities and skills as more and more cultures are becoming represented in the global network in different communication realms (social networking, media, chat programs, others).

Overall, the conducted research allow to conclude that developing intercultural communication competence is the primary and conclusive purpose of foreign language education and the componential content of the competence is represented by a number of specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and traits, including savoirs. In developing students' competence the most important role is performed by instructors themselves, who must acquire additional professional qualifications so that they could foster the development of intercultural communication competence in multiple ways, including the knowledge of the target language community, frequent and varied contacts with it, a thorough command of the pragmatic use of the language, understanding different cultural models, and negotiating meaning in case of cultural misunderstanding. As instructors introduce students to different forms of intercultural communication modes and intercultural situations, they may resort to study abroad settings, study trips, exchange projects and cultural mobility. Apart from these, students can engage in intercultural communication without travelling to other countries, but via the usage of information technology and contacts with foreign cultures while they are at home.

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ЗАГАЛЬНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА ВПРАВ ДЛЯ ФОРМУВАННЯ МОВЛЕННЄВИХ НАВИЧОК ВЖИВАННЯ ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИХ ЯВИЩ, ВІДБРАНИХ З АВТЕНТИЧНИХ ХУДОЖНІХ ТВОРІВ

Охарактеризовано групи вправ для формування мовленнєвих навичок вживання лінгвістичних явищ, вивчених раніше під час виконання групи вправ з набуття знань мовного матеріалу, на прикладах мовлення героїв автентичних художніх творів. Вказана група складається з одинадцяти вправ і забезпечує формування одного із структурних компонентів змісту розмовної мови – мовленнєвих навичок, тобто автоматизоване вживання мовних явищ у спрощених (навчальних) мовленнєвих умовах. Вказано, що в подальшому це надасть іншомовному мовленню природних філологічних проявів, а також