

Potapenko L. V.

*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
Teacher of Foreign Languages Cycle Commission,
Cherkasy State Business College*

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A COMPONENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

The intensification of international relations in the context of integration and globalization of modern world is increasing interest to foreign languages, especially to English as a traditionally important means of international communication. In this regard, the system of higher education receives new challenges connected with training a free, responsible, communicatively active person who realizes his/her right to choose and is able to make this choice, acting consciously and responsibly. Our century has changed the sociocultural context of the attitude towards the study of foreign languages. Their educational function and professional importance on the labour market have increased the motivation to study English as a language of international communication.

Qualitative preparation of students for the communication in a foreign language involves studying not only a language itself (its main vocabulary, idioms, spelling, syntax, etc.), but also an understanding of cultural identity and heritage, traditions and customs of its native speakers.

One of the main goals of teaching a foreign language is to develop students' communicative competences in the language they learn. It includes language competence (phonetic, grammatical, lexical and spelling), linguistic competence (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence consists of country studies and linguistic-ethnographic competencies.

Cross-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon. It includes the following components:

- Linguistic-cultural component – knowledge of lexical items with the socio-cultural semantics (e.g. greeting, forms of address and farewell in oral and written speech);
- Sociolinguistic component – knowledge of the language features of social classes, different generations, genders, social groups;
- Cultural component – knowledge of cultural peculiarities of English-speaking countries, their habits, traditions, standards of behaviour, etiquette and the ability to understand and use it appropriately in the communication process.

Cross-cultural competence is the ability to apply a set of multicultural knowledge, skills and qualities in the process of intercultural communication in the specific conditions of life and tolerance towards people of different nationalities.

The development of cross-cultural competence aims to familiarize those who study a language with the national and cultural peculiarities of speech behaviour and form their ability to use the elements of the sociocultural context for native speakers to understand them. These elements are not only geographical, cultural or historical realities, but also so-called «background knowledge» familiar to all native speakers. They include certain customs, rules, norms, social settings, conventions, rituals, stereotypes, as well as a set of nonverbal means, such as gestures or facial expressions. [3, c. 170]. This information enables an alien to join foreign culture, to comprehend it and to realize it, and often to experience it «from inside».

Cultural teaching of foreign language communication aims only to convey specific information. First of all, it is about the development of the ability to perceive others, to be aware of common features and differences between different cultures, as well as about the formation of knowledge, abilities and skills to communicate with other cultures and societies [1, c. 47].

Cross-cultural competence creates favourable conditions for successful survival and functioning in contemporary labour market.

Formation and development of students' cross-cultural competence presupposes:

- Understanding of the fact that all people show culturally conditioned behaviour;
- Realization that social differences (age, sex, social class, place of living, etc.) greatly influence the way people speak and behave;
- Formation of tolerant attitude to other cultures;
- Familiarization with conventional behaviour of representatives of different cultures in various situations;
- Realization of one's own cultural behaviour and acquiring skills to analyse it;
- Development of the ability to recognize cultural connotations and decode them;
- Improvement of students' ability to define how their own socio-cultural belonging influences their behaviour and teach them to correct their own acts according to situations.

All components of cross-cultural competence are interconnected through the concept of cultural and social contexts, and need comprehensive and complex training. The context of culture involves knowledge of realities common to all the native speakers, and the social context is knowledge of the specific social conditions of communication used in the country of the language. Therefore, cross-cultural competence is the ability of a person to

take into account knowledge of the social and cultural contexts of the country in the process of foreign language communication [3].

Language training procedure for the students of no-linguistic specialties should include several basic components:

- language units that form the language competence;
- roles, stereotypes, strategies, and tactics of communication, which constitute the pragmatic competence;
- speech material presented in the form of monological and dialogical texts in oral and written form and intended to develop the speech competence;
- as well as the obligatory country-specific material that represents the features of communication in a given culture or subculture.

Authenticity should be one of the main principles for selecting materials for reading and listening. Michael McCarthy believes that keeping the norms of linguistic communication adopted by native speakers, as well as the naturalness of the context in which language communication is conducted, contributes to more successful learning [4, с. 102].

Therefore, in modern world competence in the sphere of communication has become one of the main components of a high-level professional expertise. A modern specialist has to efficiently interact with a large variety of people and act promptly, registering the ever-changing information. That is why great importance should be given to the development of the socio-cultural competence among students in foreign language classes.

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