

CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACH TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL

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The article deals with the problem of intercultural communication teaching and significant role of culture in this process. On the base of analysis of different researches on the studied problem, the authors show the indivisible relation between language and culture, also pay attention to a comparative study of native and foreign cultures in the context of a cultural dialogue, which contributes to formation of tolerant attitude to foreign culture. In conclusion the authors emphasize that the successful foreign language communication implies both profound knowledge of the language and socio cultural aspects as well.

Keywords: cultural studies, foreign languages, secondary school

At the present time, in the modern society's conditions the importance of foreign languages studying has increased. The interest to the mastery of English as a means of communication has been raised. Due to cultural, economical and international relations' development, as a result of different cultural and national global integration, as well as tourism's and employment's sphere extension, the English language has become the language of intercultural communication. It is impossible to imagine the modern world and our life without the English language, it strongly affected it and radically changed our mind concerning the problem of communication on the whole. The number of people knowing English intensively increases. It has become the language of international relations in the sphere of economy and culture, science and education, business and policy.

Language reflects peculiarities of people's life, their traditions, customs, mentality. Language is a mirror of surrounding world, it reflects reality and creates its own image of the world, specific and unique for every nation and language, ethnic group, using the language as a means of communication [1, p. 44]. Language and culture should be studied closely to each other. Only with the help of culture it is possible to learn the language wholly, its stylistic features, phraseological aspect and apply this knowledge in intercultural communication. Studying the language and culture in close context helps prevent mutual misunderstanding, caused by differences of languages, turning a language barrier into a source of cultural mutual enrichment [2, p. 8]. Every language is a keeper of nation's history and its inheritable values, the adaptation of people to environmental conditions. The language covers the sense of fundamental, philosophical concepts, ideas, expressing the understanding the epoch's cultural basic values [3, p. 5]. This is especially important for such

a multinational and multicultural community as Kazakhstan. Intercultural communication, the necessity of understanding foreign culture values and knowledge, communication experience transfer to next generations are the guarantee of Kazakhstan's multicultural space integrity with other cultures.

The main aim of modern language education is directed to extend the borders of students worldview and attitude to the surrounding reality, to introduce new cultures colors to picture of world created with the help of native tongue and reproduced through the foreign language. The main goal of foreign language studying is the development of intercultural interaction skills of learners of using foreign language as a means of communication. The role of students socio-cultural knowledge is significant for achievement this goal. The scientific fundamentals for the development of socio-cultural competence is the cultural studies approach to foreign languages teaching. This approach is oriented on intercultural communication in the context of culture dialogue [4, p. 21]. Cultural studies approach takes into account the students cultural, ethnic and religious specific features and contributes to development their tolerant attitude to the representatives and the phenomena of a different culture. This approach also allows us to understand better our own culture and its role in the developing of the world's common cultural space [3, p. 3]. The usage of foreign languages as a means of intercultural communication is difficult without knowledge of both: native culture and the culture of studied foreign language. Co-studying of two cultures must be considered in such aspects as mentality, national character, life, vision, customs, traditions, social and communicative behavior. Cultural studies approach involves parallel acquaintance of students with the cultural facts of their native country and studied foreign language country. Native culture is an

equal component of intercultural communication. Awareness of one's own national culture is essential for the development of culture dialogue [5, p. 30–31]. The dialogue of cultures is understood nowadays as the exchange of cultural objects and activities: as exchange of images of consciousness for understanding the minds of the representatives of other culture in the detection of differences in images of one's own and other culture. According to many researchers, the studying of foreign language culture should be based on the comparative nature. Each culture is specific and unique in its own way. What is characteristic of one culture, may cause misunderstanding to representatives of other cultures and lead to cultural shock [6].

Cultural studies approach implies the formation of readiness, willingness and ability of students to see and understand the similarities and differences in cultures, to perceive the other way of life, to compare it with the national peculiarities of their native country, their nation; to rethink critically and in such a way to enrich knowledge about another culture [3, p. 6].

Comparison of cultural facts, applied at different stages of secondary school is the tool of formation of ability to reveal colorfully-expressed and culturally-meaningful information. As it was marked, many phenomena and facts that are obvious in one culture, cause confusion in other cultures. Every culture has its own laws, morality, values and rules. A comparative study of the cultural features in the context of the cultural dialogue contributes to formation of a tolerant attitude to foreign-language culture, the students ability to treat adequately to the demonstration of unknown in a foreign culture and overcome cultural stereotypes [5, p. 32].

The formation of learner's skill to reveal the meaning of a cultural phenomenon in the foreign language and compare it with the phenomenon of native culture is an important factor in understanding the foreign language culture. For example, the phrase «I am going to the drug store to buy a pen» may not seem strange and unknown for those, who know that in America at the drug store one can buy not only drugs, but also postage and stationery. The knowing of basic unekivalent vocabulary helps avoid misunderstandings in intercultural communication, which is largely due to ignorance of the socio-cultural characteristics [2, p. 9].

Green eyes in Russian sounds poetically, romantically, suggest an idea of magical eyes. The English phrase green eyes is metaphori-

cal designation of envy and contains obvious negative connotations.

One more example: the Russian phrase *чернаякошка* means as well as the English black cat, a house animal- a cat of black color. In Russian culture, according to a superstition, the black cat brings misfortune, failure. In English culture black cats-the sign of good luck, unexpected happiness, and on cards with the inscription «Good Luck» black cats sit to surprise of Russians [1, p. 63].

If to speak about the national character of British people, their main characteristic feature is conservatism: adherence of British to the traditions and customs. The tribute of tradition is shown in their special attitude towards Queen Elizabeth II, who «reigns but does not rule», however she is respected and loved by the British people. The tradition to drink five o'clock tea in the evening is observed even when British go abroad. They will never refuse double-decker buses, red mailboxes and left-side movement. And still the British consider themselves as honest, reasonable, educated people. Politeness, courtesy, observance of etiquette norms, self-control, fear of intrusion «into personal space of another person» – these are components of the national character of the British nation.

And what are the national features of American people? The main value for them is the identity of the person, the individual rights and interests are put first. Independence and self-confidence, materialism, love of freedom, friendliness, energy, openness characterize the national identity of the Americans. «American smile» is a sign of courtesy, honesty, openness, and respect for the other person. They are very sociable and always ready to help in difficult situations.

Hospitality, respect for elders, loyalty to tradition, tolerance in regard to other cultures and religions, respectful attitude to the representatives of other nations are the main features of the Kazakh national character.

Thus, we have come to the conclusion that in the national characters of different cultures there are both similarities and differences. The study of culture in the process of mastering a foreign language makes a significant contribution to the education and personality formation of the younger generation. However, the involvement of cultural component in teaching and learning foreign languages raises the motivation to learning and contributes to the main practical goal- the formation of communicative skills in foreign languages.

Cultural studies approach to teaching foreign languages creates big opportunities for enhancing and broadening students' world view values and life style, mentality, verbal and non-verbal models of communication between representatives of the native and target languages, provides the study of both: national cultures and social subcultures [5, p. 32]. Cultural studies approach in language teaching and learning plays significant role in the development of students socio cultural competence in the studied and native cultures. Comparative study of cultures helps prepare the person to real intercultural communication [5, p. 35].

Thus, we conclude that for a successful foreign language communication, one should not possess only knowledge of language, but should also have profound knowledge of studied language culture. Teaching foreign language communication in modern society implies mastery of socio cultural knowledge and skills, which are essential factor

in the practical acquisition of the language [7, pp. 120–13].

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