

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ МАТЕРИАЛОВ СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНОЙ НАПРАВЛЕННОСТИ

В статье рассматривается формирование коммуникативной компетенции студентов высших учебных заведений. Мы полагаем, что применение материалов социокультурной направленности является одним из значимых факторов повышения мотивации и формирования коммуникативной компетенции. Осознание и принятие во внимание культурных различий способствует лучшему взаимопониманию.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативная компетенция, социокультурные материалы, осознание культурных различий, мотивация, естественная манера общения.

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DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE BY MEANS OF SOCIOCULTURALLY CONTEXTUALIZED EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The article deals with the aspect of developing communicative competence of students of higher educational institutions. In our research we consider the use of socioculturally contextualized educational materials as one of the major factors to stimulate learning readiness as well as develop communicative competence. Recognizing intercultural differences will promote clearer communication.

Key words: communicative competence, sociocultural materials, sociocultural awareness, motivation, natural way of socializing.

The article deals with the aspect of developing communicative competence of students of higher educational institutions. Communicative competence is successfully formed through the effective process of incorporating relevant authentic materials into the teaching/learning process. In our research, we consider the use of socioculturally contextualized educational materials as one of the major factors to stimulate learning readiness as well as develop communicative competence. Recognizing intercultural differences will promote clearer communication. Learning a foreign language broadens the students' knowledge of the countries where this or that language is spoken and breaks down barriers.

The use of socioculturally contextualized educational materials can be very stimulating and can lead onto a great variety of activities. These materials encourage students to become involved in a variety of tasks proposed by the teacher on a different level. Assignments that involve internet research can generate the students' skills to produce a talk, a coherent utterance or a dialogue and understand the whole discourse as well as how to share information on different topics through written summaries or oral reports. These materials are also beneficial for those learners who are hesitant when using a foreign language. They learn how to express their own thoughts and ideas clearly and correctly without a fear of making mistakes. Responding to authentic materials brings learners to the real world, giving them vivid instructions in different aspects of life in other cultural environments. In terms of this, such materials could be very motivating in the classroom and while doing homework. We suggest the following ways of using socioculturally contextualized educational materials with the help of:

1) video materials (Youtube in the classroom, watching and learning new vocabulary, discussing videoclips or films);

2) media print materials (reading articles and interviews for full comprehension, skimming and scanning texts, and guided or self-guided writing or speaking/either independently or under the instructor's guidance);

3) websites (learning about famous museums, art galleries, universities, etc. and producing a talk, a dialogue, a report or presentation).

The suggested ways of using socioculturally contextualized educational materials develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills contributing to learners' perception, attention, memory, logical thinking and cultural awareness, presenting natural ways of socializing and offering proper tasks. We would like to emphasize the fact that these tasks should be used in the following way:

- the material should be used in different socioculturally contextualized contexts;
- an individual or a common group study guide (plan) should be designed;
- the student's previous language and professional experience should be analyzed;
- the teacher should realize and identify his/her student's basic needs and personal preferences;
- the student's personal interests should be taken into account and used in the teaching/

learning process;

— thought-provoking activities, such as brainstorming, debates, round-tables, virtual excursions, etc. should be used;

— motivating realistic speaking tasks should be given and “natural” situations should be modelled;

— a range of flexible, vibrant and effective intercultural workshops should be offered (project work, case-study, etc.);

— correlating areas (additional areas of study) that may be beneficial for students should be proposed;

— the given activities and tasks should encourage the students to present their own views connected with the topic or “natural” situation and motivate them to do their own research.

At the end of the class it is necessary to get the students' feedback concerning their involvement asking them to analyze all the procedures, the level of their activity, the outcomes and their success in achieving (or not achieving) certain general and specific objectives.

Activities incorporating sociocultural materials are motivating, developing creative and critical thinking skills. The use of these materials provides the optimizing of the motivational considerations in learning foreign languages revealing sociocultural peculiarities of a foreign country and serve as an effective mechanism for developing communicative competence in those who master a foreign language. The strategies we suggest enable learners to fully analyze the language structure, which in its turn can help them note the gaps in the learning process and enhance their learning readiness. Language and culture are tied closely to one another, and the incorporation sociocultural materials enable students to better comprehend people of other countries, religions, nationalities and see their cultural peculiarities.

A variety of daily and intellectual contexts differ greatly from one culture to another, often making it difficult for people from other cultures and nationalities to effectively communicate with the native speakers. Such contexts are widely presented in different authentic materials such as films, newspaper articles, educational websites on the Internet, musical materials, web logs, etc. But it is necessary to note that all these materials should be quality ones presenting current language in use and making it easier for the students to better comprehend it and communicate with the people of another language and culture.

The use of socioculturally contextualized educational materials will develop students' understanding of general cultural contexts. Besides, it will enable students to fully comprehend oral speech or a written text of another culture, advance their speaking and writing skills. It will also help students develop language fluency and maintain their communication skills. In regard to this, we consider the principle of sociocultural motivation to be a basic principle of the foreign language teaching process.

Our techniques are based on the method of incorporating relevant socioculturally contextualized educational materials into the teaching/learning process. We emphasize the role of such materials in the process of mastering a foreign language.

We believe that they serve as a perfect solution in improving multicultural misunderstanding as well as eliminating the lack of sociocultural awareness. They present a combination of various aspects of social interactions including authentic speech, every-day life situations, and traditional ways of socializing. Students who are well aware of the communication standards of another country are able to apply these norms to their language behavior. It should be noted that teaching communicative competence in a classroom has nothing to do with making students reject their own cultures and adopt another cultural identity. What teachers should do is to present some new information for their students to consider, giving them an opportunity to see how people of other cultures live, act, behave, and communicate. The students can accept and study the presented materials for the sake of better communication and appropriate behavior while being in other cultural environments. Teaching communicative competence with the help of relevant authentic materials is a way to encourage students to develop an outlook on communication in the English language. The use of these materials organically develops speech and behavior models and gives tips how to better communicate in other cultural environments. Learners of a foreign language should be supported by having at hand cross-cultural materials that encounter particular language in appropriate contexts, visual stimuli to practice everyday conversations and move through practicing patterns to free speaking and writing activities.

The sequence of implementing theoretical aspects regarding the efficiency of incorporating relevant authentic materials to promote motivational background:

- application of relevant authentic socioculturally contextualized educational materials;
- modeling «natural» situations;
- developing motivation for taking actions;
- development of the communicative competence;
- encouraging further creative activities.

We may put forward the following conclusion: teaching a foreign language through the application of relevant authentic sociocultural materials along with the traditional educational materials has demonstrated some positive practical results. The analysis of questionnaires has shown that students are willing to experience new forms of learning designed to perfect their communicative skills and broaden their cultural outlook (cultural traditions, norms of behavior, etiquette, social attributes, and other cultural aspects peculiar to a certain English speaking country). We believe the effective incorporating of relevant authentic materials into the teaching/learning process is a great resource for students who are willing to improve their knowledge of English and be able to adequately use it in other cultural environments.