

THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Torebay Gulfairuz Shynybekkyzy

1st year Master student,

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University,

Kazakhstan, Astana

Gaurieva Gulzhan Mukhametkaliyeva

Candidate of pedagogical sciences, associate professor,

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University,

Kazakhstan, Astana

Abstract

The article reveals the importance of intercultural communication, discusses the main approaches to teaching foreign languages at the present stage.

Key words: intercultural communication, dialogue of cultures, communicative competence, integrative approach.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in the cultural dimension of foreign language education, and teachers today are expected to promote acquisition of intercultural competence in their learners. In this regard, in the field of education, a difficult task has appeared - to involve students in intercultural communication, equip it with competences that would help them feel comfortable in a multicultural society.

Intercultural communication as a scientific and applied discipline deals with problems of mutual awareness: to understand others, to adequately communicate with representatives of other culture, to correctly interpret. In terms of its genesis, intercultural communication has an interdisciplinary status. It integrates the knowledge

of a number of sciences, such as cultural anthropology, linguistics, pragmalinguistics, communication theory, ethnopsychology, sociology [1, 21].

The dialogue of cultures implies knowledge of student's own culture and the culture of another language. Language is a means of communication, identification, socialization and familiarization with cultural values. A language does not only convey a message, but also has the ability to “fix and preserve” the cultural heritage of humanity. By the term culture, we understand "a certain set of significant symbols, ideas, values, customs, beliefs, traditions, norms and rules which socially acquired and translated from generation to generation." Emphasizing the unity of language and culture, E.I. Passov states that learning a culture means “to know - to be able - to create - to want”, and he considers that the last one is a main element, and it determines the motivational and moral aspect of a person as an individual personality [2,16]. According to I. I. Khaleeva, intercultural communication is a process of communication (verbal and non-verbal) between communicants who are carriers of different cultures and languages [3,11].

Learning a foreign language is an excellent means of familiarizing own culture with the culture of another nation and instilling respect and love for it.

Cultural studies are divided into the following types:

Perceptual type	Evaluation type	Analytical type
Focused on familiarity with the components of a culture, awareness of their values, giving them an individual context.	Offers a personal assessment of cultural facts, ensuring their actual relevance and an incentive to reflection.	Designed to analyze and compare the facts of native and studied cultures.

Since language and culture are interrelated, it is impossible to teach the language in isolation from the culture of the country. Language most accurately and vividly illustrates the mentality of the people, especially its culture. There are several ways of

simultaneously teaching language and culture. As an example, we propose activities “Do you know this person?” in the form of discussion, problem assignments.

“Do you know this person?”

Topic: Perception, attributions, national stereotypes. The purpose of the assignment is to identify national stereotypes and their occurrence. The exercise allows students to acquire a new knowledge about cultural-specific stereotypes. **Task content:** Participants (if there are more than nine) are invited to divide into groups. Each group (or each participant) is given one photo (different for each group). The task is to give answers to the questions posed within 10–15 min, which make it possible to compose a peculiar characteristic of the person depicted in the portrait. After that, students discuss the result of tasks.

This kind of exercise perfectly illustrates the patterns of stereotypical perception: students do not have difficulty describing the alleged aptitudes and interests of the person depicted in the portrait. If groups work with identical photographs, they will come to similar conclusions. It is necessary that portrait photos were not celebrities, but images of ordinary people who are not known to any of the students.

1. Please enter his (her) personal data:

Last Name _____

Name _____

Age _____

Nationality _____

Profession _____

2. Try to imagine ...

(a) What is most important in the life of this person?

(b) How does he (she) usually spend his free time?

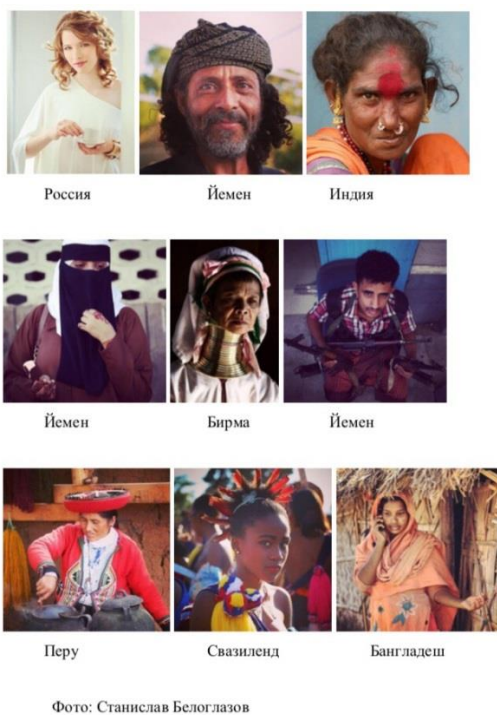
(c) What is the name of his / her favorite book?

(d) What is the name of his / her favorite movie?

(e) What will he (she) do if he wins a million dollars in the lottery?

Questions for discussion:

1. What difficulties did this task cause?
2. What exactly influenced the final answer?
3. How did you get the idea about these people?
4. What kind of external features gave an indication of the name, origin, nationality of the person depicted in the photo? What signs were not taken into account and why?
5. How reliable are the conclusions about the cultural / national identity of a person that we make on the basis of his appearance? [4, 56].



Picture 1. Portraits of different nationality

These set of exercises consisting of three blocks aimed at shaping the following skills: awareness of the cultural specifics of human behavior, awareness of the orientation system characteristic of native culture, awareness of the importance of cultural factors in the process of communicative interaction.

Summing up, we believe that the study of foreign culture helps students:

- Realize yourself as a person belonging to a certain socio-cultural community;

- Better understand the characteristics of the national character;
- Anticipate a possible misunderstanding of cultures;
- Develop such abilities as cultural impartiality, empathy, tolerance;
- Understand a different cultural reality;
- Overcome cultural stereotypes;
- Being able to participate in the dialogue of cultures.

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