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**COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING
LINGUOCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TEACHERS VIA THE COURSE “LINGUISTIC
COUNTRY STUDIES”**

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Abstract. *The article substantiates necessity of including linguistic and country study content while developing communicative competence of students; demonstrates a scheme of applying the communicative approach to developing linguocultural competence of students as a system of country-through-language knowledge, skills and motives that enable effective communication in the process of cross-cultural intercourse. The model of developing such competence is based on the principles of authenticity of linguocultural material, philological way of cognition, polychannel perception of information; and encompasses motivating (psychological), orientating (factual) and communicative (subject-oriented, pseudo-communicative, creative) stages.*

Keywords: *communicative competence, cross-cultural communication, country-through-language studies, linguocultural competence, future foreign language teachers, philological training.*

Introduction. Fully functional communication in a foreign language as a target of philological training is impossible without taking into account national specificity reflected in the language, polycultural worldview contributing to penetration into the picture of the world of a language speaker. Thus, development of foreign language communicative skills is hardly feasible out of linguocultural context which is currently realized at higher school in two ways: (1) at foreign language practical classes such as “Practice of Oral and Written speech”, “Communicative Course”, “Practicum in Speech Communication”, “Communicative Strategies”; (2) at special classes – “Linguistic Country Studies”.

As for the first case, the focus is placed upon language. Although material is selected according to the principle of authenticity, acculturation and oriented at mastering facts, norms and values of another culture, emphasis is placed on

linguistic and speech components of communicative competence without considering the other ones.

Conversely, academic discipline “Linguistic Country Studies” is often interpreted as an secondary, subsidiary one and its role in the system of developing foreign language competence is frequently understated. The notion “linguistic country studies” is commonly confused with pure “country studies” which consequently results in learning facts about nature, population, economics, education of the country. Therefore, development of communicative competence is overlooked.

“Linguistic Country Studies”, however, is a philological but not social science, its aim being learning language. Yet the language is mastered alongside the country’s culture, on authentic country-specific and culture-oriented orientation material. Linguocultural material used in the course of “Linguistic Country Studies” is represented by discourse of publicist, belles-lettres and conversational styles and mostly affects students’ emotional sphere. Unlike this, the course of “Country Studies” is built on purely encyclopedic, scientific genres and affects the cognitive sphere. Another fundamentally different feature of country-studies material is that here texts can be represented in the native language whereas linguocultural – in the target language. Even if the latter is in the native language, their aim is to focus upon linguistic units necessary for effective communication.

Review of literature. Necessity of acculturation of language learners was first raised by foreign scientists – Ch. Fries, D. Hymes, R. Lado, E. Simonet, etc. The issues of interrelation between language and culture are raised in publications of W. Humboldt, D. Gudkov, V. Krasnykh, V. Potebnya, B. Worf, V. Zhayvoronok, etc. Linguocultural principles of studying languages were first formulated in home research papers by E. Vereshchagin, V. Kostomarov, who emphasized importance of using culture-oriented material in the process of teaching Russian as a foreign language [5]. Likewise, such researchers as V. Bader, I. Korshunova, O.Kulykova, O.Palka, G. Savytska, etc. recommend focusing upon linguocultural aspect while learning Ukrainian; and V. Furmanova, O. Horodnya, R. Pavlyuk, G. Tomakhin – in the process of mastering English.

We believe that “Linguistic Country Studies”, deliberately introduced in the academic program of philologically oriented higher school as a condensed, communicatively and culturally oriented philological discipline, is a most effective precondition of developing foreign language communicative competence taking into account its entire structural elements – linguistic, speech, discourse, strategic, cross-cultural and, most importantly – linguocultural competence. Linguocultural competence is a system of country-through-language knowledge, skills and motives that enable effective communication in the process of cross-cultural intercourse. [3]

“Linguistic Country Studies” is aimed, firstly, at teaching language and specificities of national culture via the language; secondly, at developing foreign language competence as an ability of adequate perception of interlocutor’s speech or original texts and producing own communicative acts. The object of the discipline is linguistic units most brightly rendering national specificities of the country whose language is learnt: culture-specific, non-equivalent vocabulary (units denoting object and notions typical of the culture of one nation and not typical of others, e.g. *Apache, bushel, glimpse*), connotative (units whose semantics has a stylistic feature different from a corresponding unit of the native language, e.g. *the Volga, Ivan*) and background vocabulary (units whose lexical meaning coincide, while their semantic parts contain additional information about the target culture, e.g. *school, college*). The mentioned units can and must be learnt to achieve the principle aim of the discipline – to develop students’ communicative competence.

Hence, **research aim** is to demonstrate efficacy of the model of developing foreign language communicative competence of students via the discipline “Linguistic Country Studies”.

Methods and materials. Twenty two students specializing in teaching the English language and literature at secondary school, and ten – French – at the Department of Foreign Languages department of South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University (Odesa, Ukraine) and Izmail State Humanitarian University (Izmail, Ukraine) (Academic Bachelor Degree Program) correspondently participated in approbation of the model elaborated. To determine the initial level of culture-oriented knowledge we applied tests “Test your Sociocultural Competence” [4, p. 412-418], «Tests D’Evaluation de La Civilisation Progressive. Intermediate» [2, c. 37-43], which demonstrated that 11% of students have a high, 23% - medium and 49% - sufficient level of the knowledge mentioned; almost a fifth of the respondees testified quite approximate, episodic knowledge, i.e. demonstrated a low level. The methods of initial and further research are modeling, observation, experiment, testing, questionnaire.

Discussion. To reach the set aim we introduced the model of developing foreign language communicative competence in the process of studying the discipline “Linguistic Country Studies” (Table 1).

Table 1
The model of developing foreign language communicative competence via the discipline “Linguistic Country Studies”

Categories	Contents
PRINCIPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-cultural communication (content exchange between agents of different cultures); - Authenticity of culture-oriented information (use of original, clear to natives materials reflecting national specificity of the people); - Philological way of cognition (exploring national specificity via its language); - Polychannel way of information perceiving.
WAYS AND TECHNIQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication with native speakers (in speaking clubs, or on special internet-sites designed for communication with peers from other countries, e.g. sharedtalk.com, easylanguageexchange.com, hellotalk.com, etc.) - Reading texts of belles-lettres and publicist genres; - Work with video material: feature, documental films and commercials; - Work with texts of small genre, songs, poems.
STAGES	<p>1.MOTIVATING (psychological): introductory presentation based on authentic culture-oriented audio and visual material to form a positive attitude to cultural specificities of the country and the atmosphere of interest.</p>
	<p>2.ORIENTATING (factual):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientating lecture-review with pointing out content knots on the theme; - Feedback (test checking of mastering culture-oriented material on the theme; writing essays).

	<p>3.COMMUNICATIVE</p> <p><u>Subject-oriented:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group work with two-way (linguocultureme – its definition) cards made by students; - Explanation, description or individual searching for words-realia and paremic units on the theme. <p><u>Pseudo-communicative:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translation, research work and discussion on the issues of publicist texts; - Work with authentic dialogues of conversational genre (tapescripts of real-life conversations); analysis and staging of thematic talks; - Work with maps, photos, reproductions of paintings (role play) <p><u>Creative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion of the ideas and linguoculturemes represented in extracts from belles-lettres works, e.g. “Ellis Island as a representation of The American Dream” (“The Shoemaker’s Wife” by A. Trigiani), “Image of the French Woman in novels by A. Gavalda”, “France as a community of consumers” (“99 Franks” by F. Beigbeder), etc. - Presentation of projects on linguocultural themes, e.g. “The largest rivers of the USA – what’s behind their names? (etymology and brief description)”; “Description of American geography, flora and fauna in literature (J. London, J. Verne, T. M. Reid, etc.)”, “Paris dans la literature et la peinture” .
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Results. Organization of studies due to the suggested model attested to the increase of the quality of training, i.e.:

1.Final assessment of educational progress testified that 28% of students reached a high level of mastering material, 53% – medium, which is totally four times as much as the number of the students who demonstrated the sufficient level (there are only 19% of them).

2.Current assessment of students’ progress was performed according to the criteria of the development level of foreign language communicative competence suggested in the Common European Framework of Reference [1] – linguistic (vocabulary, orthographic, phonological control, grammar accuracy), speech (overall listening, reading comprehension, overall spoken interaction, sustained monologue, public announcement, overall written skills); sociolinguistic, pragmatic (flexibility, thematic development, coherence) criteria. The students’ reflection indicate that such assessment focuses on linguistic but not regional orientation of the discipline which naturally influences the quality and level of motivation of students of philological educational bias, and enhances complex development of foreign language communicative competence.

Conclusion. Linguocultural orientation of teaching foreign languages enhances comprehending and admission of national specificity of a culture, formation of culturological competence as a component of foreign language communicative competence. On the other hand, philological and communicative bias in culturological disciplines like “Linguistic Country Studies” increases motivation, enhances cognitive activity of students majoring in teaching foreign languages since it consistently forms linguistic background similar to the one that is kept in a native’s consciousness. The suggested model proved effective as an educational system, which nevertheless does not claim to be universal and complete. Our further research is aimed at developing an academic module on forming written component of the linguocultural competence via the course “Linguistic Country Studies”.

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