

COMPARATIVE TECHNOLOGY OF FORMING STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. *The article is devoted to the solution of the problem of forming students' social and cultural competence in a foreign language in the university educational process. The problem is regarded in the context of preparing students of non-philological specialties for work in cooperation with representatives of other nationalities. Comparative technology of forming students' social and cultural competence suggested by the author is theoretically grounded and described.*

Keywords: *comparative technology, non-philological students, social and cultural competence in a foreign language.*

For Ukraine redefining the contours of learning, teaching and research means modernization of the system of education which comprises not only wide implementation of informative and communicative technologies, but also positive changes in students' attitude towards learning, effective combination of theory and practice, introduction of new approaches to teaching, transition from reproductive to productive learning. All these will make it possible to transform our national education from massive to really high quality education and prepare creatively thinking, responsible and hardworking specialists competitive at the international labor market.

As soon as Ukraine is integrated in the European and world educational process and labor market it becomes necessary to prepare university students for international cooperation, for productive functioning in a team work with representatives of other nations and different cultures. That is why problems of forming students' social and cultural competence are becoming urgent. The ways of their solution attract more and more attention of scientists, researchers, and foreign language teachers.

The main questions of forming students' social and cultural competence in the process of teaching English were researched by foreign and Ukrainian scientists (V.Safonova, N. Sura, P. Sysoev, A.Tomakhin, L.Morska and others) on different levels. In most cases they considered future philologists, teachers of English or interpreters while students of other specialties were not taken into account. In this article we are going to discuss the problems of forming social and cultural competence of non-philological students in the process of teaching English.

So *the aim of the article is*: to introduce the comparative technology of forming students' social and cultural competence in a foreign language; to describe the main positions of the comparative technology; to highlight the specifics of usage of the comparative technology in the process of teaching English to students of non-philological specialties.

The notion 'comparativism' (from Latin *comparativus* – to compare) exists in scientific literature in regard to comparative grammar, psychology, and law science. The Encyclopedic Dictionary gives the definition of a comparative and historical method in linguistics as a 'system of the research methods which are used for stating the common and differing features of languages' [7, p.621].

Theoretical principles of the comparative technology are based on the research in pedagogy, psychology, and methods of teaching foreign languages. In scientific works of A.Veselovski, V. Zhyrmunski, M.Conrad (Russia), F.Baldansperge and P.Van Tigam (France), V.Friderikh and P. Wallec (USA) common features and contradictions among literary events in different cultures are researched. It is stated that similarities in traditions, customs, life styles, communicative behavior as well as in the languages mostly occur in neighboring regions or when the people who inhabit the nearest territories originated from the same or very close forebears. Differences in social life and culture are found when peoples belong to different religions, live far from each other, depend on various natural conditions which sometimes are very specific [1]. Comparative technology is widely used in pedagogy for comparison of different systems of professional training of specialists in European countries and in the USA. With the help of this technology the results of usage of various approaches to teaching are analyzed. The quality of university education which can be defined with help of the comparative technology is based on the state standards.

According to V.Safonova, theoretical grounds of the comparative technology for building fruitful dialogue and successful exchange of information suppose taking into consideration the following positions: coefficient of descriptiveness of the proposed material; different blocks of selecting, filtering and ciphering (deciphering) information at different subjects of the educational process; pragmatic needs and their values for every student; level of the development of tolerant attitude towards other people [5].

The main tendencies of working out the comparative technology for forming social and cultural competence of non-philological students in the process of teaching English are determined by social and psychological aspects of activating the process of studying at higher school. While developing the comparative technology of forming social and cultural competence of non-philological students all necessary components of any pedagogical technology were taken into consideration: defining the targets of teaching, planning the

process, its organization, control and assessment of the results and their analyzing, making corrections (if necessary).

Implementation of the comparative technology for forming social and cultural competence of non-philological students has its own specifics: traditionally the linguists' efforts were concentrated on the description of the rules of usage of the language structures, i.e. the grammar of the language. Now when in the results of changing of the international situation we require reconsidering the roles of grammar and the person's ability and developed skills of communication in a foreign language, it becomes clear that sometimes for mutual understanding and future cooperation the knowledge of social or cultural peculiarities of a business partner is more important than knowledge of grammar rules. Practical aim of implementation of the comparative technology besides modeling of speech activity in a foreign language also implies development in students such features as rationalism, practice and respect to law. Without these personal characteristics it would be rather difficult for our university graduates to compete on the international labor market.

O. Zabolotska in her research proves that in the process of the comparative technology implementation into practice of teaching English it is necessary to use active methods of teaching: work in small groups, discussion, brainstorming, case method, simulations, presentations, role plays etc. Such methods give every student a chance to take an active part in different kinds of work and use their knowledge and communicative skills according to the level of their development [2, p. 24].

Based on the advantages and possibilities of the comparative technology we propose to use authentic texts at the English classes. Such texts should be represented by not only abstracts from literary works but also by newspaper articles, advertisements, reports, and choose topics for discussion according to the interests of the young people. The topics can be connected with everyday life of English or American students, family affairs, entertainment, and other elements of so called youth subculture. Effective can be work with idioms, proverbs and sayings because they introduce the national mentality, moral values of the people, and their attitude to different spheres of life. From the viewpoint of the developing students' social and cultural competence good results give such kinds of work as interview, search for new or additional information, writing letters or essays.

Now in accordance with the new Program of Teaching Professional English the process of learning the language material is accompanied by the country-study material [4]. Although in many cases this process is based on the factual approach, and students are often overloaded with facts about the country which language they are learning (the area in square kilometers, percentage of

different branches in economics, composition of the population etc.) For many students the culture and social life of people in the target countries appear as the list of figures, dates, events. At the same time not enough attention is paid to the life priorities of people in English-speaking countries, their values and beliefs, life styles and communicative behavior though practice proves that if business partners do not know some lexis, it can be considered pardonable. But in case when they do not know or understand the manner of behavior, violate some traditions or break customs it would be rather difficult to renew the relationships. The usage of the comparative technology allows paying more attention to differences in everyday life and business communication adopted in the English-speaking countries.

Here it is important to note that in the process of teaching the foreign language we do not oppose social and cultural aspects of life in the English-speaking countries and in Ukraine. The task of an instructor is to explain to the students that differences in various spheres of life and business activity are based on the history of every country, political system, national characteristics of its inhabitants etc. In classes English language teachers try to persuade their students that every nation, no matter how numerous its population is, has equal rights to live its own life, develop its culture, and cherish its traditions and customs. Moreover, usage of the comparative technology helps students to understand their own origin better, realize belonging to their native culture, and comprehend themselves as bearers of Ukrainian national culture. Now in the context of worsening traditional relationships with Russia it is very important for the young people.

Conclusion. As soon as the comparative technology of forming students' social and cultural competence in a foreign language provides excellent conditions for direct inclusion in the life process and is based on the mutual activity of a student and an instructor in the form of a dialogue and interpersonal cooperation, is aimed at intensive submergence into the subject, it can be regarded as an innovative technology of teaching English.

Results of the implementation of the comparative technology for forming social and cultural competence of non-philological students testify the increasing students' interest to learning English and are accompanied by positive changes in students' attitude towards learning and style of thinking. This technology helps students to get rid of negative attitude towards different life styles, obsolete stereotypes. It makes them more tolerant on comprehension of other people with their own priorities, values and beliefs.

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