

Country Studies in teaching foreign languages at higher school

Bukach Valery¹

State Institution "South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University
named after K. D. Ushynsky", Odesa, Ukraine

E-mail: valery.bukach@gmail.com

ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8473-1510>

Golubova Ganna²

National University «Odessa Law Academy», Odessa, Ukraine

E-mail: aa8nn.gg@gmail.com

The article substantiates the relevance of the use of Country Studies materials in the English teaching process. It is emphasized on the importance of training future specialists in intercultural communication, cultural, professional and personal communication.

The effectiveness of the use of Country Studies materials as an integral part of the foreign language teaching process has been revealed. It is emphasized that Country Studies material contributes to the formation of a linguistically competent personality and the upbringing of patriotism and citizenship; the success of the use of Country Studies materials in the process of teaching a foreign language and culture is determined by their interdisciplinary character.

The principles that substantiate the general-didactic requirements to the organization of training, on which the systematic model of the use of Country Studies materials is based, are considered. The knowledge important for teaching alongside with the educational purposes gained during the study of their native land (geographic studies, historical ethnography, literary ethnography).

Keywords: foreign language teaching, Country Studies, intercultural communication, Country Studies material, teaching Regional Studies, dialogue of cultures.

Introduction. One of the most important tasks, the solution of which can and should be carried out in the process of studying a foreign language, is the development and formation of a person who has knowledge of his / her own culture, who perceives himself / herself as a bearer of certain cultural values, as a part of the natural and social integrity.

The importance of the study is substantiated by the changes in modern education and the growing need for the future specialist to be prepared for real intercultural communication, in which he / she must manifest himself / herself as a linguistically interesting person possessing the knowledge of his / her native land, and who is able to use it in intercultural communication.

The social transformations in the world that have generated the global processes providing the formation of a multicultural information society have created new demands for a person to be prepared for the implementation of positive communication under conditions of interpenetration cultures.

The new living conditions have radically changed the tasks the modern system of language education faces: to train educators for cultural, professional and personal communication with representatives of countries sharing other social traditions, social system and linguistic culture.

Thus the purpose and objectives of the study are to prove that the use of Country Studies material is an integral part of the process of teaching foreign languages, as it promotes the formation of a linguistically competent personality and the upbringing of patriotism and citizenship.

Materials and methods of research. The success of the use of Country Studies materials in the process of teaching foreign language and culture is determined by their interdisciplinary nature; this application provides an increase in the motivation of learning. In this regard, one of the objectives of learning a foreign language is the ability to represent your own country and culture under conditions of intercultural communication by means of a foreign language, the formation of the ability to highlight the general and specific issues revealing native country culture and the ones of the region the language of which is studied. The use of Country Studies material during the lessons and extracurricular activities plays an important role

¹ Ph. D. in History, Associate Professor, Private-Professor at the Department of World History and Methodology of Science at the State institution "South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushynsky"

² Ph. D. in Pedagogy, Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages № 1 at the National University «Odessa Law Academy»

in the achievement of this goal. Country Studies material brings foreign language communication closer to students' personal experience, promotes the formation and consolidation of their communication skills in the language studied. The student's ability to talk about something that is precious and valuable, about something that surrounds and concerns him / her allows a student to become more interesting to his / her foreign-speaking interlocutor. Without knowing person's own culture, without loving it one can not understand or love some culture. Only one who feels the beauty, strength and wealth of his native land, who knows and honors the customs and traditions of his / her people, treats them with care, can understand and respect the culture of other peoples.

The integration of the regional component into the study of a foreign language can be implemented in two directions: first, the inclusion the regional information covering various subject areas (history, geography, literature, art, etc.) into the foreign language syllabus; secondly, creative rethinking of the obtained regional information, the ability to specify and analyse the historical and contemporary trends in the development of a region. Therefore, the teacher can use Country Studies information in the teaching of any chosen topic because regional studies is multifaceted in their content. The teacher needs to confirm the Country Studies material with the syllabus, selecting the information that reflects the uniqueness of a region, its special character, and at the same time has a universal value, the attraction to which positively influences the increase of students' general cultural level.

Country Studies material connects life and settlement of any region with the general perception of our country and substantially complements the content of the language system. Students have an interest in deeper studying their land, its culture, customs and traditions. As a result this contributes to the formation of respect for their country, small homeland, the need for practical use of a foreign language in various fields of activity. Country Studies material also helps to improve practical usage of a foreign language: students' vocabulary is enriched, grammar skills are improved, and speaking skills are developing. The introduction of regional information into the process of teaching a foreign language also allows implementing the educational task – to strengthen students' feeling of patriotism.

In the context of the problem dealing with the establishment of world culture as a world without walls, but with well-expressed and distinct boundaries, the role of Country Studies in the intercultural interaction can not be overestimated. Country Studies is a kind of «axiological background» which allows us to determine the role and place of native culture in the general civilization process, the purpose of which is to contribute to the formation of a new type of linguistically interesting personality of a student-patriot who is capable and willing to bring knowledge of the native land into a dialogue of cultures.

Taking into account the relevance of Country Studies materials in the English teaching process, there have been developed the criteria for the selection and organization of Country Studies and Regional Studies based on a single concept. This is an alternative concept. There is a systematic model of the use of Country Studies materials which that is based on the principles derived from the general-didactic requirements to the organization of the training but it takes into account the features of Country Studies as an effective means of training students in intercultural communication:

- 1) the principle of interdisciplinarity according to which Country Studies material is used alongside with other subjects, programs of training future specialists (Toplenkyna, 2007);
- 2) the principle of systematicity, based on purposeful, planned character of the use of Country Studies materials at different stages of teaching a foreign language;
- 3) the thematic principle, which involves the development of relevant materials to each topic of a standard textbook;
- 4) the principle of recording students' age-specific characteristics in the selection of Country Studies materials based on the principle of the availability of learning;
- 5) the principle of technologization which implies the use of gaming technologies, reliance to student's creativity, their imagination, the ability to model «conditionally real» communication under artificial conditions (Yvanova, Chudylova, Vylkova, 2006);
- 6) the principle of cognition which is aimed at students' learning new information in the process of studying with the help of the Country Studies material which is based both the on known to them before and on new knowledge;
- 7) the principle of tolerance which involves the development of students' ability to understand and accept other cultures without falling into ethnocentrism ethno-selfishness (Korniyenko, 2004).

In order to successfully implement the teaching of reading with the help of Country Studies materials, we need to adhere to these principles.

The educational-cognitive aspect of intercultural Regional Studies at foreign language lessons and extracurricular activities involves students' assimilation of information, cultural, research and practical values.

To the informational values of Country Studies the researchers attribute knowledge acquired in the process of studying their native land, which is significant for educational purposes: a) Geographic Studies give the knowledge about the geological structure, relief of an area, its minerals, landscape, climate; seas, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, swamps; population, migration, settlement on the territory; branches of industry, agriculture, communication, trade, etc.; b) Historical Regional Studies is a source of the knowledge on the history of a region, both in general and in particular periods: new information about certain events, the military past of a region, the armed feats of countrymen involved into battlefields, on the ethnography of a region (customs, occupations, life-style of people in different periods of history), history of certain settlements, streets, buildings, etc.; c) the literary ethnography gives the knowledge about the literary life of native places, the writers who visited a province, the oral folk art, the works of the writers of a region, the works and biographies of the writers who were born or lived in that area, literary monuments of a region. Cultural values include elements of cultural experience, folk culture: the creative heritage of artists, architects, musicians, folk craftsmen, actions aimed at preserving cultural monuments and environmental protection. The research values include the possession of methods, skills, research skills. The practical values include practical experience, specific practical skills acquired in the process of Country Studies activities [Zvereva, 2005: 20-24]. Thus, the internalization of regional culture during foreign language lessons and extracurricular activities contributes to the integration of subject fields, the formation of historical consciousness, creates a meaningful basis of learning; it is also a means of supporting motivation, that acquaints with methods and techniques of scientific knowledge, develops research skills and helps to educate the students of this category as a «culture-of-patriotism» category which presupposes respect for their family, nation, national culture, traditions, state and Motherland; then orientation towards a permanent and venerable dialogue on the goals, ideals, values of other nations and peoples. Patriotism is formed as a feeling associated with the outlook of the native land, the surrounding environment. It is being socialised, facilitating students' gender better awareness, especially in the process of implementing specific types of socially useful activities.

However, it is the regional component of the Regional Studies content in the system of foreign language education that is not sufficiently complete. Thus, at present, the problem of scientific and methodological substantiation of the use of Country Studies material in the process of foreign languages teaching aimed at developing the culture of patriotism is a topical issue.

The teacher needs to find such methods and forms of work with students that would allow them to come into contact with the history and culture of the country. The work with Country Studies material can be organized at a certain stage at a foreign language lesson, as part of an integrated study of other subjects, during separate extracurricular activities; it can also have a wider time frame (project or research activity). The inclusion of the regional component into the teaching process is possible through the organization of various forms of work: preparation of reports; defense of abstracts; issuing newspapers and posters; oral journals; writing works; work on the project; staging; conducting excursions, including virtual ones; issuing tourist guides; preparation of multimedia presentations; creating videos and commercials; research work; creating web quests. The implementation of these forms of work involves the use of modern teaching methods, such as: problem-based learning; search technologies, information and communication technologies; role games; a project method. These methods and forms of work have a great practical orientation, which allows combining independent individual work with group and collective kinds of work. It is necessary to develop students' ability to remove and apply at foreign language lessons the information that is obtained from the study of other subjects. While working on Country Studies material, students can search for photographs, written documents, information on the Internet, visit local museums and attractions, representatives communicate with of the older generation in order to get the knowledge about the history of their native land.

Intercultural communication «as a dialogue of cultures» should be realized exclusively by means of person's trained native language, national culture, heritage of their own people. However, all the subtleties and the full depth of interlingua and intercultural communication problems become especially evident and sometimes they are just perceived, when comparing foreign languages with their native, and foreign culture with their native one, ordinary one. The perception of a foreign culture through the prism of someone's own culture, through the vision of native history, through love for the native land provides a positive result that will lead to real success both in the preparation for intercultural communication and in communication itself [Korniyenko, 2005: 77]. The ratio of national culture to foreign language allows us to recognize that someone's own culture is the culture itself but not a natural formation. According to this, the inclusion of the Country Studies principle into the methodology of teaching foreign languages as an integrated, unique means of training intercultural communication, on the one hand, and the formation of the culture of patriotism, national consciousness, civic competence, on the other, obtains a special social content. Some

issues related to the use of Country Studies materials in the process of teaching different subjects, including a foreign language, have been considered by a number of authors, mainly at the level of generalization of experience or description of interesting finding in practice (I. V. Alekseyenko, I. A. Hodunova, V. P. Skvortsova, N. V. Fiesa). It is methodically expedient to select and organise Regional Studies material on the basis of a unified concept in which the hierarchy of goals and objectives, principles and means of foreign region studies would be substantiated as well as, the scope of the use of certain materials would be clearly specified. One of the suggested concepts is the concept of individual development in intercultural cooperation (Tuchkova, 2003). This is an alternative concept one of the principles of which is complexity and dominance of the goals. Complexity involves the cultivation of culture, the development of the ability to actually teach foreign language communication for purposeful practical-oriented intercultural cooperation. Regional Studies education at a foreign language lesson involves a combination of education and upbringing with a leading role of the first one (Fedotova, 2008: 33). According to this approach, in our opinion, it will be fair to note that the formation of culture of patriotism by the means of Regional Studies in the framework of language education will become most effective when changing the object orientation of education into the subject-object one, shifting the emphasis from the usual acquisition of ready-made knowledge to their active assimilation, the use of possibilities of inter-subject connections, compensation of disadvantages of educational literature. In addition, the implementation of the dialogue-of-cultures principle into foreign language classes and extracurricular activities should be carried out in two directions. In one case, it is necessary to motivate students for the cognition in other ethnic culture, in a close, but different national context. As for another direction, we should give an opportunity to assimilate unusual worldview opinions, aesthetic tastes and ideas that will ultimately contribute to the expansion of the social and moral-ethical experience of the students themselves, the formation of a new type of personality. According to some linguistic and methodologist scholars (N. V. Baryshnikov, R. D. Galskova (Hal'skova, 2000) and other), in order to be an interesting partner for intercultural communication, it is necessary to know and understand interlocutor's national (ethnic) culture. In an interpersonal dialogue, the exchange of information about culture, traditions, customs of people, to which the speaker belongs, about their homeland plays an important role. In other words, this is the stratum of culture, which in special literature is called regional studies. Therefore, Regional Studies serve as a real and concrete means of implementing ethnolinguodidactic principles. Thus, N. V. Baryshnikov (Baryshnykov, 2002: 28-32) notes that real intercultural communication as a form of communication between representatives of different languages and cultures is realized with the greatest completeness and efficiency in the case when in the process of preparation for it a significant place is allocated to the native national culture. The domination of a foreign culture in the foreign languages teaching can serve badly for those studying a foreign language – they will inevitably turn out to be uninteresting interlocutors for potential foreign partners in communication (Kornyenko, 2005: 79).

Results of the research. Using the regional component in the classroom increases the quality of learning, serves not only for improving knowledge, but also for its control, consolidation, repetition, generalization, and, therefore, performs all didactic functions. The regional component in the class awakens students' cognitive interest in their native land, creates a special linguistic environment that helps them get closer to the history of their native land, as well as its political and geographical position, and this knowledge helps students to master not only the history of the region but also historical material of the foreign language studied. The regional component can not replace other means of teaching a foreign language. Some optimal place should be found for each of them the educational process.

The effectiveness of using the regional component during a lesson depends on the teacher's proficiency. Therefore, the use of the regional component during the classes should not be merely entertainment but a part of a purposeful learning process that meets all the requirements of the methodology of teaching a foreign language. The objectives of study are as follows:

- social adaptation of students under conditions of a rapid socio-economic development of their region;
- formation of creative personality, who has assimilated the spiritual values and traditions of a small homeland, who is able to design and build his / her life based on the values of his / her native land;
- upbringing of humanism, patriotism, careful attitude to the traditions and culture of a native land;
- awakening of young people's interest in their historical past, folk traditions;
- expansion of students' outlooks;
- formation of the abilities and skills to conduct search and research work in tours, excursions, museums, archives;
- awakening of interest in studying the life and nature of their region;
- integration of various educational scopes;

- development of the ability to receive information from different sources and independently navigate in it;

- formation of social responsibility of an individual through his / her attitude to specific problems of the region as a part of the country (Sorokovykh, Davydova, 2007: 63- 69).

Discussion of results. Working with Country Studies material provides various types of classes, methods of teaching: independent work with the book and the document; excursions; an overview of cultural historical monuments; expeditions to the native land; students' research work; project activities; conversations and meetings with interesting people; speeches, reports; scientific and practical conferences; Country Studies-oriented research of nature; creating video products; folk holidays; publications in mass media, etc.

The teacher can use modern effective teaching methods: problem-based learning, method of projects, role-playing games, information, search, research technologies, and create conditions for students' self-assessment formation. The most favorable opportunity is the attraction of Country Studies material to Regional Studies. In modern English teaching kits, there is enough material on history of the region, in particular, information on the history, culture, geography of the countries being studied. Our country, especially its more isolated regions, is not enough reflected. The tutor's task is to teach a student to speak English about what surrounds him / her, to describe valuable aspects related to him / her from his childhood, what he / she is proud of and is willing to share with his potential partner in the intercultural communication. It is the region-oriented material that will substantially complement the content aspect of the languages study.

Thus, Regional Studies can significantly expand and deepen students' knowledge and understanding about the surrounding world, help to acquire the ability to carry out local lore and other studies. Students are given the opportunity to acquire and develop practical skills: self-organization and self-management, social activity and discipline. Also, local lore opens up wide opportunities for student's independent activities, for searching, researching, and discovering. It awakens learners deep interest in the history of the land, the country, generating the thirst for knowledge.

Conclusions. Country Studies help students to comprehend the idea of historical development, to understand the interconnection between local and general, and ultimately to understand the modernity, to develop an active life position. Thus, the use of Country Studies is an important part of the foreign language teaching process. Country Studies material helps to increase the efficiency of the foreign language teaching process and the level of students' positive motivation, the degree of their adaptation to the surrounding social and natural environment, expands students' outlook; it is also a means of moral and patriotic education. The use of information, data related to the real life of those who study in the teaching process stimulates not only their interest in studying a foreign language, but also stipulates each student's autonomy, cognitive activity, develops their skills and abilities to provide research activities, raises a responsible attitude to learning, promotes individual's development, enhances the efficiency of mastering a foreign language.

References

Baryshnykov, N.V. (2002). Parametry obucheniya mezhkul'turnoy kommunikatsii v sredney shkole [Parameters of teaching intercultural communication in high school]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole – Foreign languages at school*. (№ 2), (pp. 28-32) [in Russian].

Hal'skova, N.D. (2000). Sovremennaya metodika obucheniya inostrannym yazykam. Posobiye [Modern methods of teaching foreign languages. Handbook]. Moscow: ARKTY [in Russian].

Zvereva, Z.A. (2005). Aksiologicheskiye osnovy krayevedeniya v raznostoronnem razvitiy uhashchikhsya: Diss... kand. ped. nauk [The axiological bases of regional studies in the versatile development of students: Diss... Ph.d. in Ped. Sciences]. Volohda [in Russian].

Yvanova, N.N., Chudylova, A.Y. & Vylkova, N.D. (2006). Ispol'zovaniye krayevedcheskogo materiala v obuchenii inostrannomu yazyku: Metod proyektov [Use of local lore material in teaching a foreign language: Project method]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole. – Foreign languages at school* (№ 4), (pp. 55–57) [in Russian].

Korniyenko, P.A. (2005). Ispol'zovaniye krayevedcheskikh materialov v obuchenii inostrannym yazykam: Na primere Karachayevo-Cherkesskoy Respubliki, angliyskiy yazyk [The use of local lore materials in teaching foreign languages: On the example of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, English: *Candidate's thesis*. Pyatyhorsk [in Russian].

Korniyenko, P.A. (2004). Krayevedcheskiye materialy kak sredstvo obucheniya inostrannomu yazyku [Local lore materials as a means of teaching a foreign language]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole – Foreign languages at school* (№ 6), (pp. 28-34) [in Russian].

Sorokovych, H.V. & Davydova, O.V. (2007). Regional'nyy komponent kul'tury kak sostavlyayushchaya sodержaniya obucheniya inostrannomu yazyku [Regional component of culture as a component of teaching foreign language content]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole – Foreign languages at school* (№ 1), (pp. 63-69) [in Russian].

Toplenkina, Y.P. (2007). Regional'nyy komponent na urokakh inostrannogo yazyka [Regional component in foreign language lessons]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole – Foreign languages at school* (№ 3), (pp. 25-30) [in Russian].

Tuchkova, T.U. (2003) Urok kak pokazatel' gramotnosti i maysterstva uchitelya [The lesson as an indicator of teacher's literacy and mastery]. Moscow: Ts.HL [in Russian].

Fedotova, M. A. (2008). Regional'noye sodержaniye v kontekste shkol'nogo yazykovogo obrazovaniya [Regional content in the context of school language education]. *Ynostrannye yazyky v shkole – Foreign languages at school* (№ 3), (pp. 31-35) [in Russian].

Викладання краєзнавства та іноземної мови у вищій школі

Букач Валерій Михайлович³

Державний заклад «Південноукраїнський національний педагогічний університет імені К. Д. Ушинського», Одеса, Україна

Голубова Ганна Василівна⁴

Національний університет «Одеська юридична академія», Одеса, Україна

У статті обґрунтовано актуальність застосування краєзнавчих матеріалів у процесі викладання англійської мови. Розглянуто важливість підготовки майбутніх фахівців до міжкультурної комунікації, культурного, професійного та особистого спілкування.

Обґрунтовано використання краєзнавчого матеріалу як невід'ємної частини процесу навчання іноземним мовам. Доведено, що краєзнавчий матеріал сприяє формуванню лінгвістично компетентної особистості та вихованню патріотизму і громадянськості; успішність застосування краєзнавчих матеріалів у процесі викладання іноземної мови і культури обумовлено їхнім міжпредметним характером.

Розглянуто принципи, що впливають із загально-дидактичних вимог до організації навчання, на яких базується систематизована модель використання краєзнавчих матеріалів. До інформаційних цінностей краєзнавства дослідники відносять значущі для освітньо-виховних цілей знання, отримані в процесі вивчення рідного краю: географічне краєзнавство, історичне краєзнавство, літературне краєзнавство.

Ключові слова: викладання іноземної мови, краєзнавство, міжкультурна комунікація, краєзнавчий матеріал, регіональна освіта, діалог культур.

Література

Барышников Н. В. Параметры обучения межкультурной коммуникации в средней школе. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2002. № 2. С. 28-32.

Гальскова Н. Д. Современная методика обучения иностранным языкам. Пособие. М.: АРКТИ, 2000. 165 с.

Зверева З. А. Аксиологические основы краеведения в разностороннем развитии учащихся: Дисс...канд. пед. наук. Вологда, 2005. 181 с.

Иванова Н. Н., Чудилова А. И., Вилкова Н. Д. Использование краеведческого материала в обучении иностранному языку: Метод проектов. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2006. № 4. С. 55- 57.

Корниенко П. А. Использование краеведческих материалов в обучении иностранным языкам: На примере Карачаево-Черкесской Республики, английский язык: Дисс...канд. пед. наук. Пятигорск, 2005. 185 с.

Корниенко П. А. Краеведческие материалы как средство обучения иностранному языку. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2004. № 6. С. 28-34.

³ кандидат історичних наук, доцент, приват-професор кафедри всесвітньої історії і методології науки Державного закладу «Південноукраїнський національний педагогічний університет імені К. Д. Ушинського»

⁴ кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент кафедри іноземних мов № 1 Національного університету «Одеська юридична академія»

Сороковых Г. В., Давыдова О. В. Региональный компонент культуры как составляющая содержания обучения иностранному языку. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2007. № 1. С. 63- 69.

Топленкина И. П. Региональный компонент на уроках иностранного языка. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2007. № 3. С. 25- 30.

Тучкова Т. У. Урок как показатель грамотности и мастерства учителя. М.: ЦГЛ, 2003. 62 с.

Федотова М. А. Региональное содержание в контексте школьного языкового образования. *Иностранные языки в школе*. 2008. № 3. С. 31- 35.

Accepted: November 11, 2019

