

LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A PART OF TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract. Intercultural competence is considered to be a core element for the professional and social competence of a teacher. Intercultural competence comprises a system of lingua-cultural knowledge which is developed at the foreign language learning stage. The development of intercultural competence is fostered by such didactic methods as the lingua-conceptual approach to teaching of foreign language, working with authentic texts and films, corrective exercises which are targeted at eliminating possible communication failures. Communication classes are conducted in interactive form and involve role playing and training activities, wherein intercultural communication peculiarities are taken into consideration.

Keywords: culture, education, competence, development, intercultural, lingua-cultural knowledge.

ЯЗЫКОВАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ КАК ЧАСТЬ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ ПЕДАГОГА

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Аннотация. Межкультурная компетентность считается ключевым элементом профессиональной и социальной компетентности учителя. Межкультурная компетентность представляет собой систему лингвокультурных знаний, которая формируется на этапе изучения иностранного языка. Развитию межкультурной компетентности

способствуют такие дидактические методы, как лингвопонятийный подход к обучению иностранному языку, работа с аутентичными текстами и фильмами, коррекционные упражнения, направленные на устранение возможных коммуникативных неудач. Коммуникативные занятия проводятся в интерактивной форме и включают в себя ролевые и обучающие мероприятия, в которых учитываются особенности межкультурного общения.

Ключевые слова: культура, образование, компетентность, развитие, межкультурное, лингвокультурное знание.

Introduction. Professional competence means knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities, which are required by a specialist in order to solve professional problems. The professional competence of a teacher is a systemic phenomenon, which represents the combination of the pedagogical knowledge, experience, individual characteristics and qualities necessary to carry out effectively educational activities, specifically to organize the process of pedagogical communication and personal development (McBer, 2000, Anderson, 2004, Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005).

Successful integration of the individual into the European educational space is directly related to the study of foreign languages. Gaining a pragmatic sense of orientation in a modern educational system means setting new goals for foreign language learning. Both the linguistic training parameters and their substantial sociocultural component are subject to change. At the forefront of foreign language learning come the development of intercultural competence and the ability to conduct intercultural dialogue (CEFR, 1986). The development of intercultural communicative competence is a key element for the professional development of specialists. This competence concept has turned into one of the leading pedagogical theories of our contemporary world (Byram, 1997). A system of education can be considered effective only when it educates an

individual to be competent and able to perform adequately and behave appropriately in varying situations, applying knowledge in practice and assuming the responsibility for actions performed. A competent professional does not only possess the ability to meet professional standards, but strives to evolve as a personality. Intercultural competence is a person's ability to free one's potential in intercultural communication, to choose adequate behavioral patterns and achieve positive results in the dialogue of cultures (Olson & Kroeger, 2001). K. Knapp defines intercultural competence as the ability to understand representatives of other cultures as if they were representatives from one's own culture (Knapp, 1987). Among basic skills, constituting intercultural competence, research has pinpointed the ability to decipher phenomena pertaining to a different lifestyle and hierarchy of values, the ability to understand and accept facts about a foreign culture, compare these facts with one's personal cultural experience, comprehend them and initiate a dialogue therewith and, thus, enrich one's personal picture of the world (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 1998).

Intercultural competence is becoming the key to effective cooperation in the professional pedagogical community. Future teachers must not only be able to live in a multicultural society, but also be able to solve effectively professional tasks in a multicultural society. The model of intercultural competence in the modern educational space presupposes that a teacher masters a number of special knowledge, skills, values, personality traits and modes of behavior. The basic requirements for intercultural competence are knowledge about other cultures and understanding of other people's behaviors and ways of thinking, skills of communication with representatives of other cultures, tolerance, empathy and interest in the communicative situation, psychosocial sensitivity, and a lack of bias and prejudice. Intercultural competence implies the knowledge of the principles and rules of intercultural communication, including the ability to understand and interact with different cultures while

maintaining the own cultural identity. Intercultural competence is considered to be a core element for the professional and social competence of a teacher (Moosmüller, 1996, Corbett, 2003).

Methods. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) defines core competencies for foreign language teaching, such as: Communicative competence, which provides speakers with the skills of spoken and written communication in any individual's professional and social life; Political and social competence directed toward the functioning and development of democratic institutions; Intercultural competence, which ensures an awareness of living in a multicultural society and effective communication with representatives of other cultures in order to prevent the outbreak of xenophobia, intolerance and a climate of dissent; The competence needed for developing teachers' abilities and their willingness to partake of lifelong learning, both in their professional and social life (CEFR, 1986).

Intercultural competence stands for the necessary basic knowledge used by a person in life activities and reflecting the perception of the system of values, norms and rules pertinent to the respective culture and language. Intercultural competence comprises a system of lingua-cultural knowledge which is developed at the foreign language learning stage. It comprises a system of cross-cultural views and individual norms of conduct which are developed on the grounds of cultural and language samples during the person's upbringing, education and professional activity (Gudkov, 2003). Adaptation to a new multicultural context requires teacher knowledge of cultural peculiarities, habits, traditions, native speakers' norms of conduct, and the ability to comprehend and adequately use this knowledge during communication. W. B. Gudykunst and Y.Y. Kim pinpoint the following abilities necessary for the development of intercultural competence: knowledge about society, intercultural knowledge, ability to assimilate new cultural information and become adapted to it, flexibility in new situations, and empathy towards communicants from foreign

cultures (Gudykunst, 1993, Kim, 1993). Intercultural competence constitutes a basic criterion for working in an international group. Intercultural communication becomes possible due to the integrative foreign language communicative competence. One of the pedagogical tasks for foreign language teachers is to instill in students a tolerant attitude toward the target culture, to develop the students' objective assessment of the cultural phenomena of other people, the awakening of the students' desire to learn more about the country of the target language, taking into account the cross-fertilization of cultures. Students of any foreign language, must, above all, understand the world of the people who speak it. Only in this case can we talk about the dialogue of cultures (Phipps & Gonzalez, 2004).

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