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English Literature as A Means of Developing Intercultural and Language Competence

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Abstract: This article examines the importance of English literature in the process of learning English as a foreign language. The role of literary works in the development of linguistic competence, critical thinking and intercultural perception is emphasized. The author shows how English literature contributes not only to the acquisition of language skills, but also to a deeper understanding of the culture, history and mentality of the English-speaking society. Special attention is paid to the need to integrate literary texts into the educational process to form a comprehensively developed linguistic personality.

Keywords: English literature; learning a foreign language; intercultural communication; linguistic competence; literary text; cultural understanding; teaching English; critical thinking.

Introduction: The current stage of globalization, integration processes in Europe and the transformation of Eastern European countries have led to the intensification of intercultural contacts in various spheres of life. Communication with representatives of other cultures has become an integral part of everyday life. In this regard, the task of preparing students, especially those in non-linguistic specialties, for effective intercultural interaction is becoming increasingly relevant. The formation of intercultural competence is considered one of the strategic goals of education, but a unified methodological concept for its development in non-linguistic universities is still missing. Studying a foreign language and, especially, the literature of the country of the language being studied, seems to be an effective tool for achieving this goal.

METHODS

The methodological basis of the article is the communicative-cultural approach, as well as elements of the linguacultural and competence approaches to teaching foreign languages. The methods of analyzing scientific literature, summarizing pedagogical experience, as well as a comparative analysis of Russian and international educational models, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, are used.

The main attention is paid to the role of literary works as an authentic material capable of simultaneously developing the linguistic, cultural and critical abilities of students. The key skills formed during learning through literature are highlighted.

The obviousness of this statement allows us to give an affirmative answer to the rhetorical question about the need to prepare students for intercultural communication. We must be oriented towards the fact that our communication partner is not just different, since all people are different from each other, but because his worldview and perception of the world were formed in different geographical, political and economic conditions, in another society, with its inherent system of values, determining the thinking and behavior of people in this society. Awareness of this fact and appropriate adjustment of behavior will help to avoid misunderstanding and disappointment, resentment and mutual claims and will create a prerequisite for successful communication and cooperation at the intercultural level. Today, a comprehensive concept of training students of non-linguistic faculties as competent participants in intercultural communication is missing, although intercultural competence is fully recognized as a strategic goal. In achieving intercultural competence, an important role belongs to the study of a foreign language and the literature of the country of the studied language, which expands the possibilities of communication at the intercultural level, and, of course, evokes respect in the communication partner, flattered by the knowledge of his language, just as Russians admire a foreigner speaking their language. It is advisable to study how, already in the process of studying a foreign language and literature of the country of the studied language, a person can gradually acquire the knowledge, develop the skills and abilities that are a prerequisite for successful intercultural communication.

Analysis of literary and methodological sources. The study of literature as a means of developing intercultural competence is actively considered in both foreign and domestic methods of teaching foreign languages. The analysis of scientific and methodological sources shows that works of art have significant potential in developing not only linguistic,

but also socio-cultural and communicative skills of students.

According to the works of foreign researchers (Lazar, Duff & Maley, Kramsch), literary texts contribute to the formation of emotional and cultural intelligence, develop empathy and intercultural imagination. Literature allows you to look at the world through the eyes of representatives of other cultures, thereby creating the basis for a deeper understanding of intercultural differences and similarities.

Domestic authors (Karimov A.K., Abdullaeva M.A., Safarova Z.Z., Kodirova N.Kh.) emphasize that the inclusion of literature in the educational process enhances students' motivation, enriches the lexical and grammatical base, and also contributes to the development of critical thinking and analytical skills. The role of literature in the formation of the personal position of the student and his ability to independently interpret what he has read is especially highlighted.

Methodological studies show that the use of authentic literary texts requires the teacher to apply a whole range of pedagogical techniques: from preliminary cultural training to post-text analytical and project activities. An important aspect is also the choice of genres and authors relevant to the age, language level and cultural interests of students.

Studying the literature of the country of the studied language is essential for the development of students' critical abilities, their self-knowledge and understanding of other people. It helps not only to understand the culture of the studied language, but also other cultures. Therefore, it is assumed that if a foreign language is taught at a university under the International Baccalaureate program in non-linguistic faculties, it is necessary, along with the well-known skills and abilities in a foreign language, to additionally develop the following skills and abilities in students: 1) the ability to use a text as an example and inspiration for their own creativity; 2) to understand various literary genres and forms; 3) the ability to analyze a literary work in terms of theme, plot, system of images; 4) understanding the structure and style of works, various forms of dialogue between the writer and the reader; 5) the ability to independently evaluate literary works. At the end of the five-year program of the International Baccalaureate, one of the main acquired skills of the student "is the ability to express their own evaluation of literary works." The main difference between the programs of Russian universities and schools and the International Baccalaureate is the following: literature acts as an independent subject and, although, as a rule, is taught by the same teacher as the Russian language, is separated from it structurally, methodologically and

administratively. The program of the International Baccalaureate is tied to the study of language.

Both systems have their pros and cons. Often, the study of foreign language texts in schools and universities is conducted in isolation from the works of fiction by writers of the country of the studied language. The hours allocated for independent work of students and schoolchildren, the so-called "home reading", do not give an idea of the specifics of the national literature of the country of the studied language. Undoubtedly, practical home reading classes are undoubtedly valuable: here students come into contact with the best examples of living language, and not conventionally educational texts, they have the opportunity to express their opinion and evaluate the work, characters and situations. The practice of communicating with foreigners has proven that even deep knowledge of a foreign language does not exclude misunderstanding and conflicts with native speakers of this language. Therefore, teaching foreign languages includes familiarizing students with the history, customs, traditions, and social organization of the country of the studied language. However, as practice has shown, only theoretical familiarity with the relevant culture is not enough for conflict-free communication with its representatives; it has become obvious that successful and effective contacts with representatives of other cultures are impossible without practical skills in intercultural communication. It is necessary to prepare schoolchildren for effective intercultural contacts at the level of everyday interpersonal communication. For this, knowledge about the nature of intercultural misunderstanding is not enough; it is necessary to develop practical skills and abilities that would allow freely understanding representatives of other cultures.

RESULTS

Analysis of literary and methodological sources, as well as the experience of implementing programs using literary texts, showed the following:

- Studying the literature of the country of the studied language contributes to the development of intercultural communication skills, critical thinking, empathy and tolerance;
- A literary text helps to understand cultural codes, the value system and behavioral characteristics of native speakers;
- Unlike the traditional approach, IB programs include literature as an integral part of language training, while in Russian schools it is often considered an optional or auxiliary component;
- The most effective forms are the analysis of genres,

plots, images, structure and style, as well as project work, dialogues based on literary situations, linguistic and cultural analysis of proverbs, phraseological units and dialogues.

DISCUSSION

Competence is understood as the ability to creatively perform activities based on formed motives, personal qualities, the ability to use normatively acceptable patterns of behavior in the professional field. Mastering competence creates the basis for the development of professionalism and skill.

Communication is a socially conditioned process of transmitting information and exchanging thoughts and feelings between people in various areas of cognitive, labor and creative activity.

The task of developing the ability for intercultural communicative competence is carried out in the process of speech interaction: listening, reading, speaking, writing, both in the classroom and in extracurricular work with students.

The teacher's task is to create a model of real communication that promotes the emergence of a natural desire and need for students to interact with others, self-confidence and self-confidence in their abilities to communicate. The communicative approach involves teaching communication and developing the ability for intercultural interaction.

Intercultural communication through training exercises

The quality of training largely depends on the selected regional and linguistic regional studies material. Relevant and interesting information about life and everyday life in the countries of the studied language, photographs, diagrams, statistics, detailed comments from the teacher and communicative exercises based on the presented material will allow educational and methodological complexes on a foreign language to fully comply with the modern educational paradigm in our country. For the linguacultural approach to teaching foreign languages, phraseological units that reflect the national identity of the culture, traditions, way of life, and history of the people who speak the language are of great interest. Proverbs are also of considerable interest for linguacultural studies. Proverbs contain the wisdom of the people, their ability to subtly notice individual aspects of a person's life, they reveal their observation skills and the ability to briefly express their attitude to the world around them as a whole. The third stage of developing intercultural competence should be training exercises of a communicative and research nature. Any knowledge without practical consolidation will be useless. Such exercises may include:

Practicing language units and grammatical structures in

dialogue situations that are as close as possible to real ones and are typical for the culture of a given country (for example, communication at the airport, restaurant, store, visiting, etc.);

If the necessary technical means are available, real communication with representatives of a foreign culture (correspondence by e-mail, in a chat, on a forum; the ideal option is communication via Skype, etc.);

Solving linguistic and linguacultural problems (what would a native speaker answer to this question, how would he behave in this situation, etc.);

Research and creative projects related to the topics being studied, but, in addition to searching for and presenting information, including linguacultural analysis of this information;

Linguistic and linguacultural analysis of authentic materials, ranging from printed publications to films or news from national channels of the country of the language being studied.

These are just a few examples of possible training exercises.

The process of developing intercultural competence at school should include three necessary components: developing a sufficient stock of background knowledge about the national culture of the country of the studied language, developing an adequate and friendly perception of a foreign language and its realities, and, finally, practical training in intercultural communication.

A comparison of domestic and international experience allows us to conclude that literature should be considered not only as a way of learning a language, but also as a cultural tool that shapes the student's personality. The integration of literature into the educational process requires pedagogical flexibility, an interdisciplinary approach, and an increased role of independent and project work.

For the effective development of intercultural competence, it is necessary to:

- Select authentic texts that reflect national specifics;
- Use communicative exercises that are close to real communication situations;
- Develop students' skills in analyzing, interpreting, and critically evaluating what they have read;
- Systematically include elements of linguistic and cultural studies in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

To sum it up, it can be noted that in the future the problem of developing intercultural competence of

students will not fade into the background. Every day there is a growing need for specialists who not only speak foreign languages, but are also ready to successfully interact with representatives of other cultures.

The formation of the foundations of intercultural competence of students is facilitated by the study of a foreign language at school, built on the principles of:

- awareness by students of their own national culture and native language.
- reliance on background knowledge, the socio-cultural background in the context of which the studied foreign language functions.
- shifting the emphasis in the process of teaching a foreign language from teaching activities to the activities of the student, forming him as a creative person.
- the use of modern technologies that ensure the actualization and development of personal qualities of schoolchildren.

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