

SOME ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the analysis of researches on Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in the field of foreign language education. The working definition of ICC is the one proposed by Kunanbayeva S.S. who defines ICC as “the process of verbal and non-verbal communication between communicants who are mediums of different cultures and languages”. The article dwells on the necessity of ICC studies in modern world due to the globalization process as well as recent changes in the foreign language education paradigm. Besides, the article gives a short overview of studies on ICC in FLE in Kazakhstan, Russia and western countries, paying much attention to the contributions of Kunanbayeva S.S. (Linguoculturological Approach), Dudnik A.O. (Structural-informative model of the intercultural component of economically-oriented foreign language education), Marinicheva A.V. (Level of preparation for intercultural communicative and professional competence) and Zhang Y. (Three levels of intercultural teaching objectives and criteria).

Key words: Intercultural Communication Competence, Foreign Language education, culture, intercultural component, professional competence.

Introduction

The expansion of international relations reinforced by major globalization trends led to an increasing role of a foreign language in society and in the professional activities of a modern specialist. Today, a foreign language has become a means of not only interpersonal, but also interethnic, interstate, and international communication.

Current needs of society have identified a special role of foreign languages in the educational and professional activities of specialists who need to learn to understand the characteristics of participation in intercultural communication, which presupposes observance of the norms of behavior that are universal for world cultures,

rules and categories in conjunction with the specific norms of etiquette inherent in specific cultures. According to Dudnik, “the task requires the creation of a sociocultural background in a foreign language classroom, which is achieved by using educational materials in the classroom, bringing students closer to the natural culturological environment: genuine literary, visual, musical works, objects of real reality and their illustrative image. These means provide communication with “live”, real objects, stimulate communication.” (Dudnik, 2011, p.11)

A crucial role in the implementation of these tasks belongs to a foreign language teacher, who is expected to be able to navigate in the multicultural world, understand its values and meanings, and translate them into worthy examples of civilized behavior in the educational process, as well as in the process of interaction with representatives of the professional community in our country and internationally.

A number of works appeared in the methodology of teaching foreign languages, the authors of which give background knowledge a special role in the process of integrating culture into the system of language education. This was dictated by the sharply increased cultural, scientific, and economic contacts of countries and their peoples, which inevitably put the problem of “language and culture” among the most

important linguistic and sociolinguistic problems.

In Kazakhstan, as well as in majority of CIS countries, in the process of training of a foreign language teacher in higher education, the theoretical aspects of education play an approximately equal role with language acquisition along with the subjects of the psychological and pedagogical cycle. Aliev (2009) defines that the system of training of foreign language teachers is based on the three components of this system: language / speech training, linguodidactical training, and psychological - pedagogical training, which are in complementary relations. The systemic relations between these components are supported by the unity of the methods of self-education, professional self-education, carried out on the basis of scientific and methodological knowledge, based on the professional skills.

In determining the systemic nature of the learning process at a higher education institution, a significant role is played by the systems approach in organizing the content of education, its various aspects. An important role is played by the awareness of students of system relations in the process of their professional training. That is, the principle of consistency relates not only to the content of training, but also to the course of training, its procedural side, to the degree of its awareness as a system: awareness of the integrity and interconnectedness of its components. In the conditions of the

university training of foreign language teachers, this procedural systemism is expressed, firstly, in the use of the language system of the target language for transmitting information in the form of a coherent text that has thematic unity and implements a certain idea, and, secondly, in the use of knowledge on related educational disciplines (psychology, pedagogy, linguodidactics and a foreign language) to build a lesson (lesson system) in a foreign language.

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is one of the indicators of professionalism, it promotes the expansion of qualification opportunities in the professional sphere and the expansion of the professional sphere of specialists, as well as their social adaptation. Alongside with it, ICC increases their professional mobility and competitiveness.

There is a big number of definitions given to ICC depending on different approaches to it, including social, linguistic, psycholinguistic and others. A definition integrating all the components of ICC has been proposed by Kunanbayeva S.S. It states that “intercultural communicative competence is defined as the process of verbal and non-verbal communication between communicants who are mediums of different cultures and languages” (Kunanbayeva, 2017, 29).

The transmission of cultural values, patterns and standards of behavior from generation to generation is carried out in the

process of communication and acts as a mechanism of socialization as a whole, as well as a mechanism for the formation of communicative competence as an integral and very important component of the integration process of an individual into the socio-cultural environment necessary for successful functioning in society.

Intercultural communication is a product of the dialogue of cultures - this is the interaction of contacting cultures, which ensures adequate mutual understanding and spiritual mutual enrichment.

The peculiarities of intercultural communication as a pedagogical process are considered in the works of Russian researchers I.A.Zimnyaya (2004), Y.L.Kolominsky (2000), A.A.Rean (2000), and others. The scientists like D. Hymes (1972), M.A.K. Halliday (2002) etc. dealt with the component structure of communicative competence in foreign didactics and methodology.

A significant contribution into integration of ICC into foreign language education in Kazakhstan has been done by Kunanbayeva S.S. (2017) The main idea is the shift in the philosophy of education, from traditional language education to foreign language education and as a result shift in the object of education, which has changed from “Foreign Language” to “ICC”. Consequently, the aim of Foreign Language Education has changed as well, from the knowledge of language and level of elementary

communication to reaching the level “intermediator of intercultural communication”. (Kunanbayeva, 2017, 13) Kunanbayeva S.S. explains that in the process of formation of “secondary cognitive consciousness” in foreign language education, the following cognitive aspects of ICC competence are activated in student’s “consciousness/structure of knowledge”: cognitive-social, cognitive-conceptual, cognitive-anthropocentric, cognitive-linguoculturological, cognitive-sociocultural and personality-centered. (Kunanbayeva, 2017, 50)

Dudnik (2011) has proposed the structural-informative model of the intercultural component of economically-oriented foreign language education of economists and has revealed its four substructures: the sociological component: the individual’s understanding of the influence of culture on the behavior of its representatives; transformation of knowledge into effective practical interaction with those who are different from it; psychological component: awareness of the differences of representatives of foreign cultures (stereotypes, mentality); enrichment of the individual as a result of awareness of the values of another culture; the ability to successfully adapt and adapt to specific cultural conditions; linguistic component: knowledge and application of linguistic features and mechanisms that allow successful intercultural professional

communication of economists; methodical component: a set of pedagogical tools that implement the goals, content and methods of forming a business culture in the process of learning a foreign language.

The significance of integration of Intercultural professional-communicative competence into foreign language education was reflected in Marinicheva’s research (2003) on attitude of students to this competence. According to respondents, Intercultural professional-communicative competence results in adaptation and obtaining of more prestigious work (24%), increased contacts (20%), growth of professional career (16%), effective interaction with modern equipment and technology (15 %), as well as the opportunity to fully realize their potential (11%) and receive higher incomes (11%). The 89% of surveyed students believe that they will need a foreign language in their professional activities.

Marinicheva (2003) admits that in order to improve the effectiveness of intercultural communication, which includes personal and professional interaction, a certain level of knowledge of a foreign language is necessary, that is, a certain level of preparation for intercultural communicative and professional competence. In this research, it was revealed that only 2% of respondents rate their level of knowledge of a foreign language as the basis of intercultural communication as high, 37% of

those surveyed have an average level of knowledge, 47% have a low level; 31% of students have never used a foreign language, 64% have not read literature on a specialty in a foreign language, 54% believe that they cannot communicate in a foreign language within the framework of everyday subjects.

A number of researchers believe that development of ICC in foreign language classroom is a continual process made up of three levels of intercultural teaching objectives and criteria (Zhang, 2007). Zhang (2017) describes the first level as “related to knowledge including linguistic awareness, cultural-general awareness, language ability of the target culture, culture knowledge of the target country. The second level is germane with competence containing communicative competence, abilities of

using verbal and non-verbal messages, socio-cultural competence, and communication strategies. The third level is closely linked to attitude which is about empathy in intercultural communication, and critical cultural awareness” (Zhang, 2017, 229).

In conclusion, it is possible to say that although we have tried to overview some of the aspects of ICC in foreign language education, it is a very tiny part of studies on ICC in general. In the last 20 years ICC has been and still stays a significant factor in foreign language education. Notwithstanding a big number of different researches on the topic, there are still areas that need further study, especially in terms of integration and implementation of ICC into education process.

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