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The importance of communicative activities to develop Intercultural Communicative Competence among 7th and 8th grade students

АННОТАЦИЯ

Бұл мақалада ағылшын тілі пәнінен 7 және 8 сынып оқушылары жүргізген пікірталас, жобалар, рөлдік ойындар, сұхбаттар секілді коммуникативтік іс-шаралар талқыланған. Автор бұл іс-шаралардың шет тілін үйрену барысында мәдениетаралық коммуникативтік құзыреттіліктің дамуына тиімді әсер ететін маңызды құрал деп аяқтайды.

Түйінді сөздер: мәдени аралық коммуникативті құзыреттілік, құзыреттілік, коммуникативтік дағдылар, коммуникативтік қызмет, мәдениет, шет тілдерін оқыту.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются примеры коммуникативных мероприятий, таких как ролевые игры, дискуссии, проекты, проводимые учащимися 7 и 8 классов на уроке английского языка. Автор приходит к выводу, что эти мероприятия имеют эффективное воздействие на развитие межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции, который является важным инструментом в обучении иностранному языку.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, компетенция, коммуникативная способность, коммуникативная деятельность, культура, преподавания иностранных языков.

ABSTRACT

The article considers the examples of communicative activities such as role-playing, discussion, projects held by 7th and 8th grade students in an English language lesson. The author concludes that these activities have an effective influence on the development of intercultural communicative competence which is essential tool in foreign language teaching

Key words: intercultural communicative competence, competence, communicative ability, communicative activities, culture, foreign language teaching.

Looking into Michael Byram's study, ICC in general terms is identified as "the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and relating to that behave appropriately according to cultural understandings". [1, p.9] It is the ability to communicate across cultures and to relate appropriately within the culture. The competence is relied on basic factors such as respecting each other concerning to cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and of course cultural differences.

According to Michael Byram, intercultural competence involves five elements:

Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own.

Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. [2]

Van Ek's model of "communicative ability" (1986:36) includes six "competences", together with autonomy and social responsibility.[3, p. 9]

- Linguistic competence: the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances which are formed in accordance with the rules of the language concerned and bear the conventional meaning.

- Sociolinguistic competence: the awareness of ways in which the choice of language forms is determined by such conditions as setting, relationship between linguistic signals and their contextual – or situational- meaning.

- Discourse competence: the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts.

- Strategic competence : when communication is difficult we have to find ways of "getting our meaning across" or of "finding out what somebody means"; these are communication strategies, such as rephrasing, asking for clarification.

- Socio-cultural competence: every language is situated in a sociocultural context and implies the use of particular reference frame which is different from that of the foreign language learner; socio-cultural competence presupposes a certain degree of familiarity with that context.

- Social competence includes both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy, and the ability to handle social situations.[4]

Culture is an absolutely essential part of the second language class. Without incorporating culture regularly, students lack an important component of the language learning process. Culture is indispensable in order to fully understand a language, its nuances and appropriate uses. Aside from understanding the linguistic side of language, culture is a key component in giving the student a well-rounded education in the chosen language and provides a context for understanding one's own culture.[5]

Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use that language; in fact, students cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs. [6, p.27]

Linguists and anthropologists have long recognized that the forms and uses of a given language reflect the cultural values of the society in which the language is spoken. Linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language (Krasner, 1999). Language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.[7, p.27]

From my teaching experience at Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools I practiced ICC with the help of communicative activities such as film making, defending a presentation and projects, acting out, playing games, role-playing, having a discussion, holding a debate in English with 7th and 8th grade learners.

a)In role plays, students can act out a miscommunication that is based on cultural differences. For example, after learning about ways of addressing different groups of people in the target culture, such as people of the same age and older people, students could role play a situation in which an inappropriate greeting is used. Other students observe the role play and try to identify the reason for the miscommunication. They then role play the same situation using a culturally appropriate form of address. Experiencing the situation from different perspectives can contribute to a —clearer perception, greater awareness and —a better understanding of one's own culture and culture of other people (Fennes H., Hapgood K). [8,p.107] As a teacher I started to use this activity

during our untraditional open lesson with my colleague in Atyrau. Since that time I have been teaching and assessing learners' speaking skills with the help of it. Another example of role-play is the conversation between doctor and patient, also the role-play during making a storyboard of cartoons with 8th grade students at the Intellectual School in Almaty.

b) Projects

We can apply not just classroom instructional activities for cultural assignments in foreign language teaching in the content of intercultural communicative competence but we can also use some projects that students can prepare individually or in groups to be presented in the classroom. [9, p.113] As a teacher I assigned my students to prepare projects for the topics such as health problems. Also had experience to work in scientific project for learners "Science Festival" which was held in NIS Atyrau.

C) Discussion

The students should first become acquaintance with what it means to be part of their own culture before jumping into and getting lost in the target culture. By discussing the values, expectations, traditions, customs, and rituals they unconsciously take part in, they are ready to reflect upon the values, expectations, and traditions of others —with a higher degree of intellectual objectivity (Huber-Kriegler. Lázár and Strange). Discussion involves various topics about intercultural aspects, contributing greatly to learner's motivation and critical thinking. Discussion activity can provide good teaching/learning atmosphere in which students can cooperate better with one another, learn from the content of discussion and from one another. [10, p.112]

In conclusion, communicative activities enable to overcome the language barrier, insecurity, fear to express their thoughts correctly, real life situations are used. This is due to the fact that the lesson excluded speaking in their native language, and instead of conventional exercise. The most common activities are communicative problem tasks (charades, puzzles, and games), interviews, discussions, role-playing games, communication studies, preparation of the story. [11, p.1] Each of these tasks aims the purpose of the development of communicative and speech abilities, skills of building his statement clearly and grammatically, emerging into another culture and developing intercultural communicative competence.

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