

Cross-cultural communication development of agricultural students during foreign language activity

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the problem of multicultural education development in agricultural higher educational institution. It is one of the conditions of highly qualified and competently able specialists preparation in agro-industrial complex. The principle role in it is given to the discipline of foreign language as the universal means of multicultural education. For decision of the problem the authors proposed the effective methods and techniques taking into account the cross-cultural environment of foreign language activity. Results demonstrated the efficiency of cultural communication during foreign language learning as a team.

1. Introduction

Integration processes in the field of higher education, expressed in the monitoring of higher educational institutions for the reception of citizens from the "near" and "far abroad", the intensification of international cooperation, the possibility of studying abroad according to student exchange programme have identified the problem of multicultural education. The idea of educating students, in particular in our agricultural institution, should be aimed at understanding the unity of the world community, feelings of national patriotism and self-consciousness and be based on the cultural and educational values of different nations. The relevance of this topic is also determined by the ethnically diverse environment of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), expansion of international cooperation in the field of agriculture and preparation of students for cultural, professional and personal communication with representatives of foreign countries. Here the main role is assigned to a foreign language as a universal means of communication. The task of lecturers of a foreign language in an agricultural institution is the preparation of competent, competitive and demanded specialists in their professional field.

Mastering a foreign language is always associated with "entering into the world of another culture" (Fomin, 1998). The pedagogical process, aimed at obtaining and reflexive perception of cultural knowledge, increases the general cultural level of students, stimulates the desire for personal and professional growth. Also the modern goals of teaching foreign languages are associated with the practical acquisition of language, adequate speech behavior in various situations. "Communicative competence is adequate communication in various situations (including professional and business), taking into account relevant cultural patterns of communication and interaction" (Fomin, 1998). Many researchers emphasize that the development of intercultural competence of students requires consideration of the sociocultural factor (Nikitenko& Osyanova, 1993). Intercultural communication is an adequate mutual understanding between two participants belonging to different national cultures in a communicative act (Vereshchagin, Kostomarov, 2005). In this case it is possible only after the students realize the values of their native culture and language (Vereshchagin& Kostomarov, 2005). Knowing your own culture and opposing it to other culture creates a dialogical personality. It is precisely the dialogical personality makes her capable of a dialogue of cultures (Bakhtin, 1979).

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2. Methodology

The problems of multicultural education were first studied by American scientists. K.I. Bennett pointed to the reform of the educational content, which would reflect the uniqueness of each ethnic group and development of learners such personal qualities as multiculturalism, expressed in a tolerant and respectful attitude to other cultures (Bennet, 1999). J. Banks emphasized that being a process multicultural education is a special way of thinking, a special attitude and a special type of behavior in a culturally diverse environment ”(Banks, 2001). The compulsory components of multicultural literacy S. Nieto attributed students' knowledge of history, art, and literature of all the peoples of the country; possession of at least one foreign language; knowledge of the traditions of not only their own people but also those nations whose representatives attend the school (Nieto, 2000).

Multicultural education implies both the psychological readiness of students to communicate, a certain level of their knowledge of speech skills and language material and the necessary amount of socio-cultural and cultural knowledge about the country of the language being studied. The main areas of multicultural education are cognitive, pragmatic and motivational ones. In the cognitive sphere the goal is to obtain information about other cultures. A pragmatic goal involves the acquisition of practical skills necessary for intercultural communication. In terms of motivation, the goal is to form a student's openness, tolerance and respect for the culture of another nation (Fomin, 1998).

In order to achieve all these goals in teaching English students of agricultural institution in classes we use lexical and grammatical material on the following oral topics as, “Tomorrow's farms”, “Professionals in agriculture”, “The problems of zooengineering (forestry, veterinary medicine, etc.)”, “The students of agriculture in Britain”, “Domestication of animals”, “Mutual future”, “Modern agricultural machinery” and others. Also we use test materials for the study of speech etiquette and regional study material. At the same time effective means are the use of new information technologies in the classroom and a comparative analysis based on the material of the country of the language being studied, Russia and the republics, where the students of the group come from. Internet resources are rich source of authentic materials, working with which in foreign language classes can contribute to the development of multicultural education of students by enriching the knowledge of cultural information, improving linguistic competence, acquiring certain skills without which an understanding of a person living in another culture turns out to be embarrassing.

3. Results

Modeling communication, including thematic situations, such as “Meeting with partners”, “Job hunting”, “Business trip”, “On the farm”, business games, conferences on the problem of the village and their specialty create conditions for the active socialization of students, expand the scope of multicultural education. Thus students can participate in all forms of social interaction adopted between them in real life or in their chosen profession in English (Kuklina, 2002). One of the conditions for the possibility of multicultural education is awareness. The text as a unit of communication and a complete speech carries certain information, which reflects materials on both the broad profile of agricultural institution and the narrow specialty. The selection of textual material and the method of working with it is a difficult task. It is necessary to highlight the following principles for the selection of texts: 1) the principle of authenticity is the correspondence of the content to the realities of the country of the language being studied; 2) the principle of influencing emotional and motivational sphere of the individual, taking into account the students' interests, needs and language level; 3) the principle of methodological value for the formation of intercultural competence based on comparative analysis; 4) the principle of influence on the formation of professional skills of a future specialist. The selection of such authentic materials by students using Internet resources, translation and retelling of the text also contribute to expanding the students' intercultural potential, form a complex of analytical skills, improve the skills of collecting, systematizing, summarizing and interpreting cultural information by means of a foreign language. Of great importance is the introduction to the curriculum of electives, English majors course and special course “Business English”. The use of materials from special disciplines at an agricultural institution, such as “Animal Husbandry”, “Crop farming”, “Animal Anatomy”, “Forest Studies”, “Mechanics” and translation the terms into English also enriches the vocabulary of students and increases the motivation to learn their specialty. Scientists have seen in interdisciplinary connections a means of solving a number of general pedagogical and methodological tasks: strengthening cognitive interest of students (V.N. Maksimova, 1988), the depth and strength of knowledge (M.M. Skatkin, 1971). Comparison of this material with authentic materials of the core direction serves multicultural education, the main position of the modern concept of education. So as practice shows in the agricultural institute as in other higher educational institutions, it is the foreign language discipline that plays the main role in the development of students' multicultural education. The main task of teaching a foreign language at the present stage is the upbringing of a person, the main asset of which is human culture and human values. This task is directly related to the problem of mutual understanding of people, their spiritual connection and the search for common ways of making progress, the solution of which can be the introduction of students to the cultural heritage and spiritual values of their nation and other peoples. Thus multicultural education as a process of cultural mutual enrichment between people teaches students to understand, accept and appreciate a representative of a different culture (Maximova, 1988). The philosophical basis of the modern concept of multicultural education is the idea of dialogue and interaction of cultures, civilizations, countries, the problem of forming a polyethnic culture of the individual, which is important in educating the younger generation and their future cooperation with representatives of other countries, engaging in a multicultural environment.

4. Conclusion

Realizing and detecting the nature of the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning and teaching another language. This study aimed to investigate the impact of culture in teaching and learning English as a foreign language and also it suggests some ways of how to teach culture in classroom. The integration of cross cultural communication and foreign language studies contribute significantly to both the business community and the foreign language education profession. It is leading to increasingly successful global interactions.

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