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THE ROLE OF LINGUCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract:

This thesis examines the role of lingucultural competence in foreign language learning and explains why successful language acquisition cannot be limited to grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Lingucultural competence is understood as the learner's ability to understand, interpret and use language in connection with cultural meanings, social norms, values, traditions and communicative behavior. The thesis argues that foreign language learning becomes more effective when linguistic knowledge is integrated with cultural awareness, because language reflects the worldview of its speakers. The study is based on theoretical analysis of linguistic, cultural and pedagogical sources. The findings show that lingucultural competence improves communicative accuracy, reduces intercultural misunderstanding and develops learners' ability to participate in real communication.

Keywords: lingucultural competence, foreign language learning, intercultural communication, cultural awareness, communicative competence, language teaching.

In modern foreign language education, the main goal is not only to teach learners how to construct grammatically correct sentences, but also to prepare them for meaningful communication in different cultural contexts. A learner may know many words and grammatical rules, but still fail to communicate effectively if he or she does not understand cultural meanings, politeness norms, speech etiquette



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and national values reflected in the target language. Therefore, linguistic competence has become an important component of foreign language learning.

The concept of linguistic competence is closely connected with communicative competence and intercultural competence. Hymes emphasized that language users need to know not only what is grammatically possible, but also what is socially appropriate in a particular situation. Byram later developed the idea of intercultural communicative competence, showing that language learning should include the ability to compare cultures, interpret cultural facts and communicate respectfully with representatives of other communities. In this context, linguistic competence helps learners understand how language and culture function as a single system.

The relevance of this thesis is determined by the growing need for foreign language learners who can use language not mechanically, but consciously and culturally appropriately. Globalization, academic mobility, international cooperation and digital communication require learners to understand cultural codes hidden in speech patterns, idioms, proverbs, gestures, forms of address and communicative strategies.

The thesis is based on a qualitative theoretical method. Scientific literature on linguoculturology, foreign language pedagogy, communicative competence and intercultural communication was analyzed. Comparative and interpretive methods were used to identify the connection between language units and cultural meanings. Special attention was paid to the pedagogical interpretation of linguistic competence, because this competence should be formed not only through theoretical explanation, but also through practical classroom activities. The analysis focused on how cultural content can be integrated into vocabulary teaching, speaking tasks, reading comprehension and communicative practice.



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The analysis shows that lingucultural competence performs several important functions in foreign language learning. First, it helps learners understand the cultural meaning of lexical units. Many words do not have exact equivalents in another language because they are connected with national traditions, social experience and historical memory. For example, words connected with family relations, hospitality, respect, holidays and everyday behavior often carry cultural information that cannot be understood through direct translation only.

Second, lingucultural competence improves the understanding of idioms, proverbs and phraseological units. Such language units are rich in cultural associations. If learners translate them literally, they may misunderstand the meaning. However, when teachers explain the cultural background of these expressions, students begin to understand not only the language form, but also the mentality of native speakers. Third, lingucultural competence develops pragmatic awareness. Learners become able to choose appropriate speech forms depending on the situation, age, status and relationship between speakers. This is especially important in requests, apologies, compliments, refusals and greetings. A phrase that is grammatically correct may sound impolite or unnatural if it is used without cultural sensitivity.

The results also indicate that culturally oriented teaching increases learners' motivation. Lessons become more meaningful when students work with authentic materials, such as dialogues, films, songs, texts, advertisements and real-life communicative situations. These materials show language as a living phenomenon and help students compare their native culture with the target culture.

Lingucultural competence should be developed systematically in foreign language classes. It is not enough to add cultural facts occasionally; culture must be connected with every language skill. In reading, students can analyze cultural symbols and social values in texts. In speaking, they can practice culturally appropriate dialogues. In writing, they can learn how politeness and formality are



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expressed in letters, messages and academic texts. In listening, they can observe intonation, emotional expression and communicative behavior.

The teacher's role is especially important in this process. The teacher should not present culture as a set of stereotypes, but as a dynamic system of meanings. Learners should be encouraged to compare, question and interpret cultural phenomena. This approach forms tolerance, empathy and respect for other cultures. At the same time, it helps students understand their own national culture more deeply, because comparison with another language often reveals the specific features of one's native language and worldview.

Lingucultural competence also supports the development of independent learning. When students learn to notice cultural meanings in language, they become more attentive to context and more capable of using authentic resources. They begin to understand that foreign language learning is not memorization of isolated words, but entry into another cultural and communicative world.

Lingucultural competence plays a significant role in foreign language learning because it connects linguistic knowledge with cultural understanding. It enables learners to communicate appropriately, interpret cultural meanings and avoid misunderstanding in intercultural interaction. The formation of this competence should be considered an essential pedagogical task in modern language education. Foreign language teaching becomes more effective when grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are integrated with cultural awareness, authentic materials and communicative practice. Thus, lingucultural competence is one of the key conditions for developing a competent, flexible and culturally sensitive foreign language user.



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