

FORMATION OF SENIOR STUDENTS' SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCE BY MEANS OF BLOG TECHNOLOGY

Luiza R. Zakirova

Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russia.

Marianna E. Yashina

Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Russia.

Mariya B. Kazachkova

Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), Russia.

E-mail: clivia29@yandex.ru

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the research of the formation of sociocultural competence in the process of teaching a foreign language at the senior stage with the help of the blog technology. The relevance of this article is because sociocultural competence is one of the structural components of communicative competence, which is key in the context of global intercultural communication. The aim of the research is to provide the theoretical basis and practical verification of the effectiveness of using blog technology in the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students in a foreign language class. In the research, the authors analysed the characteristics of the blog and the benefits of its use, revealed that using the blog technology can develop almost all types of speech activities: writing, reading and listening, as well as improve the sociocultural competence of students. Obviously, the blog technology has many advantages compared to other technologies, as it includes all types of information. Consequently, the blog provides an opportunity to implement various tasks. The article describes the experimental work, namely, its purpose, tasks, stages, conditions, content, methods of teaching the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students.

KEYWORDS

Foreign language, Socio-cultural competence, Intercultural interaction, Blog, Information technologies.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the period of globalization, the study of a foreign language becomes a necessity for integration in the modern world. The high degree of mobility of people around the world leads to intercultural interaction. In this regard, according to the new educational standards of June 5, 2012, each graduate of the Russian school is obliged to master at a certain level at least one foreign language. However, language learning includes many aspects, one of which is sociocultural. Direct communication with native speakers requires competence not only in matters of grammar and phonetics of a foreign language, but also in the field of foreign culture, traditions and customs. The significance of the sociocultural component is often underestimated, although it is precisely it, in our opinion, that can contribute to the transformation of the English language into a subject-specific discipline in Russian secondary schools.

The peculiarity of a foreign language functioning is that its communicative function provides intercultural communication. The interdisciplinary nature of the content of the subject “foreign language” has favourable opportunities for creating a wide sociocultural educational space, while using the sociocultural approach in language education that gives a new, deeper and more meaningful discovery of all components of the concept of functional sociocultural literacy. Socio-cultural competence can be achieved at the expense of other disciplines, and such sources of sociocultural information as literature, mass media, the Internet, and films and can be an essential addition to the development of sociocultural competence.

The knowledge of the native speakers’ culture provides with a deeper mutual understanding. The main thing in the process of learning is not only the accumulation of information about the country, but also the knowledge of people, their peers, the way of thinking, behaviour, and attitude to human values.

We can say that culture and intercultural communication problems should be presented in educational process as global education objectives. However, the new concept of sociocultural education requires serious didactic thinking, choice

of approach to learning a foreign language which can provide socialization of training foreign language communication and connection of communicative activity of students with cognitive research to the study of sociocultural portrait of native speakers (Rakhimova, 2017; Kheirabadi & Mirzaei, 2019; Nakhaee & Nasrabadi, 2019; Alipichev *et al.*, 2017).

We tried to analyse a theoretical basis and practical verification of the effectiveness of using blog technology in the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students at the lessons of a foreign language. While analysing the term “sociocultural competence” we resorted to educational literature on the research topic; theoretically and experimentally substantiated the effectiveness of the use of blog technology in the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students; developed educational and methodical recommendations on the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students based on the Google Blogger service (Kashisaz & Mobarak, 2018; Eslami & Ahmadi, 2019; Jabbari *et al.*, 2019).

The theoretical basis of this work was the scientific works of Russian and foreign methodologists on the formation of sociocultural competence in foreign language lessons such as Bim (2003), Bayram (1997), Galskova (2000), Sysoev (2004), Shakiba & Delqandi (2018).

According to Sut (2003), sociocultural competence can be defined as the students’ ability to accomplish proper cross-cultural communication, whereas Nikitenko (2005) wrote that sociocultural competence is represented in the knowledge of the language (non-equivalent and normal vocabulary), knowledge of national culture, and the norms of behaviour.

It is worth mentioning that modern methodological research is based on the linguistic approach of teaching a foreign language. At the same time, vocabulary with a cross-cultural component, cross-cultural information, affecting the most diverse aspects of the life of the country of the studied language, its history, literature, science, art, as well as traditions, customs and customs, are highlighted.

The linguistic and cultural aspect contributes to the enrichment of the subject-content plan. Its more thorough selection and earlier use of a foreign language in school is one of the reserves for increasing its activity.

Culture in its various directions contributes to the formation of a person's personality. "Foreign Language Culture" is the issue that can provide students with the process of mastering a foreign language in the educational, cognitive, developmental and educational aspects.

The elements that make up the content of a "foreign language culture" are the following:

- 1) A set of knowledge about the language being studied, about the functions of the language in society, about the culture of the country of the language being studied, about the ways of most effectively mastering the language as a means of communication, about the possibilities of the influence of the learning process on the students' personality, and all this is called the conditional element – knowledge;
- 2) Experience in the implementation of speech and learning activities - learning and speech skills;
- 3) The ability to perform all the speech functions necessary to meet their needs and the needs of society;
- 4) The experience of an emotional attitude to the process of mastering a foreign language culture to the teacher and students as speech partners, to the language being studied as an academic subject, to the role of language in the life of society – an experience turned to the system of personal values or otherwise – motivation.

Mastering a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication is impossible without knowledge of the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic characteristics of the target language country (Ostroumova *et al.*, 2014; Sailaukyzy *et al.*, 2018). Using cross-cultural information in the learning process increases

students' cognitive activity, examines their communicative abilities, favors their communication skills and abilities, as well as positive motivation, provides an incentive for independent work on the language and contributes to solving educational tasks.

The main purpose of teaching a foreign language in the secondary school is to develop the personality of the pupil in close connection with the teaching of the culture of the country of a foreign language contributing to the desire to participate in intercultural communication and independently improve in the classroom activities.

2. METHODS

In the course of the research we used the following methods: analysis of scientific and methodological literature on the research problem, scientific observation, generalization of the results of the experimental work. The relationships between theoretical stance, pedagogical context and research approach.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the process of the research, we analysed the methodological literature of Russian and foreign authors on the formation of sociocultural competence at the senior stage in secondary school. Sociocultural competence is one of the structural components of communicative competence, which is key in the context of global intercultural communication. Thus, the formation of “sociocultural competence” in a secondary school is usually understood to mean familiarizing students with the realities of the country/countries of the language being studied, their culture and customs within certain themes and situations of communication necessary for the successful implementation of intercultural communication. In accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard of Secondary General Education (GEF SOO) for 10-11 grades dated October 6, 2009, clause 9.1.2, students must acquire communicative competence in the subject “Foreign

Language” (basic level) in order to successfully socialize and fulfill themselves, and also use a foreign language as a “tool of intercultural communication in the modern multicultural world”. In addition, according to the GEF SOO, students should acquire knowledge about the countries of the language being studied, considering its socio-cultural component. One of the requirements for the “portrait of a high school student” is also “the ability to build one’s speech and nonverbal behaviour adequately to this specificity; the ability to single out what is common and different in the culture of one’s native country and the country / countries of the language being studied”.

Communicative competence is the main purpose of teaching a foreign language at school, but it includes several subcompetences, such as sociocultural and sociolinguistic, which should be included in the ZUN (knowledge, skills) of a graduate of a secondary school in the Russian Federation.

It is not possible to implement the formation of communicative competence without knowledge from the field of linguistic studies, since each foreign word is a product of a foreign language culture and reflects the internal structure of the language.

4. SUMMARY

To increase the efficiency of shaping sociocultural competence among schoolchildren, we suggested using the blog technology Web 2.0. The term “weblog” or “blog” was first used by Jorn Barger in 1997. Blogs have become widely used since 2001 and are now widespread. The first blog was an annotated list of bookmarks, open to the general public.

IT-technologies set new trends in different spheres including education and pedagogy. Teaching English as a foreign language and education in general is a huge ground for development (Gatiyatullina *et al.*, 2018).

In the process of the research we analysed the characteristic features of the blog and the benefits of using blog technology. Moreover, we found out that with the help of blog technology it is possible to develop almost all types of speech activity: writing, reading and listening, as well as improving the sociocultural competence of students. Obviously, the blog technology has many advantages compared to other technologies, as it brings together all types of information. Consequently, the blog provides an opportunity to implement the tasks of a different plan.

The research is aimed at the practical study of the problem of the formation of sociocultural competence in a comprehensive school. The main goal of any scientific research is to improve the educational process, so the experiment is one of the main research methods. In this regard, in order to test the effectiveness of the use of blog technology, we carried out experimental work in which 30 senior students participated. The practical part of the experimental work was carried out based on the Municipal Public Educational Institution “Secondary School N.º 2” of the city of Leninogorsk. The main goal of our experimental work is the approbation of an educational and methodological complex that contributes to the effective formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students.

In the course of the experiment, an educational Internet blog was developed and tested, aimed at improving the formation of the sociocultural competence of senior students. The lessons in the control group were carried out in accordance with the program, in the traditional question-answer form. The educational process in the experimental group, in turn, was also carried out in accordance with the program requirements, but in an unconventional form (using the educational web blog).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The control slice of students’ knowledge, as well as the results of the comparative characteristics of the successful implementation of tasks of the experimental group at the ascertaining and final stages showed the following:

- 1) The level of sociocultural competence in the experimental group is higher than in the control group.
- 2) The level of formation of sociocultural competence in the experimental group at the final stage is much higher than at the ascertaining stage.

The results obtained allowed us to talk about the effectiveness of the use of the educational blog we developed in English lessons in order to increase the sociocultural competence of senior students.

In the course of this scientific study, we concluded that the Internet resources created by native speakers and teachers of the English language make it possible to improve the efficiency of teaching a foreign language. Besides, students learn to transfer already available knowledge of a foreign language to new sociocultural situations and problems, to see contradictions, having at the same time independence of judgements (Rachimova *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, they get the opportunity to perceive the natural form of the language, which corresponds to the realities of the English-speaking countries, while increasing their competence in linguistic and social and cultural aspects.

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