

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

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Abstract

In the context of globalization and increasingly active international interaction, the role of intercultural competence as an essential component of the educational process is increasing. This article examines the key problems of teaching intercultural skills: from methodological difficulties to psychological and pedagogical barriers. Special attention is paid to the specifics of teaching a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication and the need for a systematic approach to the formation of intercultural awareness in students.

Keywords: Intercultural skills, teaching problems, methodological difficulties, communication, translation, teaching methods.

Introduction

Modern education is aimed not only at transferring knowledge, but also at preparing a personality capable of effective interaction in a multicultural environment. Teaching intercultural skills becomes a prerequisite for the formation of a citizen of the global world. However, in practice, this process faces a number of serious problems.

The modern world, due to growing cultural contacts and interactions between different peoples and countries, is becoming diverse. In this context, the issues of building intercultural communications, which are based on respect for the cultural and linguistic values of other peoples, mutual understanding and preservation of cultural identity, are becoming increasingly important. There is also a growing need to develop scientifically based recommendations that will ensure effective and conflict-free intercultural communication. Thus, it becomes obvious that the

integration of teaching intercultural communication into the domestic educational system is relevant and necessary. Education enriched with multicultural aspects contributes to the all-round development of the personality, increases the level of cultural competence, forms respectful attitude towards representatives of other cultures and develops skills of constructive cooperation. The presence of intercultural component in the education process makes it relevant to search for new pedagogical, psychological and methodological solutions in teaching the skills of intercultural communication with representatives of other cultures.

The modern higher education system is continuously searching for innovative educational technologies and methods that help to assimilate theoretical knowledge and develop practical skills, which is key to the training of qualified and well-rounded specialists. Teaching methods are rapidly changing in accordance with technical and social progress. During the study and analysis of pedagogical literature in this work, the problem of choosing between methodology and technology as modern and effective ways of teaching intercultural communication arose. In the current understanding, method and technology are sets of teaching methods, but technology also includes processes - it is the process of learning itself and the development of the chosen approaches. Method, in turn, denotes a way of theoretical investigation or practical realization. In technology, the concept of method is additionally considered through process. Despite their similarities, method and technology have important differences and reflect different aspects of pedagogical reality. Thus, the study and comparison of the concepts of “methodology” and “technology” in pedagogy was carried out.

A great contribution to the development of the concept of pedagogical technology, teaching methods and their classification was made by Russian scientists: S.I. Arkhangelsky, Y.K. Babansky, V.P. Bespalko, L.S. Vygotsky, V.V. Zimnyaya, V.S. Larner, Y.G. Tatur, N.F. Tylyzina, D.V. Chernilevsky. Zimnyaya, V.S. Larner, Y.G. Tatur, N.F. Tylyzina, D.V. Chernilevsky.

In modern pedagogy there are many definitions of teaching methods and their classifications. Each method pursues the achievement of specific pedagogical goals and has its own advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, there are no universal methods, and it is necessary to make a choice depending on the educational task.¹

¹ Babansky, Y. K. Pedagogy: textbook / Y. K. Babansky, T. A

Modern pedagogical learning technologies are a systemic category covering the design, implementation, evaluation, correction and reproduction of the learning process. Some authors compare this category with pedagogical skill, which develops with experience.

In modern French teaching, the formation of intercultural competence is considered as one of the key tasks. This competence includes not only the ability to communicate in a foreign language, but also the understanding of cultural codes, norms and values characteristic of French-speaking countries.

Interculturalism involves mastering the following skills:

- ability to perceive another culture without bias;
- ability to interpret cultural realities through the prism of one's own and another's culture;
- development of empathy and adaptability in intercultural communication.²

The analysis is carried out according to the following criteria: compliance with CECRL standards, setting of learning goals and objectives, structure and logic of the content, applied methodological approaches (especially communicative approach), development of all types of speech activities (listening, speaking, reading, writing), means of control and evaluation of learning outcomes.

The main problems of teaching intercultural skills.

1. Methodological uncertainty

One of the key problems is the lack of a unified methodological framework. The concept of “intercultural competence” is interpreted in different ways: as a set of knowledge about culture, as the ability to adapt, as the ability to empathy, etc. Hence the difficulty in choosing pedagogical methods and criteria for evaluating the result.³

² Andronov a, O. A. Tarasenko. – M.: Prosveshchenie, – 1988. – 479 c

³ Byram, M. Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Multilingual Matters, 1997.

2 Insufficient teacher training

Not all teachers are skilled in cultural analysis or have sufficient intercultural experience. This makes it difficult to incorporate authentic and culturally sensitive materials into the classroom.

3 Stereotyping and Ethnocentrism

Students (and sometimes teachers) often demonstrate stereotypical or ethnocentric perceptions of other cultures. Without recognizing this barrier, effective intercultural sensitivity building becomes impossible.

4 Limited learning materials

Many language textbooks focus on formal language proficiency, while cultural components are presented superficially or as fragmented information that does not always correspond to realities.

Teaching intercultural skills should be done systematically, through the context of real life situations. For example, analysis of intercultural conflicts, work with videos and texts reflecting real-life behaviors.

It is necessary to introduce courses on intercultural pedagogy into teacher training programs. Professional development should include trainings on the culture of communication, tolerance, and the psychology of perception of foreign cultures.

Project-based learning methods, role-playing games, case methods, discussions with the participation of representatives of other cultures allow to activate intercultural perception and develop empathy.

1. French language program for secondary school (based on the Uzbek curriculum)

The program meets the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards (Uzbekistan) and is oriented towards students achieving the A2 level by the end of grade 11.

The program prescribes the main topics ("My Family", "Travel", "Ecology"), grammatical structures (conditional sentences of type I, agreement of tenses) and communicative situations.

Advantages: logical distribution of material, gradual complication of topics and grammatical phenomena.

Disadvantages: weak attention to the formation of intercultural competence, limited use of information technologies.

1.The training complex "Le Nouveau Taxi!"

"Le Nouveau Taxi!" is one of the most common textbooks for teaching French at the A1-B1 level.

The textbook uses a communicative approach, includes numerous audio materials, real dialogues, cultural information about France and French-speaking countries.⁴

3. DELF B1 Exam Preparation Program (CIEP)

The DELF B1 International Exam Preparation Program is aimed at developing the ability to understand the main ideas of complex texts, to participate in discussions, to express one's own opinion and to argue one's point of view.⁵

Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis shows that the most effective programs (for example, DELF preparation programs) are focused on the development of learners' autonomy, their ability to apply the language in real situations, which corresponds to the principles of the competence approach.

At the same time, school programs often focus on reproductive activities (paraphrase, translation) and insufficiently use modern technologies (interactive platforms, online resources).

In addition, in recent years, educational programs have increased the emphasis on the intercultural component, which is especially important in the context of preparing students to interact in an international environment.

Main Approaches in Curricula

Most modern French language teaching programs (e.g. the European project Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues - CECRL) emphasize intercultural communication as the most important component of communicative competence. According to CECRL, learners should:

- Know the cultural norms of the countries of the target language;
- be able to adapt speech behavior depending on the cultural context;

4 Capelle, G., & Menand, R. (2011). Le Nouveau Taxi !. Paris: Hachette FLE

5 France Éducation internationale. (2022). Guide officiel du DELF B1. Paris: Didier

- demonstrate respect for cultural differences.

At the level of school and university programs this component is implemented through the integration of cultural materials into language teaching.

Examples of analyzing curricula and textbooks

Example 1: Textbook "Alter Ego+" (A1-B2)

"Alter Ego+" is widely used in international French language teaching practice. In it, intercultural competence is developed through:

- sections "Culture" and "Regards croisés", where students are invited to compare their culture with the French culture;
- thematic texts about everyday life, education system, holidays (for example, a lesson on the celebration of 14 juillet - Bastille Day);
- tasks to discuss stereotypes (for example, how the French are perceived abroad and what stereotypes exist about French-speaking countries).

Example assignment:

"Comparez les habitudes alimentaires en France et dans votre pays. Quelles différences remarquez-vous?"⁶

Example 2: Édito textbook (A2-B2)

The Édito textbook emphasizes:

- analyzing cultural differences in the media;
- developing skills to critically interpret cultural events;
- debates about values and social norms.

Example assignment:

"À partir d'un article de presse, discutez des différences dans la conception du travail entre la France et votre pays."

Example 3: "Le français interculturel" textbook

This specialized manual focuses specifically on the development of intercultural skills:

⁶ Conseil de l'Europe. Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues : apprendre, enseigner, évaluer. Didier, 2001.

- Each topic includes a section on "Interculturalité", where real-life intercultural communication situations are presented;
- The specialized textbook is aimed specifically at developing intercultural skills: each topic includes a section on "Interculturalité", where real situations of intercultural communication are offered.⁷

The analysis of modern curricula shows that teaching French in the context of intercultural communication:

- 1) is built on the principles of authenticity, multidimensionality and openness;
- 2) requires active inclusion of students in the processes of comparing cultural norms;
- 3) promotes the development of tolerance and intercultural awareness.

However, as research shows, (the success of intercultural competence development largely depends not only on the content of textbooks, but also on teaching methods, professional training of teachers and the creation of a motivating educational environment.

CONCLUSION

The formation of intercultural skills is a complex and multilayered process that requires from the teacher not only language knowledge, but also cultural competence, empathy, and flexibility of thinking. Overcoming the problems is possible only with an integrated approach to the content, methods and organization of the educational process. The future of intercultural education depends on the readiness of educators to become not just carriers of knowledge, but also mediators between cultures. The problems of teaching intercultural skills are different, for example, the analysis of curricula, learning difficulties and typical mistakes in international communication allows us to conclude that the formation of intercultural competence in teaching French is a difficult but extremely necessary task.

Modern curricula generally recognize the importance of the intercultural component, but its implementation is often superficial or fragmented. The problems are exacerbated by insufficient teacher training, limited authentic materials, language barriers and students' tendency to stereotype.

⁷ Le français interculturel. CLE International, 2015.

Typical errors in international communication, such as misuse of forms of politeness, misunderstanding of nonverbal cues, misrepresentation of cultural realities, or misunderstanding of humor, demonstrate the need for a systematic approach to teaching intercultural skills. Without targeted work in this direction, students may experience difficulties not only in language learning, but also in real communication with representatives of French-speaking cultures.

Thus, successful development of intercultural competence requires:

- integration of cultural aspects into the learning process at all stages;
- use of authentic materials and situational tasks;
- development of critical thinking and intercultural reflexivity in students;
- improvement of teachers' professional competence in the field of intercultural communication.

The solution of these problems is the key to effective and conscious mastering of French as a means of intercultural communication.

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