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## **AUTHENTIC MATERIALS SPECIFICS IN THE PROCESS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FORMATION**

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At the present stage of education development foreign languages teaching is primarily aimed at the formation of the student's multicultural personality. In this context, the experience of students' intercultural communication is of paramount importance. In this regard, the organization of the educational process is to ensure an authentic environment leading to the formation and development of the secondary linguistic personality of the student who possesses intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence includes skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with the representatives of other cultures. Such a kind of communication is associated with the achievement of interactional goals and presupposes behavior suitable for a specific cultural environment and communicative situation taking into account corresponding cultural norms. Considering the notion of intercultural competence Fantini equals it to the intercultural communicative competence and states that monolingual individual can never possibly have one [1]. Thus, intercultural competence is generally defined as a complex of abilities and skills needed to act effectively and appropriately in the interaction with linguistically and culturally different society.

Over the past decades, significant attention has been paid to the use of authentic materials in the teaching of foreign languages. This is due to the fact that authentic materials contain culturally specific information about the target language country. Moreover, these materials, as a rule, demonstrate the students a number of extra-linguistic components of communication. These features allow authentic media texts to serve as a means of intercultural competence formation, which is the ability to communicate in a foreign language, taking into account cultural differences.

Defining authentic materials one tends to include all written or oral materials containing real communicative acts produced by native speakers for an audience in a non-artificial situation. The language at all its levels is presented in relevant contexts close to the students' every-day experience. Using authentic materials is significant not only pedagogically, but it also provides the students with a high level of motivation, which allows them to feel confident, realizing their ability to communicate in real situations as opposed to the unnatural, abstract ones presented in textbooks. Being exposed to the highly possible situations students have to use corresponding linguistic forms as a native speaker would do. Justifying the use of authentic materials researchers state that while working with authentic materials students recognize themselves as the subjects of intercultural interaction, assess their ability and

willingness to interact with native speakers and identify problematic points to be improved for successful communication.

Since authentic materials reflect the reality of the target language country, this leads to their critical analysis and comparison with students' native culture, which is the essence of the intercultural competence formation. Authentic materials also have a high developmental potential in terms of students' linguistic memory, due to the use of linguistic units not typical for textbooks containing adapted materials. Moreover, it allows teachers to provide a high level of complexity of educational content.

The selection of authentic materials in the process of intercultural competence formation, in our opinion, is subject to the following criteria according to Smirnova [2]: 1) topical correlation; 2) focus on the contemporary reality of the target language country; 3) consideration of the students' age characteristics and cognitive abilities; 4) the obligatory inclusion of a cultural minimum possessed by a native speaker; 5) educational value; 6) novelty. Yet, Berardo adds the following criteria [3]: 1) content suitability; 2) exploitability, 3) readability. At the same time, he shares the viewpoint that the content should correspond to the students' interests, needs and abilities.

It still remains a disputable issue whether the influence of authentic materials on the process of the language teaching is productive or unproductive. The fact that the target language is used in its social context is considered by lots of scientists as a motivating factor for learners, who get more interested in the target language and culture and overcome the barriers of different kinds easier than other learners. However, the use of authentic materials cannot but be criticized. It is stated as well that such materials have no impact on language learning and don't manifest any significant advantages over non-authentic materials. Moreover, the result of learning based on authentic materials compared to learning using traditional ones does not demonstrate considerable differences according to various researches. Cultural bias is considered to be one more disadvantage of authentic materials in a learning process. It should be mentioned that for the learners of beginning levels using authentic materials may turn out to be quite demotivating because of either vague foreign reality or a high level of complexity. This may obviously lead to confusion and misunderstanding and that is why such sources should be avoided at the starter level point of language acquisition. Nevertheless, non-authentic materials can be motivating for learners, while authentic ones often contain difficult linguistic forms. Among the advantages of adapted materials is their orientation on the syllabus and a ready-made form for teachers. The last factor mentioned seems to be especially important in the context of teachers' tense work to which the need to adapt materials will only add one more considerable complication.

Compiling educational programs, teachers tend to use a mixture of created and authentic materials because both have their advantages as well as limitations. Furthermore, it becomes impossible to differentiate between authentic and created materials because many textbooks combine authentic texts with other sources. With the advance of the Internet, the access to authentic materials becomes easier and the chief goal of their use in class transforms to providing students with the tips of the Internet exploration and exploitation in accordance with their needs. In general, there is no reason not to mix created and authentic materials in an appropriate situation. In the studies on this issue, the following terms can be found to refer to materials of this kind, texts in particular: 1) semi-authentic texts based on original material, but linguistically adapted for the curriculum; 2) roughly-tuned authentic texts which are in fact partially edited authentic texts, in which the level of grammar slightly exceeds the students' level; 3) authentic looking texts (authentic-looking texts); 4) learner authentic texts. The existence of the categories described in methodical practice proves that the authenticity of the material and its processing are not mutually exclusive provided that the text preserves the properties of the authentic material.

Thus, we can conclude that authentic materials perform a number of functions aimed at the shaping of the students' multicultural personality and besides limitations there are a number of pluses on their side such as abundance of cultural and linguistic data, novelty and relevance, the potential of interdisciplinary use and motivational force in a foreign language and culture learning. In terms of intercultural competence formation such materials add to the imitation of the natural speech environment and form the ability of students to communicate in accordance with the national and cultural specifics of the country of the target language.

#### ***References:***

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