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INTEGRATING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE THROUGH ESL
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Introduction. The role of culture in language teaching is constantly reviewed and argued by many educators and professionals. They discuss this issue in terms of infeasibility to teach language without teaching culture. Nowadays the role of the language teacher has been described as that of a «professional mediator between foreign languages and culture» [1, p.58]. S. Vernier and like-minded scholars consider the teaching of culture as a fifth skill for language learners that «enhances students' overall learning experience» [4, p.268]. C. Kramsch argues that the role of culture in language teaching is even more central, calling it not just a fifth skill, but rather something that is «always in the background, right from day one» [2, p.1].

The purpose of the paper is to highlight the importance of integrating language and culture through ESL extracurricular activities.

Results. In Vygotsky's theory of zone of actual development, learning originates in the socialization process through interactions, group-activities, and communication. Student-centered learning environment offers opportunities for students to learn the values of teamwork, individual and group responsibility, competition, diversity, and a sense of culture and community.

There are different interpretations of target concepts such as «culture», «language», «cultural interaction», «extracurricular activity» in the academic pieces of research. We focus on some of them.

Thus, we can conclude, that an extracurricular activity (ECA) or extra academic activity (EAA) is an activity, performed by students, that falls outside the realm of the normal curriculum of school, college or university education.

A culture is a way of life of a group of people, their behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and

that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture express themselves. The functions of a language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

Cultural interaction is a complex process. Thus, students should be involved in the process of cultural communication at the level of using foreign languages. Therefore, linguistic development of students should have a communicative and cognitive orientation. Communicative approach to learning foreign languages pays much more attention to the use of language in certain social and cultural situations.

There are two main factors affecting the success of cultural teaching in language classroom, teachers and textbook. Teachers should understand what «culture» to teach and what methods to use. They should understand that their task is to make the students aware of the cultural differences and help the students to become communicatively competent. The second factor is the language used in the textbook.

Extracurricular activities in ESL classrooms are of great importance. They brush up linguistic skills, broaden students' cultural outlook, develop their creativity, aesthetic taste and critical thinking. What is more important they increase students' intrinsic motivation and self-esteem. One of the most effective ways to assist students in mastering English fluency is to encourage them to speak English outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities are the best tool to realize this objective. However, many ESL students live in a non-English speaking environment and socialize with friends in a mother tongue. Therefore, teachers should provide them with the opportunities to use English in an engaging and meaningful way involving students to take part in a number of outside activities. ESL learners are naturally more motivated to take risks and

explore the language because it is relevant to their personal experience [3]. As a rule, teachers' community emphasizes four ways to help ESL students expand their classroom learning into real-world settings: groups and clubs, social media, parent involvement, field trips. Teachers tend to appropriate some successful techniques to realize all the goals in the foreign language classroom. We systematized them on the basis of contemporary general educator blogs in table1.

Table 1.

Techniques for teaching culture and language in ESL and FL classrooms

	Technique	Advantages of a Technique
1	Presentation of authentic resources to students (Google Images, Youtube, FluentU, British Council, BBC, CBC, https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources , https://www.cambridgeenglish.org , etc.).	An opportunity to introduce students into an unparalleled look to illustrate how the language is sounded and used by native speakers in a daily routine
2	Comparison of students' own culture with that of the target language.	It's a good way to develop critical and creative thinking through the comparison of customs and tradition in both cultures. The best idea is food. There's a saying about the fastest way to a man's heart: It's through his <u>stomach</u> . The same goes for teaching culture.
3	Invitation and interaction with Native Speakers.	Native speakers are able to speak English clearly, confidently and with excellent pronunciation. They may have their own local accent (British, Australian,

		<p>American).</p> <p>Native speakers understand how to use different words in different meanings in different contexts. They understand sarcasm, irony and subtle jokes and can react naturally.</p>
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Conclusion. Learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots can lead to wrong or no communication. English teachers should be willing to introduce English culture when teaching the language so that the students get the idea where, when, and how the linguistic patterns that they learn in the classroom are used in real communication. Our belief is that efficiency in a foreign language classroom is achieved both by formal and informal measures. It could even be the case that in some institutions the latter are more important than the former, in the sense that while formal measures may be followed as a matter of routine, informal measures may be more powerful and effective in ensuring quality, in a particular ESL and culture teaching context.

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