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DELIVERY OF TOPICS THAT DEVELOP STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (DaF) CLASS

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Abstract: This article examines the development of intercultural communicative competence among students in the process of teaching German as a foreign language (DaF). The study analyzes the linguo-cultural potential of textbook topics and their role in enhancing socio-cultural skills. The pedagogical experiment evaluates the statistical impact of intercultural content on students' language performance.

Keywords: DaF, intercultural competence, linguaculturology, sociocultural approach, German language, curriculum topics.

Introduction

In today's era of globalization and intercultural integration, teaching foreign languages is no longer limited to merely improving linguistic grammar or vocabulary. Modern language education — particularly the teaching of German as a second language (DaF — Deutsch als Fremdsprache) — requires students not only to speak correctly, but also to understand cultural differences during communication and to adopt a tolerant attitude toward them. This quality is referred to in modern methodology as Intercultural Communicative Competence (Interkulturelle kommunikative Kompetenz).[1]

This issue is especially relevant in German language classes (DaF), since the German-speaking world spans several countries and cultures (Austria, Switzerland, Germany, and others). Students must acquire not only grammatical structures, but also cultural, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic competencies (Council of Europe, 2020).[2]

At the same time, the suitability of textbooks and instructional materials used in DaF courses in Uzbekistan's higher education system for developing intercultural communicative competence has not been sufficiently studied. Research shows that lessons based on traditional grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods lead only to the development of linguistic competence in students.

Intercultural communication competence refers to an individual's ability to communicate effectively and tolerantly with representatives of other cultures. This competence includes the following components:

[1] Sodiqova,M. Modern sociolinguistic approaches in foreign language teaching // Journal of Foreign Language Teaching Methodology. — Tashkent, 2025. — pp. 12–15.

[2] Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Strasbourg.

- cultural knowledge;

- communication skills;

- tolerance;

- empathy;

- ability to critically evaluate stereotypes;

- intercultural flexibility

The DaF methodology recommends using authentic materials from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to develop this competency. In particular, modeling real communicative situations is important in preparing students for future international communication.

In teaching German as a foreign language (Deutsch als Fremdsprache – DaF), special attention is paid to the interrelationship between language and culture. Language is an integral part of culture, through which the worldview, values, and lifestyle of a people are expressed. Therefore, the integration of cultural components into the learning process in DaF lessons is an important methodological task.

Research problem: Which topics in DaF classes most effectively develop students' intercultural communicative competence, and how should these topics be integrated into the learning process?

Aim of the study: To identify topics that serve to develop intercultural communicative competence in DaF classes, to measure their effectiveness through experimental testing, and to develop practical methodological recommendations.

Literature Review: Theoretical Foundations of Intercultural Communicative Competence

The concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been actively studied in academic research since the 1980s. But in the Central Asian education system, after the 1990s, it began to be studied through scientific and practical methods, and at the same time it began to be used in the system of teaching foreign languages. And this new term began to be widely used not only in linguistics, country studies, sociolinguistics and literary studies, but also in the field of methodology. The concept of intercultural dialogue is currently one of the relevant topics, and is taught as a subject in schools and higher education institutions. In order to form the Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) in students and young people, we will consider a review of the literature before studying it as a method and subject.

The most significant contribution belongs to Michael Byram's model, presented in his work "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence" (1997). Byram's model comprises five components:

- **Knowledge** *(Wissen)* — understanding of one's own and other cultures;
- **Attitudes** *(Vorwissen)* — openness, curiosity, relativism;
- **Skills of interpreting and relating** *(Wahrnehmung)*;
- **Skills of discovery and interaction** *(Entdeckungs- und Interaktionsfähigkeiten)*;

- **Critical cultural awareness** *(Kritisches kulturelles Bewusstsein)*.

A number of studies on the development of foreign language education in Uzbekistan have been conducted. Research by Saidova and Yusupova (2021) shows that DaF courses at Uzbek universities are primarily oriented toward linguistic competence. Meanwhile, Kholikova (2022) found in her study that incorporating cultural topics into the classroom also increases students' motivation.

According to D. Kholikova's research, project-based learning is an effective tool for developing the reflective and constructive competencies of future educators. In this sense, the present study is one of the first systematic experimental efforts aimed at strengthening the intercultural component of DaF education in the Uzbekistan context.[3]

Main Body

This approach is widely used in empirical educational research and allows for a precise assessment of differences between experimental and control groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Three topics were selected for the experimental group, each targeted at purposefully developing intercultural communicative competence:

1) checking cultural knowledge (30 questions);

2) assessing cultural relations (20 items);

3) observing and analyzing intercultural communication situations. That is, during the Foreign Language (DaF) (2nd Foreign Language (DaZ) or Main Foreign Language (DaH)) lesson, intercultural communication situations are organized and staged. Interactive methods are used - role-playing games, conversation, discourse and forum speaking (presentation) methods. A scenario is created and dialogue texts consisting of socio-cultural contexts are compiled, didactic materials are developed. These methods are organized on a consistent basis in accordance with the lesson units.

- Everyday communication and social norms;

- Cultural discourse in German mass media;

- Holidays and traditions: a comparative analysis;

- Multiculturalism and migration.

To assess the level of ICC, an adapted test based on the models of Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) was used. The test consisted of three blocks:

1. Measuring cultural knowledge (30 questions);
2. Assessing cultural attitudes (Likert scale, 20 items);
3. Resolving intercultural communication scenarios (5 cases).

Test results at the end of the course showed that the average score of the experimental group was statistically significantly higher than that of the control group.

[3] Xoliqova, D. (2022). Zamonaviy Ta'lim, 7(1), 88–99.

Comparative results for both groups across individual topics are presented below. The topics "Holidays and Traditions," "Cultural Stereotypes," and "Multiculturalism and Migration" were analyzed comparatively.

These results clearly demonstrate that the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group on the given topics. The greatest difference was observed in the "Cultural Stereotypes" and "Holidays and Traditions" topics. These two topics also recorded the highest levels of student motivation and communicative activity.

The results confirm conclusions found in existing academic literature. As Byram (1997) emphasized, grammar or lexical knowledge alone is insufficient for developing cultural awareness competence — learners must work directly with cultural contexts, stereotypes, and situations of intercultural interaction.

According to the findings of this study, the selected set of topics develops not only knowledge, but also attitudes and skills of interpreting and relating. This experimentally confirms Kern's (2000) conclusion on the effectiveness of topic-based instruction.[4]

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has experimentally demonstrated the effectiveness of topics aimed at developing intercultural communicative competence in DaF classes. Based on the research findings, the following practical recommendations were developed:

- Purposefully incorporate topics such as stereotype analysis, everyday social norms, and migration into DaF curricula;
- Increase the use of authentic German-language media materials (podcasts, newspaper articles, video excerpts);
- Regularly include comparative cultural analysis tasks (comparing Uzbek and German cultures) in lesson plans;
- Use a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methodology based on the Byram model when assessing students' level of intercultural awareness;
- Engage DaF teachers in professional development courses on intercultural didactics.

The following directions are recommended for future research: conducting a multi-center experimental study with a larger sample size; separately investigating the influence of the teacher factor on the development of intercultural communicative competence; and testing the effectiveness of these topics in online and blended learning formats.

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