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STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT WHILE LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Annotation. The purpose of foreign language studies is to develop language skills that help to communicate while learning foreign language or working both in Lithuania and abroad. Therefore, foreign language studies cannot be identified with traditional philological studies appealing on ethno cultural context of one country. The article reveals a demand to change the precept of the content of foreign language teaching and learning. It displays both the necessity of paying more attention to English ethnic culture and information on other cultures and intercultural communication of mother tongue.

Keywords: intercultural communication, foreign language, professional career.

INTRODUCTION

The success of academic and professional career is closely connected with person's foreign language knowledge. Present situation of economy and policy in Lithuania motivates the choice of certain foreign language. What concerns the domination of language, the language most widely used in business and science world and also most often used by foreign speakers takes preference. The purpose of foreign language studies is to develop language skills that help to communicate while learning language or working both in Lithuania and abroad. Therefore, foreign language studies cannot be identified with traditional philological studies appealing on ethno cultural context of one country. The demand to change attitude on foreign language studies appears in the form of organizing the process of teaching and learning towards the peculiarity of international foreign language teaching.

Connection of a language as a communicative help with a sociocultural discourse endures in the case of international language studies too. However, the percept of one country ethnocentrism is being changed by percepts of cultural pluralism and forms of interculture. Teaching material presents life realia of bilingual countries and general cultural information in order to develop skills of lingual expression, abilities to reflect and transfer national culture

to others. It defines intercultural communication that is concurrent with international language studies.

The purpose of the investigation is to analyze upbringing relation of foreign language teaching and intercultural communication competence in theoretical and practical levels.

The method of the investigation is a questionnaire survey of respondents.

The tasks of the investigation are: 1) to ascertain students' attitude towards English language learning (international English language or language as a mouthpiece of one or several cultures); 2) to establish on what social and cultural account the foreign language textbooks and teaching materials are based; 3) to clear the perception of life realia problems that students had to confront during internship and studying in foreign countries according to students' exchange programme; 4) to understand what topics developing sociocultural competence students would place into the programme of English language teaching.

THEORETICAL GROUNDING OF THE INVESTIGATION

After entering EU and becoming on equality with other states members and implementing Bologna Accords Lithuania participates in the creation of general standards and quality of higher education qualifications; therefore, foreign language studies have become a necessity. Foreign language status is constantly changing: from narrow, specific and linguistic study object it turns into the tool with the help of which other subjects can be studied as well as it helps to communicate in foreign language surroundings. It is obvious that foreign language knowing determines successful process of socialization living and learning both in Lithuania and abroad; it also influences the integration of a person and the whole society into European community. New purposes of foreign language studies motivate the appearance of new teaching and learning strategies – education of foreign language reading, writing, speaking and listening skills has become the main purpose of the activity[1]. In this situation the problem of order and option of priority in content, selection and sampling has come into the open.

English language is mostly learnt and taught in comprehensive schools and higher education institutions. It is the most commonly spoken language and widely learned as a second language and is an official language of the United Nations, of the European Union,

[1] Kaminskienė, L., Tamošiūnienė, L., Teresevičienė, M. (2004). Foreign language as a tool of European Integration. RTTEMA Scientific Articles IV. Riga: SIA Petrovskis un Ko,p. 221-226.

and of many other world and regional international organizations. Modern English is also regarded as the first world language and is the world's most widely used language in newspaper publishing, book publishing, international telecommunications, scientific publishing, international trade, mass entertainment, diplomacy and education[2]

Foreign language as an international language is not identified with British English, Australian English or German Standard German languages. International language is denationalized on the grounds of linguistics and internationalized on the grounds of culture rejecting specific lexical, grammar or phonologic features typical to different languages and dissociating from Anglo-centrism cultural meaning[3].

International English language in relation with cultural material differs from traditional ethnocultural principle of language teaching and learning. International English language, differently from elitist *lingua franca,* is used in communication by people of different social layers. Consequently, cultural context cannot be restricted to social and cultural studies of one or several English speaking countries. Cultural discourse, used in the process of international language studies, can be of three types:

- Native culture material;
- Culture material of the country which language is learnt;
- Culture material of world countries speaking languages that are learnt or other languages.

In a period of learning language cultural discourse is concurrent with a language itself and fulfils double function – semantic, notional information and reasoned, giving stimulus to use the language. General valuables and problems appear in aggregate world culture: tolerance towards distinction, terrorism detection, global change of climate, human cloning, etc[4].

Cultural context is structured of cultural intercommunity, differences and the reflection of their concatenation. Teaching and learning of international foreign language appeal to such a context. Relation of language and culture is defined with following assumptions:

- learners do not have to accept phenomena of studied language as a standard of life;

[2] Žydžiūnaitė, V. (2010). TK ugdymo/si metodologijos teorinė sąranga. Tarpkultūrinės kompetencijos ugdymo/si metodologija. Vilnius, p. 53.
[3] MCkAY, s. l. (2002). Teaching English as an International Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[4] Tomlinson, J. (2002). Globalizacija ir kultūra. Vilnius:Mintis.

- international language is "denationalized"; it is not related to any certain nation or culture;
- the purpose of academic language learning is to raise learners' abilities to communicate with representatives of other cultures spreading individual ideas and native culture[5].

Cultural discourse, the main resource of language teaching and learning and studies are not simplex action. If this process limits with analysis of studied language cultural phenomena and knowledge, learners will return to the principle of Anglo-centrism cultural studies. The process of international language teaching and learning is supported by two-sided action, analysis and assessment of other cultural realia reflecting native culture and correlating two appearances in view of their belonging and diversity. Studies that are supported by cultural discourse have to achieve two aims: 1) create intercultural sphere – offer the relation of teaching material and native culture; 2) present the sphere of cultural pluralism – propose the assumption that cultures of studied language countries are not monolithic; each of them has national diversity that can be defined by intercommunity of age, gender, region, ethnic origin and social sphere[6].

Consequently, intercultural competence outlines learners' ability to perceive different cultures and interconnect them with their native cultures. No matter in what conglobulation a person lives and what cosmopolitan culture attempts to incorporate him, it is nevertheless true that each person identifies himself as a mouthpiece of his family, region, nation, country and national culture. Perception of other cultures is possible only if you realize your own culture[7].

Communicative language teaching and formation of linguistic skills come through authentic relation with linguistic material. Therefore, a teacher of a foreign language compiles textual and situational material himself or chooses suitable textbooks, the diversity of which lets teacher find optimal according to students' age, level of possibilities, aspirations and extent of studies. The question is in relevance of teaching material that has been prepared by foreign publishers. It has to coincide with modern aims of foreign language studies. In as

[5] MCkAY, s.l. (2002). Teaching English as an International Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[6] Stepanovienė, A. (2015). Development of culture-general competence in foreign language learning.Profile and Vocational Education in Conditions of Modern Polycultural Space. Materials of the 3rd International Extramural Research and Practice Conference. Chelyabinsk State Pedagogical University.
[7] Paurienė, G. (2011). Tarpkultūrinė kompetencija ir jos ugdymas pareigūnų rengime. Visuomenės saugumas ir viešoji tvarka. 2011(5), p. 12.

much as foreign languages have become international communication languages, there is not enough to have ethnic culture grounding because languages have to be supported with the studies of intercultural context determining spread of general valuables and respect for cultural diversity[8].

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Students' books of three publishing houses (Pearson, Macmillan and Oxford) *English for Law Enforcement* by Charles Boyle&Ileana Cherson , *Insight* by Jayne Wildman&Jane Hudson, and *Focus* by Sue Kay, Vaughan Jones, Daniel Brayshaw have been chosen for content analysis. This teaching material is widely used in different European countries.

Textbook analysis presented that major attention is dedicated to foreign language skills training as opposed to linguistic studies. 30% of textbooks have purposive character and help students to prepare for English examinations of different levels where four abilities of language learning are checked. 70% of students criteria of teaching material named as follow: 1) intercultural context, 2) intercultural situations, 3) interdisciplinary realia, 4) social context of English speaking countries, 5) attractive and interesting topics, 6) topics stimulating communication, 7) universal and human values and 8) cultural context of English speaking countries.

Obviously, teaching and learning material that we are discussing about involves cultural material of different English speaking countries and seeks to involve learners into intercultural communication, stimulates language usage that is reasoned pragmatically. All the material is presented not only to memorize ethnocultural information but also to stimulate learners' perception of sociocultural diversity.

Seventy-seven second year students – future law enforcement officers - were the respondents of the survey. The results showed that, in their opinion, English teaching must be oriented towards international language teaching. Ninety-five percent of respondents were for international English language teaching and 5% for English language as unbroken ethnocultural mouthpiece.

The relation of English language teaching material and sociocultural discourse was evaluated as follows: the largest part of material (90,2%) presented the information about

[8] Norvilienė, A. (2014). Tarpkultūrinės studentų kompetencijos ugdymo(si) veiksniai. Socialinis ogdymas/ Socialiniam ugdymui(si) palanki aplinka ir jos kūrimo strategijos. T. 38, Nr. 2, p. 40-55.

culture studies of Great Britain, 87,0% - information about English culture, 76,3% - teaching material appealing to English speaking countries cultures, 74,8% - European countries and 71,7% - material of sociocultural life of different world countries (view Fig.1).

While defining competences of future professional work the standard of law enforcement officers training states that an officer has to know and be able to evaluate social and cultural life of foreign countries. During the process of studies students have: a) to gain knowledge about history, traditions, customs, etc. of the country which language is learnt, b) to understand political and economical state of the country, c) to envisage the most typical resemblances and differences of social, economic and cultural life of native and foreign countries, d) to perceive public, cultural and political realia of the country which language is learnt[9].

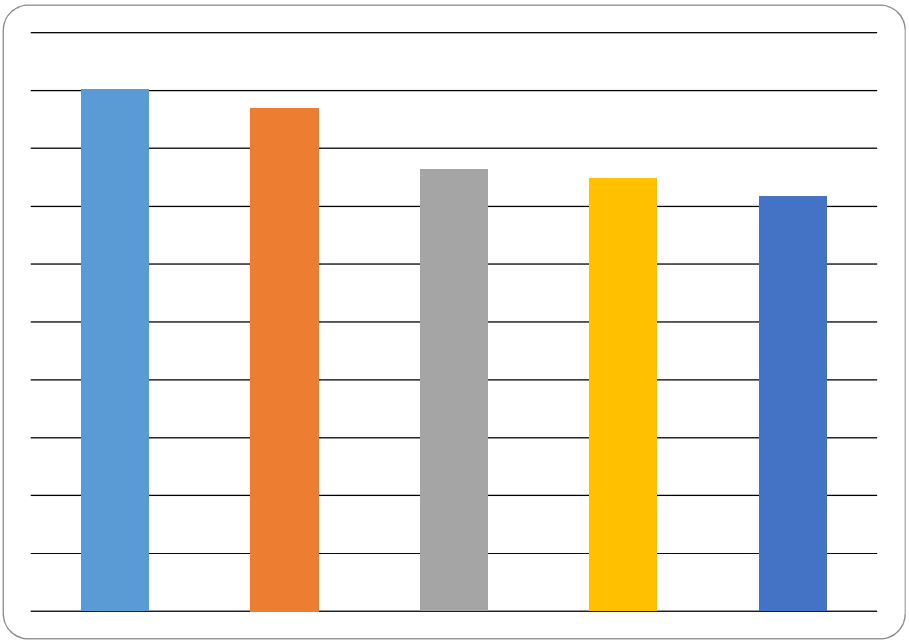


Fig. 1. Students' attitude towards correlation between English language and culture

The requirements of this document are obligatory for a future law enforcement officer. They testify that a law enforcement officer is being prepared according to cultural content of one of the countries which language is being learnt. Perception of world culture diversity is missing. It allows to state that the standard is oriented towards ethnocultural communicative

[9] Kjaerum, M. Fundamental rights-based police training. Luxembourg:Publications office of the European Union, 2013.

competence but not to intercultural competence which is the base of international language studies.

The following answers were presented to the question what cultural and social life realia raise an issue to students: officers who work or train experience the biggest confusion while investigating life situations of world countries (59.2%). 50,8% of learners had problems with one half of teaching material about the life in European countries. The context of English speaking countries was perceived better (45,4%). Future law enforcement officers have chosen the investigation of cultural discourse of Great Britain and England as the best one – 31,4% and 30,5% (view Fig.2).

These results apparently correlate with standards and show Anglo-centrism character of study programmes and insufficient attention towards cultures of non-English speaking countries.

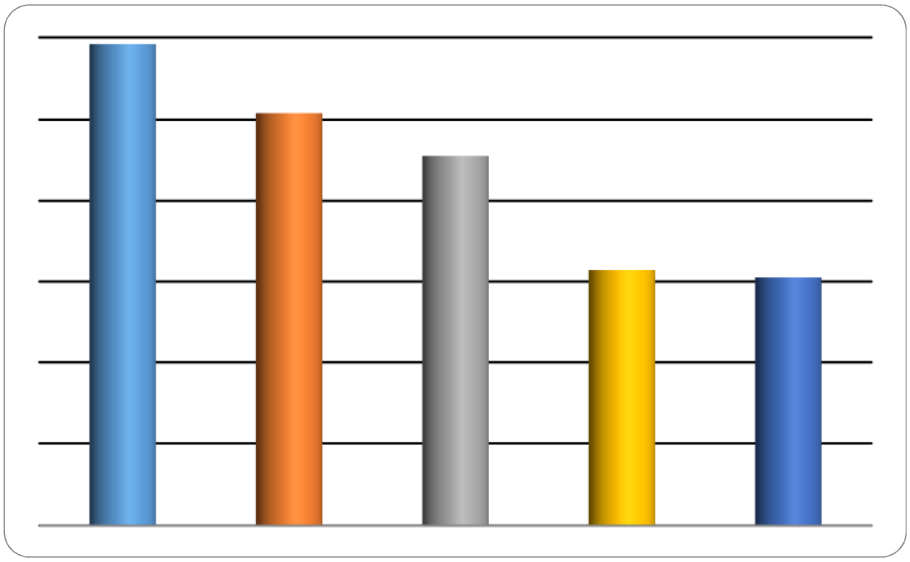


Fig. 2. Cultural material perception

Education of social cultural competence in law enforcement officers training is being realized through the studies of different subjects. However, the learners answering the question what subjects, in their opinion, are necessary in preparing a competent officer, presented the following answers: cognizance of England as a country – 95,7%, cognizance of Great Britain as a country – 95,2%, cognizance of English speaking countries – 80,1%,

cognizance of European countries – 83,6%, history of world culture – 71,4%, history of Lithuanian culture – 70,1% (view Fig. 3)

The results show that not only studies of foreign countries life realia are important in development of intercultural communicative competence, but also ability to relate them with cultural life of mother tongue as well as life realia of people speaking other languages. From here the demand to give great attention to the cognition of Lithuanian culture studies and European countries appears. Learners must not limit themselves with studies of English speaking countries.

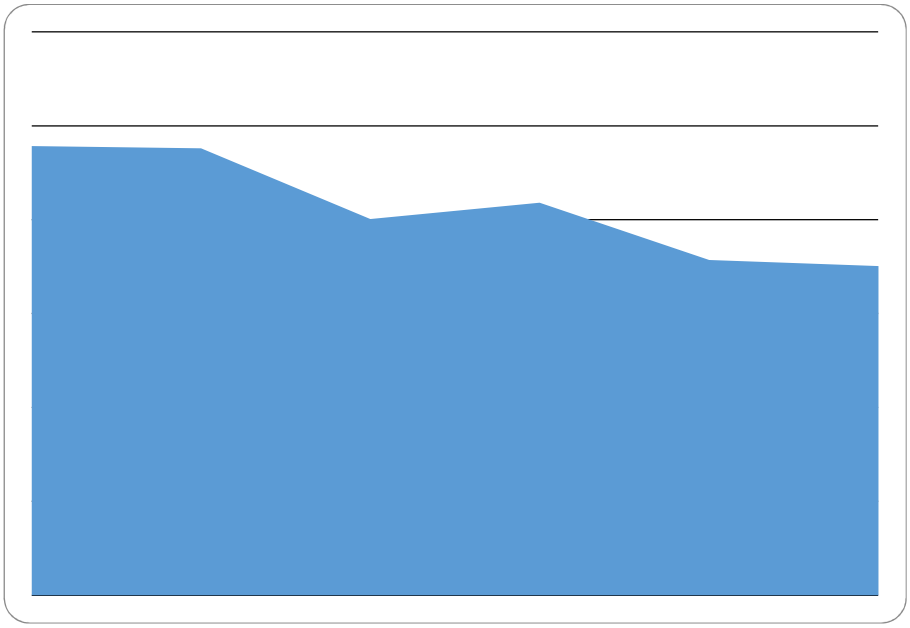


Fig. 3. Desirable subjects developing students' sociocultural competence

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to the results of the investigation, it can be stated that foreign language studies must be oriented towards the development of linguistic abilities, because foreign language knowledge is necessary seeking academic and professional purposes both in Lithuania and other world countries. Therefore, the process of foreign language teaching and learning has to be organized as international language studies dissociated from sociocultural context of monolingual country.

International language is being studied on the grounds of cultural discourse of both language countries and countries speaking other languages, because correlation of

international language with culture is defined as precept of language denationalization and cultural internationalization.

Intercultural communicative competence is perceived as ability to realize and analyze phenomena of discourse culture comparing and reflecting native culture. As a result, the necessity to pay greater attention to the studies of mother tongue culture and proficiency appear.

Teaching material of the English language is presented with reference to such selection criteria as effectiveness in developing linguistic skills, interculture, interdiscipline, topicality and universality of realia, cultural pluralism, diversity and thematic desirability.

The results of the investigation show that, in opinion of future law enforcement officers, English language has to be taught as an international language.

According to the analysis of investigation data, the programmes of law enforcement officers training have to resign the principle of Anglo-centrism culture. On purpose to educate competence of intercultural communication such subjects as cognizance of Europe and Lithuania have to be included into study programme.

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STUDENTŲ POŽIŪRIS Į TARPKULTŪRINIO BENDRAVIMO UGDYMĄ MOKANTIS UŽSIENIO KALBOS

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S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje teoriškai analizuojamas užsienio kaip tarptautinės kalbos mokymas siekiant ugdyti produkavimo ir recepcinius kalbos įgūdžius bei padėti besimokančiajam bendrauti su įvairių kultūrų atstovais akademiniais ir profesiniais tikslais. Tyrimo procesas įgyvendinamas per kultūrinį diskursą, nes jis pats suteikia semantinę prasmę ir motyvaciją. Vis dėlto, kultūrinis kontekstas mokant tarptautinės anglų kalbos neapsiriboja vien angliškai kalbančia šalimi, tačiau remiasi ir daugiakultūrine informacija tiek angliškai kalbančiose, tiek šia kalba nekalbančiose šalyse. Kita vertus, tarptautinės kalbos tyrimas nustato tiesioginį ryšį tarp tikslinės bei ištakų kultūros, kadangi studentas turi gebėti analizuoti pirmąją, reflektuodamas antrąją. Pastarasis principas žinomas kaip tarpkultūrinis bendravimas ir yra bene svarbiausias tiriant tarptautinę kalbą.

Pirmojoje straipsnio dalyje aptariamas teorinis tyrimo pagrindas. Nurodoma, kaip kinta užsienio kalbų statusas, iš siauro lingvistinių studijų objekto virsdamas įrankiu, kurio dėka studijuojami dalykai, bendraujama ne gimtosios kalbos vartojimo aplinkoje.

Antroje dalyje analizuojama mokymo medžiaga, skirta profesinės anglų kalbos mokymui(si). Pateikiami mokymo medžiagos turinio atrankos kriterijai, mokymo medžiagos ir kultūrų ryšys bei medžiagos apie kultūras suvokimo procentinė išraiška. Respondentai nurodo pageidautinas studijų programoje temas, ugdančias būsimųjų teisėsaugos pareigūnų sociokultūrinę kompetenciją.

Paskutinėje straipsnio dalyje pateikiami tyrimo rezultatai apie studentų nuomonę bei kompetenciją mokantis profesinės anglų kalbos, jų daugiakultūrinio diskurso suvokimą, pasiūlomi būdai, kaip pagerinti esamą situaciją.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: tarpkultūrinis bendravimas, užsienio kalba, profesinė karjera.

Aušra Stepanovienė*, Mykolas Romeris University, Faculty of Public Security, Department of Humanities, lecturer. Research interests: professional English methodology and didactics, theory and practice of legal English translation.
Aušra Stepanovienė*, Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Visuomenės saugumo fakultetas, Humanitarinių mokslų katedros lektorė. Mokslinių tyrimų kryptys: profesinės anglų kalbos metodologija ir didaktika, teisės anglų kalbos vertimo teorija ir praktika.