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**DevelopMENT OF SOCIoLINGUISTIC COMPETENCE WHEN READING LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH CLASSES**

Literary texts are an essential part of the student experience. In the context of teaching foreign languages, text basically function as: a source of vocabulary, lexical units and grammatical structures; a source of information about the culture, history, literature and country of the target language and the language itself; a source of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of the learner. Some of the characteristics of literary texts, for example, its capacity to problematize our habitual ways of seeing the world, demonstrate how literary texts constitute an opportunity to elaborate on hidden meanings; to focus on underlying values and beliefs; to engage actively with alternative interpretations of the world. All this reinforces the current view of the literary text as an opportunity to promote an intercultural encounter in terms of negotiating with an Other, one’s social, cultural and political identity [1, p. 267].

Any contemporary foreign language textbook normally contains a certain amount of the country study information which is focused on developing socio-cultural competence in students. The selected materials serve an informative function: they inform, state objective and undisputed facts. We do not think that this approach is the best option as it does not provide students with full vision of existence of foreign language ethnos. In methodology we have to distinguish ethno-socio-cultural and reference competencies. The first competence includes images, relations, values that society has. They are elements necessary for self-identity. The second one involves a set of objective encyclopedia knowledge, more or less full, related to geography, history, socio and art.

For instance, let us illustrate the development of reference competence which excludes such notions as *values*, *mentality*, *the world* *vision*, *beliefs,* *assessment*, *relations*, *prejudice*, *myths* and *stereotypes* – all that comprises ethno-sociocultural competence. A significant role is played by myths which influence the perception of others by learners of a foreign language which appears to be the reflection of their self-perception regardless of any “objectively transmitted facts” [2, p. 130]. For example, the English texts focus on the documents related to the Tube (London Underground) – its history and importance for the city, obvious advantages, service operation etc. Students indirectly learn to navigate and travel by the Tube with a plan acquiring competence in small details: they can easily tell about prices, discounts and passes, conditions, interchange stations. But even when they have absorbed the information, they still find it difficult to imagine this city in the city, understand its features, feel the sense of the city. After all, they are not able to get those feelings that Londoners have when taking a ride.

The methodological events would contribute to designing optimal conception of socio-cultural competence development as they take into account the existence of not only ‘reference’ and ethno-socio-cultural competence but intercultural one.

Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts.

As part of textbooks and trusted by students, didactic materials often express adopted, sharing only one point of view, stereotypical and ethno-centered beliefs about the studied culture. At the same time, teachers have to draw students’ attention to objective and natural possibility of existence of other set of values as well as having different opinions depending on whose culture they represent – local or foreign one [3, p.79]. It is evident that intercultural interaction in English classes is inevitable. Moreover, cross-cultural interaction is good because it not only represents reality in its contrast but it breaks down barriers, develops the feeling of solidarity and tolerance. The necessity of intercultural competence development responds to the conception of communicative approach in teaching foreign languages. If every speech act in communicative-oriented course must be motivating and personally significant, and interaction in class has to imitate a real-world conversation, then, for example, traditional method of studying the topic ‘London Attractions’ turns out to be a ‘dead end’: a foreigner will hardly tell about the British capital landmarks in a real-life conversation with a native speaker (reference competence). The solution is to raise the issue focusing on different opinions (ethno-sociocultural competence – Londoners perceived the city architecture in a different way) and it is mandatory to compare them with local culture facts (intercultural competence – How evolved and is evolving architectural character of London compared to Paris?). Consequently, sociocultural competence development in a foreign language has to be based on such things as 1) reflection in correlation between its own culture and that image which each nation develops in relation to themselves; 2) recognition and overcoming stereotypes when faced various realities; 3) reflection about relational nature of viewpoints inside the same culture.

Therefore, in a foreign language communicative-oriented course when dealing with study material, which contains sociocultural information, it is logical to respect different opinions and cultures in general.

Organizing work with the book *The French Lessons. Adventures with Knife, Fork and Corkscrew* by Peter Mayle [3], we came across lots of sociocultural and cross-cultural examples. It is possible to make such classifications:

1. **Descriptive features**

Analyzing the text, we can find the description associated with England:

* *gastronomic wilderness*
* *short supply of delicacies*
* *taste buds in my mouth were left undisturbed*
* *food was fuel, not appetizing fuel*
* *gray food*

And what about France? It was different:

* *incomparably better than anything I’d eaten before*
* *the elegance of the table setting*
* *the ritual of opening and tasting the wine*
* *the unobtrusive efficiency of the waiters and their attention to detail*
* *couldn’t imagine people eating like this every day.*

1. **National character**

How would you describe a typical caricature Englishman? In the text we read:

* *a bowler hat*
* *strictly furled umbrella*
* *very little good to say about the French – an odd lot – and their language (‘their lingo’)*
* *love for cricket*

And Frenchmen? They

* *pay extraordinary, excessive attention to what they eat and how they eat*
* *put their money where their mouth is*
* *spend greater proportion of their income on food and drink than any other*
* *everybody - from president to the peasant – interested in and knowledgeable about the food*

In Paris there is a

* suitably English address, the *avenue George V*, where there was a restaurant called Marius et Janette

Quite French name we can discover in London

* *Madame Tussauds*

1. **Cuisine**

Scent of the French cuisine

* *smelled* *different*: *exotic and tantalizing*
* *oysters (scent of the sea)*
* *the rich whiff of butter warming in a pan*
* *the pervasive – infinitely foreign – hum of garlic*

And in England?

Cutlery and etiquette

Cutlery in France

* *crystal forest of glasses* *and the armory of knives* *and* *forks*

The etiquette in England

* *keeping your hands under the table when they were not occupied with knife or fork or glass encouraged mischievous behavior (hands have a tendency to wander under the table generally getting up to no good)*

In the best French households, the rule is the reverse –

* *idle hands must be kept on the table (dalliance cannot be allowed to interfere with food)*

Names of dishes – charades and puzzles

Dishes

What was a *bar grillé*? What about a *loup à l’écaille*? And what in heaven’s name was *aioli*?

* oysters (*slippery little blighters*) – English opinion
* soup (*a tendency to cling to his moustache*) - English opinion
* bread(*light, crusty* *and slightly chewy*) – the experience of the Englishman
* butter (*tasty*, *white, a big slab*)

In England - *highly salty, a lurid shade of yellow, doled out in small, grudging pats*

At the first mouthful of French bread and French butter, my taste buds, dormant until then, went into spasm (the Englishman describes)

What will happen to taste buds if he tried English bread and butter?

* fish (*a majestic creature – sea bass – white and fragrant, naked, ceremoniously presented, filleted in seconds, arranged with great care*) – in France

In England – cod or plaice (*heavily disguised under a thick shroud of batter*)

* chips (*pommes frites, pencil-slim, crisp between the teeth, tender to chew, a perfect foil for the delicate flesh of the fish*) – in France

In England – chips (*sturdy English variety*)

* cheese (*dozen or more cheeses, the textural delights of hard, medium, and creamy)* – in France

In England – the simple choice of Cheddar or Gorgonzola

* dessert(*tarte aux pommes – apple pie – topless, displaying the fruit – wafers of apple, beautifully arranged in overlapping layers, glistening with glaze on a sliver of buttery pastry*) – in France

In England – a thick crust top and bottom

1. **Lexical units**

Adjectives and nouns:

* *pleasant shock*
* *gray meat*
* *gray potatoes*
* *gray vegetables*
* *gray flavor*
* *exotic and tantalizing smell*
* *thick shroud*
* *light, crusty bread*

Adverbs and adjectives:

* carefully color-coordinated
* extremely short
* strictly furled
* beautifully arranged
* heavily disguised
* ceremoniously presented
* highly salty
* slightly chewy

The purpose of writing this article was to define the approach and language material to develop sociolinguistic competence. The perspective of further research we see in designing a corresponding set of exercises.

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