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THE ROLE OF COUNTRY STUDIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH

Abstract: In our country, various information about a particular country that is taught in the course of language learning is called country studies. Education by means of a foreign language involves knowledge of the culture, history, religions and traditions of the country of the language being studied.

Key words: linguistics, country studies, approach to learning, discipline, language unit, foreign language, vocabulary.

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Introduction

The progressive development of international contacts and relations in politics, economy, culture and alternative areas determines the consistent orientation of contemporary ways of teaching foreign languages to the real conditions of communication. The desire for communicative ability, because the consequence of learning, involves not solely the possession of acceptable foreign-language technology (i.e., the flexibility to speak in an exceedingly foreign language, ability of students), however additionally the assimilation of huge non-linguistic data necessary for adequate learning and understanding, as a result of the latter is unachievable while not the relative equality of the fundamental data of students concerning the encircling reality. The noticeable distinction within the stock of this data among speakers of various languages is principally determined by the various material and religious conditions of the various peoples and countries, the peculiarities of their history, culture, socio-political system etc. Thus, the conclusion concerning the requirement to understand thorough the specifics of the country (countries) of the studied language and so the requirement for a country-specific approach united of the most principles of teaching foreign languages has become typically recognized.

Acquaintance with the culture of the country of the language being studied has been one of the main

tasks since antiquity. Teaching classical languages as an interpretation of religious texts cannot be conceived without cultural commentary. In the teaching of living languages since the end of the XIV century, the first place along with oral speech is put forward to familiarize with the realities of the country of the language being studied. This was especially characteristic of the German linguistic-didactic school. In our country, various information about a particular country, taught in the process of language learning (or in connection with language learning), is called country studies, in Germany – kulturkunde, in American educational institutions there are courses of language and territories (language and area), in the French methodological school there is the concept of “language and civilization” (langue et civilisation). English colleagues use the theory of “linguocultural studies”.

The temporary state educational standard among the goals of teaching foreign languages at the basic level includes the education of “students with a positive attitude to the foreign language and culture of the people who speak this language. Education by means of a foreign language involves knowledge of the culture, history, realities and traditions of the country of the language being studied (linguistics, country studies). It includes students in the dialectic of cultures, in the development of universal culture, in

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the awareness of the role of spoken language and culture in the mirror of the culture of another people.”

Addressing the problem of learning language and culture at the same time is not accidental, as it allows to successfully combine elements of country studies with language phenomena that act not only as a means of communication, but also as a way to familiarize students with a new reality for them. According to N.A.Salonovich, this approach to teaching a foreign language at higher educational establishments in many ways provides not only a more effective solution to practical, general, developmental and educational tasks, but also contains huge opportunities to challenge and further maintain the motivation of teaching.

There are two approaches to teaching culture in the process of learning foreign languages: social science and philosophy. The first approach is based on the discipline traditionally associated with the study of any foreign language. Country studies is understood as a comprehensive academic discipline that includes a variety of information about the country of the language being studied. In contrast to the basic sciences on which it is based, country studies includes a variety of information of a fragmentary nature and is defined as a discipline in the system of geographical sciences that deals with the complex study of materials, countries, and large areas.

The theories of “linguo-country studies” emphasize that this direction combines, on the one hand, language learning, and on the other – gives certain information about the country of the language being studied. Since the main object is not the country, but the background knowledge of native speakers, in a generalized form, their culture, it would be correct to talk about “cultural studies”. However, the term “linguo-country studies” is already firmly established in the practice of teaching foreign languages and, perhaps, it should be abandoned. However, we must clearly understand the difference between traditional country studies and linguo-country studies. If country studies is a social discipline, in whatever language it would not be taught, then linguo-country studies is a philological discipline, largely taught not separately as a subject, but in classes on the practice of language in the process of working on the semantics of a language unit, with the philological approach it is possible to set two different tasks:

1. Extracting cultural information from a language unit. In this case, culture comes to the fore as the main task of learning. This method has been the dominant method of teaching English as a foreign language for some time.

2. Learning to perceive or teach a language unit against the background of an image similar to what is present in the mind of a native speaker of a language and culture.

The image on which the semantics of a word or phraseology is based is created in the student of a

foreign language sequentially in the process of working on the meaning of a language or speech unit and occurs in its entirety when the student encounters this unit. With this approach to work on semantics, on the national cultural component of meaning, the language is put in the foreground of the study, and the linguo-country studies competence is designed to provide a communicative competence, which involves operating with similar images in the minds of the speaker and listener, since this occurs when speakers of the same language and culture communicate with each other.

Thus, the main goal of linguo-country studies is to provide communicative competence in acts of international communication, primarily through an adequate perception of the interlocutor's speech and original texts intended for native speakers. Linguo-cultural studies provides a solution to a number of problems, in particular, the main philological problem of adequate understanding of the text, so it acts as a linguistic basis not only for linguodidactics, but also for translation. After all, to translate, it is first necessary to fully understand foreign language text with all the nuances of values, including the subtext, allusions, hints, and then subject the recipient to select appropriate equivalents in the target language, and their ignorance leads to difficulty in communicating in a foreign language and, ultimately, to the decline of learners' communicative competence.

One of the tasks of linguistics is to study the means of language and speech, systematize them and present them in a form that is optimal for teaching a foreign language. Therefore, it is possible to speak freely about the linguistic foundations of the country-specific aspect in teaching a foreign language, which should be understood as part of the general linguistic foundations of its teaching acting in a row with other sciences: psychology, pedagogy, etc., as a theoretical foundation for teaching a foreign language in general. The greatest contribution to the development of the linguistic bases of cross-cultural aspect in teaching foreign languages have made scientists, mainly in the framework of the theory of linguo-cultural studies arising from the research E.M.Vereshagina, V.G.Kostomarov and their followers. The theoretical and practical value of works on linguo-cultural studies has found international recognition.

The linguistic justification of the country-specific facet in teaching a foreign language is on the far side the scope of method analysis and is that the task of country-oriented linguistics. However, it's not concerning the proclamation of a brand new linguistic discipline, however solely regarding the sensible wants of light the applied facet of linguistic analysis, taking into consideration the requirements of international communication. The theoretical basis of this side is created by sections of linguistic theory that affect the additive operate of language, that is, the reflection and consolidation of the results of social

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practice in language and speech. As for the analysis of the system, it's primarily linguistics and phraseology, that study each basic units of the language that may carry country-specific information-the word (lexeme) and also the stable word complex (SWC).

At the same time, the semantic analysis of inter-language differences that reflect differences in reality is brought to the fore. This analysis is carried out by means and methods of comparative (contrastive) linguistics. Thus, the general and especially comparative lexicology and phraseology of the studied and native languages form the linguistic basis of the country studies aspect in teaching a foreign language. The general approach of country-oriented linguistics to language material has a sociolinguistic character, with attention being paid to socially determined interlanguage differentiation, rather than to language forms.

Thus, the tasks of country-oriented linguistics include the identification, systematization and interpretation of foreign language reflection of phenomena specific to the country or countries of the language being studied from the perspective of contrastive linguistics. However some more specific tasks of linguo-cultural linguistics can also be mentioned:

1. semantic analysis of significant national-specific elements of the content plan of individual lexemes and SWC in the communicative and educational aspect;
2. reduction of country-specific significant lexicon units into lexical and phraseological fields of corresponding keywords;
3. the study of specific formal means of a foreign language for the designation of significant phenomena in the country;

4. analysis of national-specific interaction of language and nonverbal means of communication in certain conversational situations;

Linguo-cultural studies aims to study the language units that most clearly reflect the national characteristics of the culture of the native speaker and the environment of its existence.

The need for social selection and study of language units, which most clearly show the uniqueness of national culture and which cannot be understood as native speakers understand them, is felt in all cases of communication with foreigners, when reading fiction, journalism, the press, when watching movies and videos, when listening to songs, etc.

The number of lexical units that have a pronounced national cultural semantics includes names:

1. realia-the designation of objects or phenomena that are characteristic of one culture and absent in another;
2. connotative vocabulary, i.e. words that match the main meaning, but differ in cultural and historical associations;
3. background vocabulary that denotes objects and phenomena that have analogs in the culture being compared, but differ in some national peculiarities of functioning, form, purpose of objects, etc.

For linguo – cultural studies, phraseological units that reflect the national identity of the history, culture, and traditional way of life of a native speaker are also of great interest.

To conclude, the selection of units with a pronounced national-cultural semantics is the task of those sections of lexicology and phraseology that act as the linguistic basis of linguo – cultural studies and can be called country-oriented linguistics.

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