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DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRACTICES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. The article examines the impact of communicative English language practices in primary schools on the formation of multicultural competence in students. Foreign language teaching in the education system is of great importance in terms of developing students' intercultural communication skills. Descriptive, comparative and analytical methods were used during the study. The study analyzes the impact of the communicative approach on the formation of tolerance, empathy, respect for cultural diversity and global outlook of primary school students. It has been found that dialogues, role-playing games, group work, interactive tasks and the use of authentic materials have a positive impact on the development of both language and multicultural competencies of students. The article identifies the pedagogical importance of communicative English language practices and their application prospects in the modern primary education system.

Key words: communicative training, English language teaching, multicultural competence, primary education, intercultural communication, tolerance.

Introduction. In the modern era, globalization and the expansion of international communication processes have led to the formation of new pedagogical approaches in the education system. Foreign language teaching is no longer limited to teaching only grammatical knowledge and lexical units. In particular, since English acts as a means of international communication in the modern world, its teaching is of great importance in terms of developing students' intercultural communication skills (Byram, 1997).

The primary school period is considered one of the most important developmental stages in which students' social, psychological, emotional and communicative qualities are formed. During this age period, children's worldview, behavioral model, approach to social relations and communication skills are actively developing. Students acquire social skills such as cooperation, mutual respect, responsibility and collective action by establishing mutual relationships with their peers and teachers in the school environment. At the same time, the values and relationships formed at this stage form the basis for future personality development.

Since children perceive new knowledge and information more sensitively during the primary school age, it is of particular importance to develop their moral and social qualities in the right direction. At this stage, the formation of qualities such as tolerance, empathy, respect for different cultures, mutual understanding and social adaptation in students has a significant impact on their successful integration into society in the future. Students who gain information about different cultures learn to accept different ways of thinking, respect the views of other people and appreciate cultural diversity as social wealth.

Literature review. The issue of training future English language teachers in a competency-based education context is widely explored in contemporary pedagogical and methodological literature. Researchers emphasize the importance of developing communicative, intercultural, psychological, and professional competencies as the foundation for effective foreign language teacher training.

One key area of research is the theory of intercultural communicative competence. Byram (1997) views intercultural competence as the ability to effectively interact with representatives of other cultures, understand cultural differences, and use language in intercultural communication. This approach is an important component of the professional training of future English language teachers.

The theoretical foundations of the communicative approach were developed by Canale and Swain (1980), who identified the main components of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic. Researchers have demonstrated that successful foreign language teaching is impossible without the development of practical communicative skills.

Methodological aspects of teaching foreign languages are thoroughly examined by Richards and Rodgers (2001), who analyze modern approaches and methods of language teaching. The authors emphasize the need to use interactive technologies, communicative tasks, and practice-oriented learning in teacher training.

Kramsch (1993) places particular emphasis on the relationship between language and culture, viewing language as a means of reflecting cultural identity. The author emphasizes that learning a foreign language is impossible without understanding the cultural context and the characteristics of intercultural communication.

The psychological and pedagogical aspects of student development are explored in the works of Vygotsky (1978), who studied the influence of the social environment and interaction on the development of higher mental processes. His theory of social constructivism has had a significant influence on modern educational approaches.

Intercultural communication issues are also addressed by Hall (1976), who analyzed the characteristics of cultural perception, communication, and behavior of representatives of different cultures. His research is important for the training of English language teachers in the context of globalization.

The psychological aspects of foreign language learning were explored by Dörnyei (2005), who emphasized motivation, personality traits, and psychological factors influencing learning effectiveness. Brown (2007) also emphasized the importance of cognitive, emotional, and communicative factors in foreign language acquisition.

Thus, an analysis of the scientific literature shows that competency-based education is based on the integration of communicative, intercultural, psychological, and methodological approaches, ensuring the effective preparation of future English language teachers.

The purpose of this article is to study the role of communicative practices of teaching English in primary school in the process of forming students' multicultural competence, as well as to determine the pedagogical effectiveness of interactive teaching methods for the development of intercultural communication, tolerance, empathy and respect for cultural diversity.

Main text. In the context of globalization, the expansion of mutual relations between different peoples and cultures has further increased the relevance of multicultural education. Therefore, the formation of multicultural values at school is considered an issue of social importance. Foreign language teaching, especially English lessons, creates wide opportunities for students to get acquainted with different cultures. Since English is an international means of communication, during its teaching, students not only acquire language skills, but also gain information about the culture, customs, lifestyles and values of different countries.

Communicative activities have a positive effect on students' use of language as a real means of communication and the development of their social and cultural skills. Through dialogues, role-plays, group work, projects and interactive activities, students learn to communicate, collaborate and accept different opinions in different social situations. This develops their communicative competence, empathy, tolerance and intercultural understanding skills.

Communicative English language practices also create conditions for the formation of self-expression and free thinking skills in students. Students learn to express their opinions on various topics,

hold discussions, and freely express their thoughts. This increases their social activity, strengthens their sense of self-confidence, and helps them adapt more successfully to future social relationships.

The application of communicative English language practices during primary school makes a significant contribution to the formation of students' multicultural worldview, social relationships, and personality qualities.

The communicative approach is considered one of the main pedagogical directions of modern foreign language teaching, and the main goal of this approach is to form students' skills in practical use of language in real-life situations. Unlike traditional language teaching models, this methodology prioritizes the application of language as a means of communication rather than just memorizing grammatical rules and mastering theoretical knowledge. Within the framework of the communicative approach, students participate in various communication situations, exchange ideas, establish dialogues, and learn to use language as a means of social interaction. This process creates conditions for the parallel development of students' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Within the framework of this approach, students not only learn the rules of the language, but also acquire the skills to communicate effectively in various social and cultural contexts (Brown, 2007). Communicative activities organized in foreign language classes provide students with the opportunity to recreate situations they may encounter in real life. For example, daily dialogues, group discussions, role-playing games, presentations and projects ensure the active participation of students and develop their free communication skills. Such activities strengthen students' self-expression, form the ability to express their opinions freely and help them build social relationships.

One of the important features of the communicative approach is its student-centered nature. In the teaching process, the teacher performs the function of a guide and facilitator rather than the main information transmitter. Students become active participants in the learning process. This also has a positive effect on the development of students' independent thinking, problem-solving and cooperation skills.

Communicative activities used in foreign language lessons also have a significant impact on the formation of intercultural understanding and a global worldview in students. Through authentic texts, videos, songs, dialogues and communicative tasks from different countries, students gain information about the cultures, customs, traditions, lifestyles and values of different peoples. This increases their interest in other cultures, helps to form a tolerant attitude and leads to a decrease in stereotypes.

Communicative activities also have a positive impact on the development of students' empathy skills. While recreating various social and cultural situations, students try to understand different ways of thinking and learn to respect the positions of other people. This makes a significant contribution to the formation of their multicultural competence and social adaptation skills.

Communicative language teaching is one of the main directions of modern foreign language methodology. The main goal of this approach is to form real communication skills in students. Richards and Rodgers characterized the communicative approach as “a teaching model aimed at mastering the social functions of language through practical communication” (Richards, Rodgers, 2001).

During the communicative approach, students act as active participants, participate in various dialogues, exchange ideas and apply the language in real communicative situations. This process helps students develop their speech skills, strengthen their self-expression and build social relationships.

The application of communicative methods in primary grades is carried out on the basis of more interactive activities in accordance with the age characteristics of students. Role-playing games, group tasks, songs, stories and visual materials increase students' motivation to learn a language and have a positive effect on their social and emotional development.

Multicultural competence refers to an individual's ability to understand, accept and communicate effectively with representatives of different cultures (Byram, 1997). The development of this competence in the modern education system is considered one of the important social and pedagogical goals.

The use of communicative activities in English lessons allows students to get acquainted with different cultures. Authentic texts, videos, songs and dialogues used in foreign language lessons provide students with information about the lifestyle, customs and traditions of different peoples and social behaviors. This leads to the expansion of their cultural worldview.

Role-playing games and group activities in particular have a positive effect on the development of empathy and tolerance in students. When students play different social roles, they better understand the behavioral patterns of representatives of different cultures. This process helps to reduce stereotypes and form a sense of respect for cultural diversity.

Kramersch notes that learning a foreign language is not only about mastering the structure of the language, but also about learning the cultural values that the language carries (Kramersch, 1993). In this regard, communicative English language practices play an important role in the formation of students' intercultural communication skills.

In primary schools, communicative English language practices are mainly organized on the basis of student-centered activities, and this approach is considered one of the effective pedagogical methods in the modern education system. The student-centered learning model ensures the active participation of students in the learning process, develops their independent thinking and free communication skills. Communicative activities serve not only to master language knowledge, but also to form students' social, emotional and multicultural competencies. During these activities, students learn to use language as a real means of communication, acquire the ability to express their ideas in various social situations.

The application of the communicative approach in primary grades is organized in accordance with the age characteristics of students. At this stage, game elements, interactive tasks and creative activities are of particular importance. Taking into account the psychological characteristics of students, methods are used that increase their interest in the learning process and ensure their active participation. Such an approach strengthens students' motivation to learn a foreign language and makes the learning process more effective.

Dialogues and work in pairs are considered one of the important tools in developing communicative skills. These activities develop students' fluency and enable them to use the language practically in real communication situations. Students simulate everyday life situations and learn various conversational models on greetings, introductions, shopping, school life, friendships, and other communicative topics. This enriches their vocabulary, develops correct pronunciation skills, and strengthens their self-confidence when speaking. Working in pairs also helps students develop their mutual cooperation and listening skills.

Group work and projects are one of the important components of communicative education in primary schools. During these activities, students learn to work together, exchange ideas and make collective decisions. Various project tasks develop students' creative thinking skills and have a positive impact on their ability to build social relationships. During group activities, students learn to respect different opinions, accept different points of view and create mutual understanding. This has a significant impact on the formation of their tolerance and empathy skills. Project-based activities increase students' sense of responsibility and develop their independent action skills.

Songs, stories, fairy tales and literary texts are considered important tools in terms of studying the culture of different peoples. The use of folklore examples, children's songs and cultural texts from different countries in foreign language lessons creates interest in other cultures in students. Through these materials, students learn about the customs, traditions, lifestyles, holidays and cultural values of different peoples.

The use of authentic materials during communicative activities is of particular pedagogical importance and is considered one of the important tools that increase the effectiveness of foreign language teaching. Authentic materials include videos, pictures, newspaper and magazine articles, short films,

podcasts, songs, announcements, dialogues and various interactive digital resources used for real communication in everyday life. These materials, unlike artificially prepared teaching texts, provide students with a real language environment and allow them to perceive the language in a natural communication environment.

Videos, pictures, short films and interactive materials from different countries increase students' interest in a foreign language and ensure their active participation in the teaching process. The use of visual and audio materials attracts students' attention more, makes the learning process more interesting and dynamic. Especially for primary school students, colorful and interactive materials are motivating and help them form a positive attitude towards language learning.

Authentic materials also play an important role in the development of students' listening and comprehension skills. Since students are familiar with real speech patterns, different accents and everyday forms of communication, they begin to perceive the language more naturally. Through these materials, students gain the ability to adapt to the speed of speech, intonation, emotional expression, and communicative behavior models. Authentic content presented on various topics has a positive effect on the enrichment of students' vocabulary and the development of speech skills. Authentic materials expand students' ideas about intercultural communication. Information about the lifestyles, customs, national holidays, daily rules of behavior, and social relations of different peoples forms a sense of interest and respect for other cultures in students. Through videos and cultural materials from different countries, students get acquainted with different worldviews and begin to understand cultural diversity more deeply. This has a significant impact on the development of their tolerance, empathy, and intercultural understanding skills.

The use of authentic materials is also of particular importance in terms of preparing students for a real communication environment. Since students encounter real language examples used in everyday life, they acquire the ability to practically apply a foreign language. This allows them to communicate more freely and effectively in an international communication environment in the future.

Digital technologies have further expanded the possibilities of using authentic materials. Thanks to Internet resources, online platforms and multimedia tools, teachers can integrate relevant and interesting materials from different countries into the teaching process. This also allows for a more interactive, modern and student-oriented organization of foreign language teaching.

Interactive games and digital platforms are considered modern teaching tools that play an important role in the development of communicative skills. Through digital platforms, students participate in a virtual communication environment, perform various interactive tasks and gain international communication experience. Online games, language applications and virtual classroom platforms create conditions for the development of both language and digital competencies of students.

Digital technologies expand students' individual learning opportunities. Students use additional materials through various platforms, independently practice language and develop their knowledge. The virtual communication environment allows them to connect with peers from different countries and gain real international communication experience. Thus, students develop a global outlook, tolerant attitude and multicultural competence more effectively.

Conclusion. Communicative English language practices in primary schools have a significant impact on the development of students' multicultural competence. Communicative activities develop students' tolerance, empathy, intercultural understanding and social communication skills.

The application of a communicative approach in the education system creates conditions for the formation of a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. The use of authentic materials and interactive activities in foreign language lessons has a positive effect on the development of students' global outlook and the formation of a sense of respect for different cultures.

Communicative English language practices act as an important pedagogical tool in terms of the development of multicultural education in primary schools.

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