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## **WHAT DEVELOPS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS**

***ABSTRACT.** This paper deals with the role of sociocultural competence in teaching English as a Second Language. The purpose of the paper is to describe the process of the formation of socio-cultural competence in foreign language teaching. To achieve the purpose we put down the following objectives: to find out how teaching culture in language classes boosts socio-cultural competence and how the teaching process becomes more influential by increasing learners' efficiency and saving the instruction time as well as to suggest possible ways of developing students' sociocultural competence. The theoretical part defines the sociocultural competence and how the language is interconnected with culture and deals with different models of intercultural teaching, the characteristics of the components of socio-cultural competence which is a complex phenomenon. The practical part consists of research analysis and suggestions for incorporation of culture into the class and extracurricular activities, developing culture awareness through writing research papers and International*

*projects. The use of effective methods and technologies are described. The results of the thesis are summed up in the conclusion. The obtained results revealed that students like travelling abroad, prefer to listen to foreign songs and watch movies, have difficulties with vocabulary and grammar, understand the value of sociocultural awareness and enjoy learning it. Teaching culture in language classes boosts socio-cultural competence and the teaching process becomes more influential by increasing learners' efficiency and saving the instruction time.*

**Key words:** *sociocultural competence, research international partnership, European projects, interaction, competences, diversity, democratic culture, European and national cultural values, European integration.*

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**Introduction.** Sociocultural competence has become a significant part of foreign language teaching. There are a number of different theories of sociocultural competence, which mostly reveal the interdependence of culture and language and draw some implications for language teaching. Each of these theories has provided professionals in the field with valuable tools and paved the way towards a culture-based pedagogy. G.A. Vorobjev [1] notes "socio-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon and includes a set of components belonging to different categories" . According to R.P. Milrud [2] , "sociocultural competence refers to the activity-component of communicative competence". V.V. Safonova [3] believes that "didactic description of the objectives of socio-cultural education by means of a foreign language is to be done in terms of socio-cultural competence".

Sociocultural competence can be defined as the students' ability to accomplish proper cross-cultural communication. U.

J. Sut describes a person with some degree of sociocultural competence as someone, who is able to see relations between different cultures, and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people [4]. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of their own and other cultures, someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural. In the approach of Z.I. Nikitenko[5] and L.R Kohls sociocultural competence is represented in knowledge of the language (non-equivalent and normal vocabulary), knowledge of national culture, and the norms of behavior[6]. Scholars put forward the following stages for the formation of sociocultural competence: acquaintance with the sociocultural environment of the studied language; acquirement of sociocultural competence in educational conditions; acquirement of sociocultural competence in real conditions. The development of sociocultural competence in language teaching supposes a communication-oriented approach. Sociocultural competence anticipates the

knowledge of another culture, respect and tolerance towards others [7].

Some teachers believe that teaching culture will enable language learners to be engaged authentically with the culture of a particular native-speaking community. After we understand the significance of teaching culture, we need to perceive the importance of socio-cultural factors and their application in teaching culture since they play an incredibly important role in learning and using a new language better and easier and on the other hand when these factors are not applied in teaching a new language negative consequences like disability in understanding very culture-dependent lessons have been reported. That is the reason why many language learners

complain about very vague and ambiguous situations in native speakers' communications in the native environment. We understand socio-cultural competence as the possession of and the ability to apply a set of multicultural knowledge, skills and qualities in the process of intercultural communication in the specific conditions of life and tolerance towards people of other nationalities. Today, EFL programs across the globe are attempting to incorporate these ideas into their lesson planning programs and training programs for their non-native language teachers. They hope to enable students to better their understanding of the new language and facilitate teachers' performance. It should be noted, however, working on socio-cultural competence in language classes doesn't mean asking students to abandon their culture and adopt another identity, but it means offering pieces of information about underlying cultural and social factors which affect discourse and communication instead. This triggers learners' motivation for receiving the new language identity. We define sociocultural competence as the ability to behave appropriately in the specific situations, to choose the appropriate form of social etiquette, to decode the social code of the partner, to use different vocabulary, to understand the meanings of the words in the definite context [8].

**Social-cultural competence as a significant part of foreign teaching.** Language and culture are closely tied to one another and have a profound influence on both verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, the significance of the length of a pause or a change in tone depends on and can vary by culture. Other components of communication, such as the degree of formality in one's speech or one's body language also hold different meanings depending on the culture with which a person identifies himself. A variety of daily and intellectual contexts must often be taken into consideration in order to understand the meaning of something that is said. Such

contexts can differ greatly from one culture to the next, often making it difficult for newcomers to effectively communicate with other members of their new culture. Developing an understanding of general cultural contexts and their implications will enable someone who was not raised in a particular culture to fully comprehend speech or text in that culture's language, and to use the language more easily. That is the basic idea behind socio-cultural competence and its use in ESL teaching. Through the study of educational material the student acquires a particular competence – specific knowledge, skills – and gains experience (professional quality) and thus demonstrates perseverance, self-reliance and responsibility (personal qualities). In addition, competence in the educational process is the result of integrated learning (the integration of theory and practice, the integration of teaching methods and educational technologies, the integration of academic disciplines).

Competence is characterized by the possibility (the ability, willingness) to apply knowledge and skills in real life, showing the best personal qualities. Socio-cultural competence is a complex phenomenon. It includes the following components: linguistic-cultural – knowledge of lexical items with the socio-cultural semantics (e.g., greeting, forms of address, and farewell, in oral and written speech); sociolinguistic – knowledge of the language features of social classes, different generations, genders, social groups; cultural component – knowledge of cultural peculiarities of English-speaking countries, their habits, traditions, standards of behaviour, etiquette and the ability to understand and use them appropriately in the communication process, while remaining a carrier of another culture. Sociocultural competence is an important “cognitive” factor in learning the new language which encompasses social and cultural constructs, among them are: social-contextual factors, stylistic appropriateness factors,

cultural factors, and non-verbal communicative factors. These components contain almost all unfamiliar parts of new language's culture [9]. Some of these components are often neglected in ESL teaching, leading to confusion or comprehension difficulties in the future. For example, forms of non-verbal communication, such as body language, eye contact, and use of personal space are an integral part of the American culture- whose norms are implicitly understood and are often not discussed. However, people of other cultures usually have different customs in regards to the type of body language they use, whether or not they maintain eye contact, and how close they stand to the person who they are speaking to in their own language. People who are unaware of such communication standards in the American culture frequently try to employ the norms of their own cultures. However, if their customs are different from those of the United States, they might give the impression of having a rude or distrustful nature.

The importance of cross-cultural aspect introduction into the process of foreign language teaching is obvious.

It is worth mentioning that forming skills of cross-cultural communication should not be focused on traditional methods of British and American studies as these methods are mostly based on presenting and discussing information and do not include individual perception of a new culture. A new culture understanding is achieved using informational, interpretational, comparative and reflexive strategies which are formed with the help of a foreign language.

The informative strategies include perception, comprehension and adequate interpretation of culturally important information. The interpretational strategies mean interpretation and commenting of the culturally meaningful information. The comparative strategies are based on comparison of facts and phenomena of a new and own culture.

The reflexive strategies mean reflection of language and conceptual world image in the student's consciousness, realizing himself- herself in a new culture's context, readiness to contact people, forming tolerance to the representatives of another linguistic and cultural community.

To realize the informational strategies it is useful to present such teaching tasks as reading or listening for specific (new) information, scheming, summarizing and finding the main idea of the text, passage etc.

It is also useful to prepare in small groups an acquaintance brochure in various subject spheres like "Meals", "Greetings", "Family life" etc. Working with pictures for discussing national values and forming national images proves to be very productive in the classroom. Quizzes proved to be a very productive technique for checking the background cross-cultural information of the students as well as the level of their stereotypical thinking connected with different nations and cultures.

Using interpretational strategies the teacher should ask the students to reproduce the information using notes, tables, specific signs and to give his/her comments on the reasons of a foreigner's communicative behavior using the information of the authentic sources which explain the system of national values and mentality. The comparative strategies are proved to be very productive for teaching cross-cultural understanding. At this stage cross-cultural awareness of the students is formed on the basis of comparison with other nations' communicative behavior (verbal and non-verbal) resulting in forming their national self-identification, understanding differences and working out tolerance to different communicative models of behavior. Among the most productive and successfully used tasks the following should be named: making suppositions on different nation's communicative behavior at the pre-reading or pre-listening stage and comparing the results after reading the

text or listening to the dialog; jigsaw reading - comparing the information of the two texts during a whole group discussion; comparing information of the two tables and graphs presenting different nations and trying to find common features and differences; small groups discussions of the differences. The tasks based on comparing the students' own culture, system of values and standards of communicative behavior are considered to be the most important for the process of training cross-cultural understanding. The students should be asked to have an impartial and critical look at their national norms of behavior to comment impressions on Ukrainian communicative behavior made by the representatives of other nations and cultures [6]. Realizing creative strategies the teacher suggests input which requires preliminary presentation of substantial cross-cultural information and preliminary training. Case studies are successfully used for explaining communicative failures and making suggestions as for the realization of the speaker's pragmatic task. At the initial stage the students are given cards with suggestions from professionals in the sphere of cross-cultural communication on how to manage the problem situation. Later the students are given tasks based on solving case studies' problems connected with Ukrainian communicative norms and make independent suggestions as for these problems solving.

With respect to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the communicative competence becomes increasingly topical. To become a successful user of a foreign language it is necessary to consider another aspect of foreign language teaching and learning – the sociocultural competence. This aspect had been neglected in foreign language teaching for a long time; however, recently it started to attract more and more attention from linguists, textbook writers, methodologists, and ESL teachers. According to the Common European Framework , sociocultural competence

involves five elements:

- attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own;
- knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction;
- skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and to relate it to documents from one's own;
- skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction;
- critical cultural awareness: an ability to evaluate critically sociocultural aspects in one's own and other cultures and countries [10].

### **Developing students' Socio-Cultural Competence.**

Nowadays a great attention is given to sociocultural component in teaching a foreign language which is a requirement for the appropriate use of a foreign language in specific cultural situations. The culture should be taught as an interactive process that relates target and native languages, cultures, and perceptions [11]. The process incorporates the following eight basic stages, the first five of which are primarily teacher-associated and the final three are student-associated:

- 1) identification of a cultural theme;
- 2) presentation of cultural phenomena;
- 3) dialogue (target/native cultures);
- 4) transition to language learning;
- 5) language learning;
- 6) verification of perceptions (target/native culture);
- 7) cultural awareness;
- 8) evaluation of language and cultural proficiency.

Marianne Celce proposes organizing instruction around four basic categories:

- convention, which provides students with information about the common everyday behavior of people;
- connotation, which helps students develop their skills to recognize that the meaning of a word is determined by each individual's frame of reference;
- conditioning, which helps students develop observational and interpretive skills and understand that the actions of individuals reflect an already established cultural frame of reference;
- comprehension, which helps students develop the skills of analysis and hypothesis formation, thereby recognizing that the behavior of one person does not necessarily reflect the behavior of society as a whole [12].

The following models of intercultural teaching: cognitive (intellectual, classroom) model, self-awareness and cultural awareness models, simulation model, and interactional model.

The cognitive (intellectual, classroom) teaching promotes understanding of cultural differences and similarities. It helps students to get more information about a culture. As the emphasis is laid on cognitive understanding of customs, values, people, geography, and habits of a specific culture, the normally applied methods of teaching are role-plays, films, readings, and different kinds of presentations.

This model, however, has its limitations. It only teaches students "what to learn" but not "how to learn", teaches them to gain knowledge of a culture without knowing how to perform and to adapt behaviorally to it.

Overall, this model cannot guarantee success in living or studying in a new culture.

The self-awareness teaching helps students identify attitudes, opinions and biases embedded in their own culture that influence the way they communicate. The emphasis in this

model is laid on understanding oneself as a cultural being. Working in groups the participants learn how their own behaviors influence others and what psychological forces operate in groups [13].

The limitation of this model is its ethnocentric orientation. Although self-awareness is important for being effective in intercultural communication, its focus on the internalized processes of an individual cannot adequately teach students about factors involved in cultural interaction.

The cultural awareness teaching requires students to understand the aspects of culture that are universal and specific. It assumes that in order to successfully interact with people of other cultures we have to understand our own and others' cultural norms, customs and social systems. The cultural awareness model aims to teach students to overcome ethnocentrism, to help them understand that our own cultural identity is only one possibility among numerous others. Another strong point of this model is that the students can reach not only intellectual understanding but also an affective tolerance of cultural differences in the process of intercultural communication. This teaching model also has its limitations. First, it may be difficult for the teachers to apply general knowledge in dealing with a specific cultural task; second, in comparing their own culture to others the participants may neglect similarities and exaggerate differences; third, to become thoroughly aware of one's own culture as the base for understanding others is a complex process and may take a long time.

The simulation teaching focuses on the affective and experiential processes of teaching students by involving them in an environment that closely resembles a specific culture. The basic assumption of this model is that it is very important for teachers to gain personal experience in living in a place resembling the host culture, to develop a set of new behaviors

and attitudes that will enable them to better adjust to the foreign culture. The main advantage of this model is a strong focus on the students. It is a process, through which students acquire intercultural communication skills.

However, there are also some limitations. First, it is difficult to simulate overseas environment. Second, it is impossible to gain extensive cultural knowledge through personal experience in a limited time. Most frequently, the simulation model is used as a complementary part of the classroom (cognitive) model [12].

The interactional teaching presupposes face-to-face interaction with the foreign nationals. Through the experiential learning process students are supposed to figure out the value systems and appropriate behavioral patterns of the host culture. The model is commonly applied to the intercultural workshop programs held at the meetings of the European club “Diversity”. As any other model, interactional model also has its advantages (real life communication with foreigners, authentic source of information) and disadvantages (encountering cultural differences that may cause cultural misunderstanding or culture shock).

An effective intercultural teaching can increase the learner's capacity for intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and intercultural competence, thus enabling him or her to function effectively in intercultural context.

Applying a single model of intercultural teaching may not sufficiently prepare students to function properly and effectively in a new cultural environment. Better results may be achieved through a combination of several teaching models. A more effective outcome may be achieved by devising specific teaching techniques: case studies, critical-incident case studies based on real-life experience of the learners, simulations, role playing, team projects, experiential learning, writing diaries etc [13].

We consider that students should be culturally armed in order to accomplish the dialogue of cultures and avoid cultural shock when communicating with the representatives of different cultures.

Paying attention to the sociocultural aspect in teaching would-be interpreters is very important because translation is vital means of accomplishing sociocultural communication. To reflect the meaning of the sentence a translator must first decode the message and then convey its sociocultural coloring correctly. The ability to interpret the information in a proper way and to draw conclusions is the attribute of the translators' sociocultural competence.

Developing students' sociocultural competence is of great importance because the specific feature of their future work is based on communication with people. They must know the way of life, patterns of behavior of people of different cultures. Being not socio-culturally competent, the students may fail in communication with the representatives of another culture.

There are many opportunities that Kovel City Gymnasium students may use to increase their sociocultural awareness, sensitivity and competence. Namely, participation in Language Discussion clubs, e-mail correspondence with native speakers, communication with people of different cultures at the on-line conferences, attending special course of Culture Studies, American and English Literature, writing research papers, learning English on Oxford books, implementing joint projects. They all are means of exploration of another culture. It should be noted, that Oxford books capture students' interest in such topics as: the Internet, communication, identity, diversity, the risks of the modern world, anglophone and international culture. Students are encouraged to compare their own language and culture to that of English and the world of English speakers. Oxford books take our students some way towards reaching the ultimate goal of all-round fluency with

accuracy. The topics and texts have been chosen carefully with the aim of engaging the minds of upper-intermediate students with themes of universal interest. They are designed to provoke comment and discussion because many of the issues raised should be within their experience, for example the effects of tourism, homelessness, and great events of the twentieth century. There are also two literary extracts. All the texts come from authentic sources.

The objectives of these activities are the following:

1) to manage the students' activity through the use of sociocultural component in the process of study;

2) to expand students' linguistic and country study knowledge, and teach them how to apply sociocultural knowledge in practice, in verbal and written communication;

3) to develop students' sociocultural competence using authentic materials.

**Immersion in the natural language environment.** The best way to develop sociocultural competence is to immerse in the natural language environment and communicate with native speakers. The absence of language environment can be compensated with authentic materials (real-life materials that weren't created for educational purposes). Authentic materials can be taken from the Internet, TV programs, movies, songs, magazines, periodicals, horoscopes, menus, brochures, bills, postcards, tickets, stamps, etc. We held a poll among 120 students Kovel City Gymnasium to find out their attitude to authentic materials. We asked the following questions: 1) Why do you study a foreign language? I want to: a) travel abroad (54 %); b) study abroad (25 %); c) participate in academic exchange programs (11 %); d) work abroad (10 %). 2) Which authentic materials do you enjoy? a) songs (40 %); b) movies / video materials (20%); c) the Internet (30 %); d) literature (novels, poetry, short stories, plays, etc.) and periodicals (journals, newspapers, magazines, etc.) (10%).

3) What difficulties do you encounter when you work with authentic materials? a) vocabulary (75 %); b) grammar (15 %); c) cultural peculiarities (6%); d) realia of daily life (4%). 4) Why do people need to know another culture? a) to build relationships (31 %); b) to do business (39 %); c) to travel (11 %); d) to become aware of native culture (19 %). 5) Do you enjoy discovering another culture / customs / traditions? a) yes (82 %); b) no (10 %); c) I don't know (8 %). The obtained results revealed that students dream of travelling abroad, prefer to listen to foreign songs and watch movies, have difficulties with vocabulary and grammar, understand the value of sociocultural awareness and enjoy learning it. Thus, to feel at home in a global world, a graduating student has to possess a number of competences from professional competences in science and technology to foreign language competences. Foreign language knowledge helps understand your own language and culture, promotes intercultural communication, provides access to foreign scientific literature, opens doors to international education and understanding of other people.

In order to measure the increase in the students' efficiency in doing tasks in class, and the amount of the saved time in instruction, to show the positive effects of indirect cultural exposure on language learning and language learners we did research in which we tried to answer the questions: how teaching culture in language classes boosts socio-cultural competence and how the teaching process becomes more influential by increasing learners' efficiency and saving the instruction time?

Two Classes of both genders in pre-intermediate level and two classes in intermediate level have been studied. Totally 120 students were selected as samples, which 60 of them were pre-intermediate students and 60 of them were intermediate students. The books of Oxford University Press and Express

Publishing pre-intermediate and intermediate levels were selected as study materials since they are official course books in our Gymnasium.

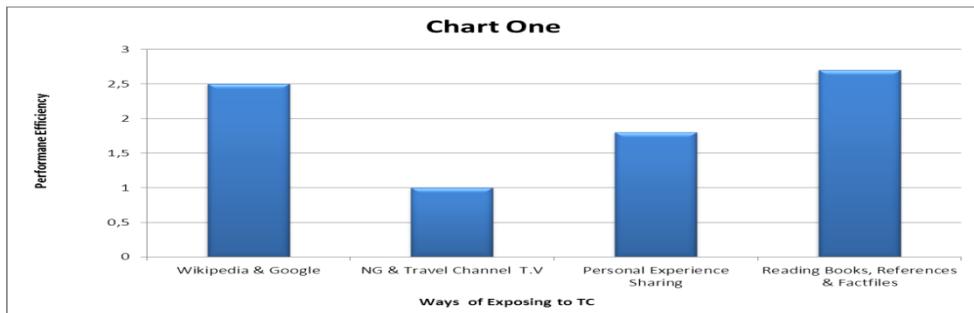
In our research, in order to collect information about students' cultural knowledge in English especially about England and the US a "Cultural Information Questionnaire" which is a form including 10 questions about English speaking countries' important historical places, social characteristics, customs and traditions, heroes and icons, geographical status and their history. Two versions (A and B) of this questionnaire were used to estimate the amount of knowledge and information that students have about target language culture, before and after they were advised to participate in this survey and indirect cultural exposure.

In order to evaluate students' level of proficiency, "Culture-bound Achievement Tests" have been used. Students' perception about different cultures in the world usually shapes their socio-cultural competence and this competence in return enables them to understand the target language better and easier. Students in this research were asked to increase their information about the target language culture in these ways:

- surfing Wikipedia (Free Web-based Encyclopedia) and Google (the most popular search engine on the Internet);
- watching satellite channels such as: National Geographic, Discovery and Travel Channel;
- asking the students who travelled to English speaking countries to share their experiences, videos or photos they have;
- reading books, papers, magazines and any other printed sources of information about target language culture.

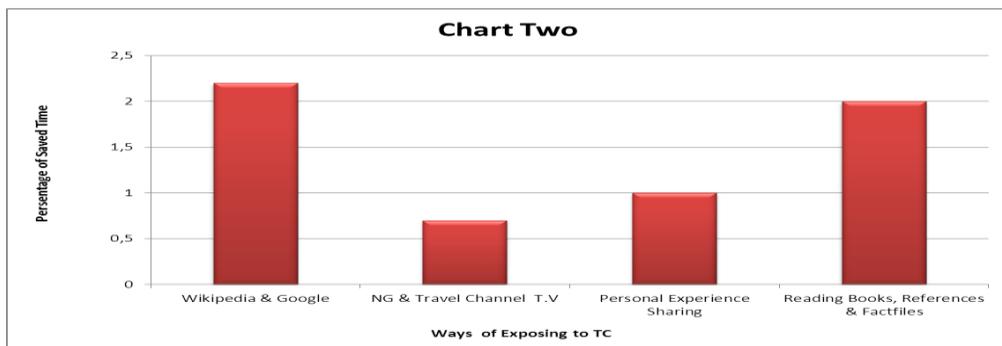
To measure the performance efficiency, students' scores recorded from two versions of cultural information questionnaire were compared and their test scores were recorded, studied and analyzed carefully.

Chart 1 demonstrates the percentage of performance efficiency influenced by four separate ways of indirect cultural exposure in both pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.



The average overall performance efficiency of students in these classes was twenty percent.

Chart two demonstrates the amount of the time which is saved, influenced by four separate ways of indirect cultural exposure in both pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.



The average saved time in these classes was twelve percent.

Studying these two tables gives the following results: surfing Wikipedia (Free Internet Encyclopedia) and Google (The Most Popular Search Engine) gives students a lot of opportunities to gain all necessary information. The results show an increase in students' information about English speaking countries' history and culture and because they felt more optimistic about language learning process they did better in class, and also because less effort is required by both teachers and students, they asked fewer questions, did the tasks faster, a lot of time was saved.

Watching satellite channels such as: National Geographic, Discovery and Travel Channel give students the opportunity to gain needed information. Results show, about ten percent increase in their performance efficiency, and about seven percent of class time was saved when they watched TV, learning about the new language culture.

Asking people to share their travel experiences, bringing videos or photos they have about their trips was another way of indirect cultural exposure. More than thirty percent of selected students had opportunity to travel abroad and touch cultural components in person (are mostly western and European countries). Students showed a lot of interest to this part eagerly hearing those people. Students' knowledge about TC was increased remarkably in this way. Their performance efficiency showed eighteen percent increase. More than ten percent of class time was saved in this way. Next recommended way of indirect cultural exposure was reading books and resources. Although this is a good method of gaining knowledge, but the problem is that, there aren't enough and qualified libraries that learners could take advantage of, therefore, students should buy or borrow the books. This is a little unpleasant for them and they sometimes do not show too much interest about it and what's more studying these books and resources takes a lot of time. In spite of these factors, results show remarkable increase

in their class performance doing the culture-dependent tasks, about twenty seven percent, and saved much more time in class. About twenty percent of time was saved.

The study of data resulted from this experiment showed that if language learners learnt about target language culture, teaching the new language would be an easier task. Developing students' sociocultural competence is of great importance because the specific feature of their future work is based on communication with people. They must know the way of life, patterns of behavior of people of different cultures. Being not socio-culturally competent, the students may fail in communication with the representatives of another culture.

### **Incorporation of Culture into the Class and Extracurricular Activities**

In the ideal foreign-language class the teaching of culture is an integral, organized component of the course content. Why is the culture component so crucial in foreign-language teaching?

1. The ability to interact with speakers of another language depends not only on language skills but also on comprehension of cultural habits and expectations.
2. Intercultural understanding is one of the basic goals of education in a modern independent world community of nations.
3. The students are extremely interested in the people who speak the language they are studying.

Various methods teachers can use to present cultural information in

foreign-language classes are the following:

4. The culture aside is an unplanned, brief, culture comment (e.g. eating habits).
5. Lecture presentations in which some characteristics of the foreign culture are discussed, (e.g. similarities and differences of Christmas holiday celebration).

6. A “slice-of-life” technique for teaching culture. The teacher chooses a small segment of life from the foreign culture that is presented to the students, (e. g. a foreign language calendar.)

7. Culture assimilators consist of three parts: a) a short passage demonstrating an intercultural exchange in which a misunderstanding occurs, b) four possible interpretations of what transpired, c) feedback for the students as to the correct answer. This type of activity has the potential to help create insight into and tolerance of cultural diversity (e.g. courtesy phrases).

8. A cultural capsule is a brief description of one aspect of the foreign culture followed by a discussion of the contrasts between the cultures (e.g. post-elementary education in the other cultures).

9. A culture cluster is a related series of culture capsules dealing with a central theme, (e.g. wedding ceremonies: the civil, the religious ones, finally an enactment of a wedding is presented).

10. Minidramas or miniskits help the students visualize culture content, incorporate the culture being learned into their actions as they perform in selected situations (e.g. arranging a meal in restaurant).

11. Visual aids (films, slides, photographs, newspapers, magazines) can make a contribution to the stimulation of students' interest. They are as important for their cultural content as for their factual content.

12. Involve the students in a group solution to a situational problem (e.g. to identify the “blunder” in the sociocultural interaction).

13. Music and dance of the foreign culture can be related to the people’s moods, interests and way of life [6].

Learning activities focusing on culture need not be restricted to the classroom: e.g. Pen pals and tape exchanges (personal

contacts, letters); summer camps; student exchange and travel / study abroad; special programs and events (cultural touring groups); regional and state language festivals; community resources (native speakers, museums and art galleries, theatres); travelogue films.

At the English lessons we propose to analyze both culture in the whole and its separate parts (ideas, cultural products, cultural behaviour). There are three main groups of exercises, which help us to do it:

Exercises that help to develop the sense of cultural context and give students' background knowledge: recognizing cultural images and symbols, working with cultural products (souvenirs, money, headlines, poems, etc.), exploring values and attitudes, exploring song lyrics, analyzing associations and cultural artifacts, determining contextual clues.

Exercises that help students learn to read visual signs. These tasks help students to read and interpret cultural signs in foreign products, analyze stereotypes, decode messages, understand non-verbal means of communication [12].

The most important are tasks where students are proposed to compare cultural experience of the country of studied language and the one of their own culture. Such exercises presuppose making cultural commentaries, analyzing of the spiritual and commercial values of both countries, comparing connotative meanings of the sign in different cultures, explaining cultural behaviour, etc.

The comparative strategies are proved to be very productive for teaching cross-cultural understanding. At this stage cross-cultural awareness of the students is formed on the basis of comparison with other nations' communicative behavior (verbal and non-verbal) resulting in forming their national self-identification, understanding differences and working out tolerance to different communicative models of behavior. Among the most productive and successfully used tasks the

following should be named: making suppositions on different nation's communicative behavior at the pre-reading or pre-listening stage and comparing the results after reading the text or listening to the dialog; jigsaw reading comparing the information of the two texts during a whole group discussion; comparing information of the two tables and graphs presenting different nations and trying to find common features and differences; small groups discussions of the differences. The tasks based on comparing the students' own culture, system of values and standards of communicative behavior are considered to be the most important for the process of training cross-cultural understanding. The students should be asked to have an impartial and critical look at their national norms of behavior to comment impressions on Ukrainian communicative behavior made by representatives of other nations and cultures. Case studies are successfully used for explaining communicative failures and making suggestions as for realization of the speaker's pragmatic task. At the initial stage the students are given cards with suggestions from professionals in the sphere of cross-cultural communication on how to manage the problem situation. Later the students are given tasks based on solving case studies' problems connected with Ukrainian communicative norms and make independent suggestions as for these problems solving.

In the process of teaching English considerable attention should be paid to the study of cultural codes and their semiotic analysis. It will help students to acquire proper sociocultural competence, background knowledge and communicate successfully with representatives of other cultures. At the lessons the students take part in guided discussions, role-plays, solving intercultural incidents, doing exercises on critical thinking, presentations of projects. These techniques enable the students to:

- understand the concept of intercultural awareness;

- recognize the origins of their own cultural values, assumptions and attitudes and the way in which their values affect their perception of others;
- identify causes of intercultural misunderstandings;
- explore how their perception of their own character, attitudes and behavior might influence their cultural learning;
- recognize personal skills affecting their ability to adapt to living and working abroad;
- develop attitudes and strategies which will help adapt to life in a foreign country and operate autonomously in that country;
- observe, monitor and report on their own cultural learning [14].

Making the language and culture connection is one more rewarding strategy used in culture learning. This strategy means that the teacher is always aware of cultural implications, ready to supply brief explanations or guidance, and cognizant of the cultural implications in the instructional content. It is especially important in vocabulary development. Proverbs, sayings, superstitions, positive and negative evaluative statements, metaphors, humor, all involve language and all carry heavy cultural connotations.

The use of media units can be very effective as well. This technique involves the use: of films, television programmes, or other visual devices that provide information, generate questions, and develop cultural hypotheses. It can be particularly useful in demonstrating nonverbal communication, in analyzing intercultural variations and in providing culture-specific information.

Therefore, Kovel City Gymnasium students should get sufficient knowledge and skills in cross-cultural communication in order to adjust properly to a new culture or multicultural environment, to be able to establish interpersonal

relations within the culturally different community, and to behave adequately in some cross-cultural situations.

**Developing Culture Awareness through writing research papers.** Each language has its own rules of usage as to when, how, and to what degree a speaker may impose a given verbal behavior on his or her conversational partner. For instance, in North American culture, paying a compliment to someone obligates that person to answer “Thank you,” whereas in another culture such a response might be both inappropriate and embarrassing. Norms of imposition vary also according to the social and personal habits of the speakers. Silence or withdrawal on the part of some students may make others feel imposed upon to speak more than they normally would.

Scholars define socio-cultural competence as the ability to behave appropriately in the specific situations, to choose an appropriate form of social etiquette, to decode the social code of the partner, to use different vocabulary, to understand the meanings of the words in the definite context, etc.

Language and culture are closely inter-linked. The difference between culture and language-systems, literary traditions and norms are the reasons for using different additional information [11]. For example take linguistic component of socio-cultural knowledge. The source of the explicit information can equally be contained in the text itself, or in a textual situation, or may be drawn from an outside source, that is our overall knowledge of the world at large. Thus lexical explicit component of English verb *to give* is generally semantically weak verb but semantically rich verb in Ukrainian. Ukrainian translators generally choose a more specific and less frequent verb in translation. Not because there are no verbs in Ukrainian of more general character. The Ukrainian verb *давати* (*‘передавати від однієї особи до іншої; дарувати що-небудь; відзначати*’) almost stands on the same level of generality as the English verb *to give* (*‘to*

*present voluntarily and without expecting compensation; bestow; to hand to someone; to grant to someone'). According to the Ukrainian stylistic peculiarities less frequent verbs are preferred instead of other verbs: He gave a lecture. Він прочитав лекцію. English verb to give is translated into Ukrainian прочитати. I gave them dinner. Я пригостила їх обідом. English verb to give - Ukrainian verb пригостити. He was given command of the regiment. Йому доручено командувати військом. The English verb to give – The Ukrainian verb доручити. They are given a flat- warming party. Вони влаштовують виходина. The English verb to give – The Ukrainian verb влаштовувати. Who'll give us a song? Хто нам заспіває пісню The English verb to give – The Ukrainian verb заспівати.*

*In these examples cases of the specification of English verb to give show more specific more concrete meaning. The source for the creation additional meanings is in the interpretation of the actual situations of the texts, the interpretation of the relations between heroes, their positions, etc [11].*

In order to maintain a successful “dialogue between cultures” and avoid misunderstanding, communicative mistakes and social conflicts we encourage students to write research papers on such topics as: “Communicative, pragmatic and extra-cultural peculiarities of praise utterances”, “Confrontational speech genres”, “Socio-pragmatic peculiarities of a compliment as an element of the language etiquette”, “The language of a smile in the process of communication”, “Structural, semantic, communicative and pragmatic peculiarities of disrespect utterances” etc. The material of research papers is taken from a large number of text fragments. The methods that were used while writing the papers are as follows: the descriptive and comparative method, the pragmatic and contextual analyses and questionnaires.

Students' personal contribution lies in designing a questionnaire that is a research instrument consisting of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questions were designed both for American and Ukrainian respondents for statistical analysis in order to find out ethno-cultural peculiarities of praise, disrespect, compliment utterances, confrontational speech genres in American and Ukrainian. While writing a research paper students not only practice their oral and writing skills but also show awareness of and caring about other people's feelings. This reveals socially correct speaker's behaviour.

In modern linguistics, exploration of social essence of language use (language in action) has been traditionally confined to two main aspects. The first is speech interaction of interlocutors, which provides the material for conversational analysis. The second is the interactional nature of utterances viewed in isolation or as a part of sequences of utterances. These facets of language use are studied in speech-act theory, discourse analysis and text linguistics.

The objects of these papers are the utterances of disrespect, compliment, praise, functioning in dialogical unities in Modern English discourse. The subject matter of the research papers is semantic, structural, pragmatic and ethno cultural peculiarities of utterances of disrespect, compliment, praise. The goal of our research is complex analysis of utterances of disrespect, compliment, praise.

The practical value of the paper is determined by the fact that its results can be used in further research on utterances of evaluation. Language is a form of behavior, and it is governed by rules. Linguistic communication is seen as conventionalized, its minimal unit being the speech act, i.e. "an utterance that serves a function in communication". The idea of language being a behavior is the key to understand how language functions in a social context. Appropriate social

behavior patterns, as they are perceived in Western societies, are built on the norms which constitute polite behavior. Language is a form of behavior, and it is governed by rules. Linguistic communication is seen as conventionalized, its minimal unit being the speech act, i.e. “an utterance that serves a function in communication”. The idea of language being a behavior is the key to understand how language functions in a social context. Appropriate social behavior patterns, as they are perceived in Western societies, are built on the norms which constitute polite behavior.

There are a lot of things we can do with words. We can make requests, ask questions, give orders, make promises, give thanks, pay compliments, praise or show disrespect and so on. Moreover, almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker’s intention.

In general, speech acts are acts of communication. To communicate is to express a certain attitude, and the type of speech act being performed corresponds to the type of attitude being expressed.

Take the case of the utterance of disrespect. If you utter, “You, fool, did a bad job!” and intend this as criticism you are expressing your evaluation, in this case you are saying something unpleasurable about the addressee’s ability to do such a job. Disrespect is a speech act which hurts, damages, neglects, embarrasses, or threatens someone, their actions, appearance or property. Disrespect should be seen as communicative, because it is intended to be taken as expressing a negative attitude to a person or his/ her action. While doing research paper “Structural, semantic, communicative and pragmatic peculiarities of disrespect utterances” we conducted a questionnaire in order to analyze utterances of disrespect in American and Ukrainian cultures.

We questioned 74 people of different occupation, age and sex (students, their parents, university students, teachers, members of different families etc.) We found out that even though disrespect is defined as a negative speech act, it is still widely used in our everyday life and can play different roles in communication. Analyzing the answers we found out that Americans view disrespect as discouragement and lack of care to the addressee, while Ukrainians view it as a personal offence and use it to express their arrogance and irritation.

Ukrainians in comparison with Americans are much more specific towards accepting disrespect. They view it more like a personal offence while Americans suppose it to be a sign of misbehavior or being ill-bred. Ukrainians express it for someone's lack of moral values, hypocrisy, lies, arrogance and aggressive behavior, while Americans tend to see and express disrespect in a less wide variety of aspects. So the main question is: "Why do people show disrespect and how can we cope with this problem?" There are different thoughts, but my American friend Michael Cortez says that no human is perfect; we all sometimes get mad and let out unnecessary rage towards others. So even if you have made the mistake of disrespecting someone, go ahead, step over your pride and try to make that person feel better!

We state that disrespect is a destructive speech act which spoils people's mood and makes them feel bad, making it harder for human individuals to cooperate effectively. So in order to annihilate the bad effects of disrespect we need to use the reverse action - respect each other, show interest in each other's thoughts and look at any other person as an individual who is worth a good compliment and a nice word. People are born to bring love and peace to each other, so we should treat others with as much tolerance and wise respect as possible!

Culture has been taken an important place in language teaching and learning studies. It has been widely recognized

that culture and language are interrelated and that language is used as the main medium through which culture is expressed

Being an integral part of the ELT social - cultural aspect includes both linguistic and non-linguistic components. Linguistic component is regarded as acquisition and proper usage of non-equivalent lexis (idioms) and awareness of the sociocultural conventions [14]. Non-linguistic component includes explicit information about English speaking countries and peculiarities of verbal and non-verbal interaction.

The development of students' cultural awareness leads them to more critical thinking as citizens with political and social understanding of their own and other communities. Fostering a certain degree of understanding of the target culture from outsider's and insider's perspective is an empathetic view that permits the student to accurately interpret foreign cultural behavior, to compare and contrast the other culture assumptions about reality. Identifying and exploring socio-cultural peculiarities of the other cultures students should learn culturally prescribed norms intended to meet expectations or needs shared by members of a culture. They learn, for instance, that certain social occasion demand specific behaviors and speech acts. So the goal of teaching and learning this aspect is to become aware of verbal and non-verbal norms of behaviour culturally defined and varied.

**International Projects – Sharing Cultures.** *Cross-cultural interaction* is important in language use in the real world. Students *share* their values and viewpoints, ways of acting and reacting, and their speech styles. They recognize the stereotypes they hold of speakers of the target language and of each other's culture. This learning experience can be in a direct exchange of opinions or through initiation into the activities of another culture. Guided activities and projects that gradually lead students to successful cross-cultural encounters give students confidence for future cross-cultural interactions[14].

Observing interaction between people from different cultures, becoming aware of one's own reactions to other people, monitoring one's own speech style, and practicing diverse interaction skills help students learn to cope successfully in another culture.

There are a lot of opportunities for the students of Kovel City Gymnasium to go global and to get invaluable cultural experience. They participate in different international programs that operate successfully at Gymnasium. These are International Leadership program, Language and Culture program in the USA, Europe, grant programs for Education in the United States, Education and Culture Programs such as "Faith to Face", "e-Twinning", "Democracy for schools", "Learning English through Arts". Moreover, a lot of former students succeed in such international programs as Work and Travel, Global Undergraduate Exchange programs in the USA and Europe, Language Summer camps.

The SSEP program, administered by American Councils for International Education, and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, is an international exchange program with former countries of the Soviet Union. It pairs schools from these countries with schools in the United States for the purpose of sharing our countries' values of democracy, diversity, entrepreneurship and market economy, along with immersion into another culture.

The main idea of this exchange was a joint project called "Volunteering is Caring." We have been working on our joint project for fourteen years. It is a new rewarding experience for teachers and students in Kovel. This project helps us understand who we are, what responsibilities we have. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship and peace between our countries, gives us a rare chance to explore our values, get new experience and share ours. As a teacher I feel my goal is to help my students to become productive active citizens who are

interested in acquiring a quality education and making a difference in their community.

Our collaborative work with other schools in the USA and Europe stimulates me to analyze my educational experience and broaden the sphere of my educational activities with my students. These new interests and skills led me to some unusual and very rewarding educational activities outside my regular teaching and routine. This program requires each school to send a group of nine students and two teachers to their partner school. Both the Ukrainian and American partner schools started to implement the joint project "Volunteering is caring". Funding from the US Department provided domestic and international travel, insurance, US visas, and a stipend.

That time witnesses the value of students' exchanges from the first hand experience. Also it has served to strengthen and consolidate the partnership between our two schools. Understanding similarities and differences in communication across cultures requires knowledge about how cultures differ. There are certain sets of cultural variables/dimensions that can be used to explain the differences in communication patterns of cultures. Our survey of research findings on this problem has put to the foreground the following cultural variables underlying communication patterns of American mainstream culture: 1) individualism (*vs.* collectivism); 2) low-context (*vs.* high context); 3) low uncertainty avoidance (*vs.* high uncertainty avoidance); and 4) small power distance (*vs.* high power distance).

Using individualism *vs.* collectivism as the major dimension of cultural variability to explain cross-cultural differences in behaviour, scholars define American culture as individualistic where the interest of the individual prevails over the interest of the group. The personal identity is "I" (*vs.* "we"). The speakers tend to display openness and creativity in communication, reaffirm the autonomy of the individual.

American culture is a low-context culture, where the speakers tend to vest "the mass of information in the explicit (verbal) code", in the communication events themselves. The influence of historical background, the knowledge of the ethos is minimized as compared with high-context cultures. The speakers tend to communicate in a clear and direct fashion with little room for cultivation of ambiguity which expresses itself in such common American sayings as "*Say what you mean*", "*Don't beat about the bush*", and "*Get to the point*" [13].

Societies that are concerned about controlling the future and the extent to which behaviour should follow fixed rules are high in uncertainty avoidance. American culture tends to display low uncertainty avoidance, thus it tends to resist change less, has a lesser need for absolute truth and formal rules, ritualization of words, dress, and actions, and more tolerance for people or groups with deviant ideas or behaviour.

Societies differ in the way they handle inequality. The USA is indicating orientation toward a small power distance society which promotes power equalization. Power distance is useful in understanding the behaviour of the American speakers in role relationships, especially those involving different degrees of power and authority. The knowledge and awareness of American cultural distinctions helps promote understanding in intercultural verbal interactions [6].

During our three week stay our Ukrainian students attended classes at Kane Area High School and North Charleston High School. School in the USA is an equal opportunity educational institution, which doesn't discriminate on the basis of race, colour, national origin, or handicaps in its activities, programs, or employment practices. To provide a supportive learning environment in these schools, the administration sets expectations for attendance, discipline, and academic achievement to ensure that all students have an opportunity to develop their skills to the fullest potential. Despite strict

discipline, the atmosphere at schools was warm and friendly. We felt respect and a desire to make us feel at home. As students arrived at school every morning, the principal and vice-principal stood near the doors and greeted students with a smile and “Good morning!” Throughout the building were signs with positive messages like “Think Positively”, “Take Your Time”, “Always Do Your Best”, “Keep Things Neat”, “Be Considerate of Others”, “Remember to Smile”, “Respect Others”.

This kind of informational exchange is viewed as an extremely important means of communicating and sharing cultural values, to develop understanding and build bridges, not only between our schools, but our communities, and even our countries.

Our joint European projects with Schools in Poland gave our students wonderful opportunities to share our cultures, values and traditions, and our experience on the joint projects “Democracy in Education” and “Leading is action”. We had a wonderful team of teachers, families and students and very experienced coordinators. The time of working together serves to strengthen our partnership between Kenty Lyceum and Kovel Gymnasium, and consolidates international understanding.

The experience of our first exchange was very useful and fruitful. The ideas of our joint project were aimed at raising our students' awareness about effective leadership and democracy in Ukraine and Poland. Through interactive learning techniques students were shown that they truly could make a difference in their own communities and they were given the skills to enact this change.

Ukrainian and Polish students participated in the leadership workshops exploring cultural diversity and values and collaborating in a cooperative project on “Leadership Skills Development”.

Students participated in the round table discussion on the issue “Students' Council”. They shared their ideas, experience and programs on how to make students' council more active and productive, how to take initiative in the communities to make schools the better place, to help others and ourselves, to see a problem and work to solve it, to listen to each other, to work together. The program for us was unique and very well prepared, the schedule was tight and interesting, our visit was filled with exciting activities and everything went according to plan.

Kovel City Gymnasium students are privileged to participate in the Face to Faith Program, which is one of the many effective projects of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation. The core belief of the Foundation is that it is essential to promote understanding and respect between the world's major religions, in order to maintain secure continued peace. Face to Faith is a program that brings students of various religions and cultures together using different forms of modern technology, to connect schools in different parts of the world. It is vital that the younger generation of the 21st century collaborate to share concepts and exchange ideas, so as to work on shaping a brighter future and truly make a difference.

The Face to Faith online community enables students worldwide to carry discussions and build strong ties with one another, through a secure website where they can interact under supervision. The Program features enabled video conferences where students discuss global issues from a variety of perspectives on beliefs and faith. Hence, students gain the required discussion skills to inhibit any sort of conflict by breaking the barriers of cultural and religious stereotypes. It is reinforced by established principles that guide students and the acronym R.E.S.P.E.C.T symbolizes this: Respect, Education, Safety, Perspective, Empathy, Celebration and Trust.

What has become obvious to us over the past couple of years since we launched is the willingness of young people to come together in a spirit of openness to learn from and with one another in discussions about one another's faiths and beliefs and on issues such as malaria, human trafficking, women's rights, the environment and wealth and poverty, just to name a few.

Our young people often have creative approaches to solving some of these problems and they agree that there is a need to collaborate to share ideas and work practically to make a difference. The Face to Faith online community is a vital part of the experience for students, enabling them to carry on with their discussions, celebrating their cultures and building relationships with one another, outside the VC.

This is a secure monitored community where students can chat and communicate safely. Each student has their own customizable homepage, and can participate in discussion forums, competitions, hot-seat debates, and most importantly, making new friends.

Twinning offers a platform for staff (teachers, head teachers, librarians, etc.), working in a school in one of the European countries involved, to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and, in short, feel and be part of the most exciting learning community in Europe. eTwinning, from its very beginning, is about people and collaboration between teachers and between pupils. Collaboration involving school librarians, ICT coordinators, head teachers, parents, National Support Service staff and a myriad of other educationalists from thirty-three countries united in a common purpose: to link and learn together in the largest social network community for teachers in Europe.

The Twinning action promotes school collaboration in Europe through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) by providing support, tools and services

for schools. The eTwinning Portal is the main meeting point and workspace for the action. It provides online tools for teachers to find partners, set up projects, share ideas, exchange best practice and start working together, immediately using various customized tools available on the eTwinning platform. Being involved in an eTwinning project can be a rewarding experience for both teachers and pupils.

Students of Kovel City Gymnasium have a great opportunity

- to share similar objectives and agreeing on a topic for your collaborative project;
- to communicate regularly and openly;
- to have comparable age, number and language level of pupils;
- to have access to ICT equipment at school to allow for effective collaboration.

We can begin our journey by meeting and sharing our ideas with these teachers through our eTwinning, look for a partner to work with in a collaborative project; use eTwinning for our own professional development, in order to build upon and strengthen your existing pedagogical skills; apply to take part in a Professional Development Workshop or an online Learning Event. We can further develop ideas about the project route of eTwinning, see all the benefits for as teachers and for our pupils. It is an expansion of minds and horizons. We can choose talk about all the positive effects of working with colleagues in our school and beyond and speak of our journeys, our teaching methods, the motivation of our pupils, the support of colleagues and how we have made friends across Europe. eTwinning helps to make teaching and learning fun.

Together with the Council of Europe and other partners we participate in the International program «Schools for Democracy» to promote democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding, democratic culture in school communities to prevent hate speech and violent extremism in

school across Europe. The main goal of participating in this Program is to develop a real democracy and democratic values at schools. This Program has been launched in Ukraine by the European Wergeland Centre (a European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway.

A whole school approach due to this program is to democratize and decentralize school governance and encourage national dialogue and social cohesion between different regions of Ukraine and Europe and between different regions of Ukraine. The result of the project should be democratic transformation initiatives at schools and in local communities. Our assumption is that the aims of education should be oriented towards preparing young people to be full and active participants in all aspects of democratic life. The skills and dispositions needed to actively participate in all aspects of democratic life include: the ability to think critically, a sense of efficacy, a commitment to compassionate action, and a desire to actively participate in political life by engaging in local decision-making processes, lobbying, voting, etc., as well as the basic need to be able to read, write and do arithmetic. Our students have learned organization and clarity and respect for different points of view and how to analyze issues, come up with solutions and their own initiatives, persuade and listen.

**CONCLUSIONS** Sociocultural competence has become a significant part of foreign language teaching. There are a number of different theories of sociocultural competence, which mostly reveal the interdependence of culture and language and draw some implications for language teaching.

Sociocultural competence can be defined as the students' ability to accomplish proper cross-cultural communication. A person with some degree of sociocultural competence is

someone, who is able to see relationships between different cultures and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or for other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of their own and other cultures, someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural. To form student' sociocultural competence it is necessary to develop the following attitudes and skills: observing, identifying and recognizing; comparing and contrasting; negotiating meaning; dealing with or tolerating ambiguity; effectively interpreting messages; limiting the possibility of misinterpretation; defending one's own point of view while acknowledging the legitimacy of others; accepting difference.

Achieving sociocultural competence requires that one lowers his/her defenses, takes risks, and practices behaviors that may feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable. It requires a flexible mind, an open heart, and a willingness to accept alternative perspectives. Sociocultural competence helps not only to survive but achieve success in an increasingly interdependent global society. A major challenge that expatriate students face in the increasingly globalized world is how to function successfully in a new cultural environment, in a country with different values, sociocultural rules, and norms of behavior. Hence, one of the main features of a successful person nowadays is the skills in intercultural communication.

**The study of data** resulted from this research showed that if language learners learn about target language culture, teaching the new language would be an easier task. Culture learning is more than getting over culture shock or getting used to life in a new country. It is the process of personal growth and transformation. **The obtained results** revealed that students like travelling abroad, prefer to listen to foreign songs and

watch movies, have difficulties with vocabulary and grammar, understand the value of sociocultural awareness and enjoy learning it. We found out that teaching culture in language classes boosts socio-cultural competence and the teaching process becomes more influential by increasing learners' efficiency and saving the instruction time. Surfing Wikipedia (Free Internet Encyclopedia) and Google (The Most Popular Search Engine) give students a lot of opportunities to gain all necessary information. The results show an increase in students' information about English speaking countries' history and culture and because they felt more optimistic about language learning process they did better in class, and also because less effort is required by both teachers and students, they asked fewer questions, did the tasks faster, a lot of time was saved.

The use of effective methods and technologies are described for incorporation of culture into the class and extracurricular activities, developing culture awareness through writing research papers and International projects.

We proved that the best way to develop sociocultural competence is to immerse in the natural language environment and communicate with native speakers. Through the study of educational material the student acquires a particular competence – specific knowledge, skills and gains experience and thus demonstrates perseverance, self-reliance and responsibility.

We should emphasize the role of sociocultural competence for achieving proficiency in a foreign language. Special attention should be given to the formation of learners' communication skills, cultural competence and positive attitude towards another culture. It enables to understand the context in which the language is used by native speakers and choose language forms to achieve a desired communicative effect. We will continue our research to discover to what extent

the textbooks we use to teach students in Kovel City Gymnasium incorporate sociocultural competence. All levels of the Student's Books and Workbooks (including Student's and Class CDs) will be analyzed in detail. The results will be taken into consideration to choose textbooks which incorporate sociocultural competence to a significantly great extent.

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### **ЩО РОЗВИВАЄ У СТУДЕНТІВ СОЦІАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНУ КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ**

*Анотація.* У статті розкрито значення формування в учнів соціокультурної компетентності як невід'ємного елемента міжкультурної комунікації, необхідної для ефективної участі в діалозі культур. Мета статті -

*описати особливості процесу формування соціокультурної компетентності учнів гімназії. На досягнення мети поставлені наступні завдання: з'ясувати, як навчання про культуру країн, мову яких учні вивчають, на уроках іноземних мов сприяють формуванню соціокультурної компетентності гімназистів; виявити рівень сформованості соціокультурної компетентності учнів, з цією метою провести опитування гімназистів, результати якого дають змогу проаналізувати ставлення учнів до автентичних матеріалів та їх використання; провести дослідження з проблеми, а саме, як знання країнознавчого матеріалу допомагає заощадити час під час пояснення нового матеріалу та підвищити ефективність роботи учнів на уроці. Проаналізовано результати дослідження щодо рівня сформованості соціокультурної компетентності в учнів. Дійшли до висновку, що учні усвідомлюють цінність краєзнавчого матеріалу, віддають перевагу інтернет-ресурсам; знання країнознавчого матеріалу допомагає заощадити час під час уроку та підвищує ефективність їхньої роботи. Розкрито шляхи розвитку соціокультурної компетентності, які реалізуються через навчальну діяльність на уроках та позакласну роботу, міжнародну співпрацю, міжнародні програми шкільних обмінів; міжнародні проекти; участь учнів у Всеукраїнських і міжнародних науково-практичних конференціях, online конференціях; громадські проекти; міжнародні та Всеукраїнські творчі конкурси. Описано власний досвід з формування соціокультурної компетентності учнів, головні методи, технології та форми роботи для розвитку міжкультурних вмій та навичок.*

**Ключові слова:** *соціокультурна компетентність, дослідження, міжнародна співпраця, європейські*

*проекти, взаємодія, компетентності, різноманіття, демократична культура, європейські й національні культурні цінності, європейська інтеграція.*

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### **ЧТО РАЗВИВАЕТ У СТУДЕНТОВ СОЦИАЛЬНО - КУЛЬТУРНУЮ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЬ**

***Аннотация.** В статье раскрыто значение формирования у учащихся социокультурной компетентности как неотъемлемого элемента межкультурной коммуникации, необходимой для эффективного участия в диалоге культур. Цель статьи - описать особенности процесса формирования социокультурной компетентности учащихся гимназии. На достижение цели поставлены следующие задачи: выяснить, как учение о культуре стран, язык которых ученики изучают на уроках иностранного языка способствует формированию социокультурной компетентности гимназистов; выяснить уровень сформированности социокультурной компетентности учащихся, с этой целью провести опрос гимназистов, результаты которого позволяют проанализировать отношение учащихся к аутентичным материалам и их использованию; провести исследования по проблеме, а именно, как знания страноведческого материала помогают экономить время во время объяснения нового материала и повысить эффективность*

работы учащихся на уроке. Проанализировав результаты исследования уровня сформированности социокультурной компетентности учащихся. Пришли к выводу, что ученики осознают ценность краеведческого материала, отдают предпочтение интернет-ресурсам; знания страноведческого материала помогает сэкономить время во время урока и повышает эффективность их работы. Раскрыты пути развития социокультурной компетентности, которые реализуются через учебную деятельность на уроках и внеклассную работу, международное сотрудничество, международные программы школьных обменов, международные проекты; участие учащихся во Всеукраинских и международных научно-практических конференциях, online-конференциях; общественные проекты; международные и Всеукраинские творческие конкурсы. Описан собственный опыт по формированию социокультурной компетентности учащихся, главные методы, технологии и формы работы для развития межкультурных умений и навыков.

**Ключевые слова:** социокультурная компетентность, исследования, международное сотрудничество, европейские проекты, взаимодействие, компетентности, многогранность демократическая культура, европейские и национальные культурные ценности, европейская интеграция.