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The Role of The Teacher in The Development of Intercultural Communication Skills Among Students in Teaching A Foreign Language

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Abstract: Language and culture are deeply interconnected, playing a central role in shaping individual and societal development. In modern contexts, intercultural communication has become critical in fostering understanding between diverse communities. Teaching a foreign language today demands more than linguistic skills; it requires imparting cultural competence. Particularly, German as a foreign language presents unique challenges and opportunities in embedding cultural elements into language instruction. Traditional language teaching methods, focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary, fail to address the development of intercultural competence, thus limiting students' ability to fully engage across cultures. This study explores the pivotal role of teachers in integrating cultural knowledge into foreign language education to enhance students' intercultural communication skills. Findings highlight that language teachers significantly influence the development of students' intercultural competence by embedding cultural topics such as everyday practices, stereotypes, and societal structures into language learning. German language education, in particular, benefits from emphasizing both linguistic and cultural dimensions. The article emphasizes the necessity of shifting foreign language education from a purely linguistic focus to a model that equally prioritizes cultural literacy, thereby promoting deeper intellectual and social engagement. These insights suggest a reformation of language teaching practices to include cultural content systematically, preparing students not only for linguistic proficiency but also for active participation in a globalized world.

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1. Introduction

Language and culture interact with each other and can hardly be separated from each other. It can even be argued that the relationship between language and culture is always psychological, sociological, and political. At the dawn of the use of human language, one of the tasks of language was to protect one's own culture from alien and dangerous factors. Now the role is the opposite, because different nations want to understand each other. Intercultural communication has become a well-known term for us [1].

It is argued that language is not only a means of external communication between people, but also an internal means by which we think and imagine, systematize and organize the world around us [2]. Neither cultural nor individual development is unthinkable without language as a means between the external and internal world. As individuals, language allows us to symbolize, collect, and share our experiences; Language allows groups and societies to pass on accumulated knowledge to future generations. The symbolic system of language is the basis of human social life and the entire cultural and social evolution. Language and culture are closely intertwined. The inner language (the means of our thinking) and the outer language (the means of social communication) are interdependent. This means that cultural differences not only affect the use of language as a means of social communication, but also lead to differences in thinking through language [3].

From the point of view of cultural transmission, learning foreign languages under the guidance of a teacher is very important. One cannot expect a foreign language teacher to be able to teach such a diverse culture as German without having formal competence in this regard. Therefore, learning a foreign language should provide this competence, but a one-year German course, which is basically enough to learn a foreign language, does not provide a deep acquaintance with the language culture. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to train foreign language teachers who will later be able to carry out important cultural transmission in the classroom. Without the cultural competence of the teacher, students will not be able to improve their intercultural competence [4]. In this context, the question arises whether German teachers consider learning German at the university to be sufficient to further instill German cultural competence [5].

2. Materials and Methods

Teaching a foreign language is always culturological in nature. Language is an integral part of culture and should not be considered only as a part of culture, as this already narrows its essence. When a language is defined as a separate part of a culture, a component corresponding to other cultural components, the probability of learning a language as a semantic, syntactic, phonetic, or other system is higher. What a teacher understands by language is of particular importance for teaching a foreign language. This understanding largely determines what is taught and what is important to achieve the learning goal. Roughly speaking, it can be stated that the teacher teaches the language as a phenomenon in its implementation. The purpose and objective of studying German and university education in general is not just the acquisition of technical skills (in our case, mastering a foreign language), but rather the development of independent, free thinking and intellectual skills, cultural phenomena and social life. be interpreted correctly. Criticism is not only a tendency to disregard historical, geographical, political, economic, and historical foundations and experiences, but also, of course, a good intention to teach students the art of discussion (an expression very often used in thematic sentences) through practical language. an approach to learning. First, discussions without a solid substantive basis are of questionable value. Even in ordinary language lessons, this is hardly correct, even in the communicative aspect. After all, you won't learn how to discuss just by discussing. Hardly anyone knows the fundamental issues of rhetoric and style after many years of studying language at university. The imposed practice of exchanging thoughts and reasoning forces students to maintain a constant average level of discussion and conversational habits. Under the pretext of practical communication, practice in the art of discussion and understanding dialogue is simply ignored. Skills are usually taught in foreign language lessons, but communication skills are always in demand by teachers and students.

3. Results

German has never been a global language. However, it has gained a significant position outside the German-speaking countries of Northern and Eastern Europe. Its status as the most widely spoken mother tongue in the European Union is well deserved, as well as the second most popular foreign language in Europe [6]. However, the trend was downward. Decades ago, it lost its former status as a scientific language, and fewer and fewer scientific publications are published in German. German is increasingly being offered and chosen as a subject. This means that the need for qualified teachers of German as a foreign language is constantly decreasing. It seems that interest in the German language and culture outside of Germany is higher than in German-speaking countries, or at least higher than Germans imagine [7].

4. Discussion

Cultural topics related to the teaching of foreign languages were included in the curricula and literature. This means that approximate recommendations have been created for the relevant cultural content. The central cultural themes in German as a foreign language lessons are geography, politics, and society in German-speaking countries [8]. The central areas of culturally oriented learning above the mentioned subject can be divided into six groups: everyday culture, facts and culturally specific, positive and visual content. The most sought after area, everyday culture, reflects the features of everyday life in the language being studied. In the textbooks, you will find, among other things, situations that tourists often encounter, for example, when asking for directions, buying tickets or hotel room reservations. Such situations are called ritualized speech acts [9].

Previously, teaching a foreign language was limited to learning letters, in which the structure of a foreign language and its literature formed the most significant content. Today, local history is a topic along with linguistic, literary and didactic research. The purpose of the lessons on the country is to let students learn something about the society of the language being studied [10]. If you manage to introduce students to the target culture, their interest in the language and motivation to learn often increase. Cultural content plays an important role in communication-oriented foreign language teaching. It includes authentic, communicative situations. Instead of geography, history, sociology, or political science, great importance is attached to oral and written communication. Regional studies can simply be defined as familiarity with everyday culture [11]. Everyday culture includes the regular, often unconscious behavior of people in everyday life, while the so-called high culture is not the subject of communication-oriented foreign language teaching. A person often has a stereotypical view of someone else. When you don't know much about someone else's culture or only superficially analyze the information you have, you become biased [12]. Stereotypical images and prejudices of other people are essentially mental models that organize new information according to old patterns. Thus, schemes are governed by reality, which can easily lead to cultural misinterpretations. If negative stereotypes about a country and its people already exist, it is difficult to change them in school lessons. A complete change can only happen when a person gains personal experience of being in a foreign country and with its inhabitants [13]. When it comes to German as a foreign language, foreign images primarily address the following topics:

1. Regional studies
2. The image of Germany in textbooks and teaching aids
3. Literary images
4. (Personal) reports on the experience of foreign language teachers regarding cultural contrasts.

In order to find out how someone else's and your own relate in foreign language lessons, you will have to look at German textbooks. In modern foreign language teaching, it is not enough to just focus on grammar and vocabulary. In addition, intercultural

competence and meetings with foreigners are important. The accompanying literary and cultural content contributes to the development of communication skills [14]. This means that teachers of German as a foreign language are intermediaries between two (or more) cultures. From this point of view, their task is to help students understand the differences between two points of view someone else's and their own and create common ground between them. Applying the concept of culture today and in this context the concepts of foreign culture and one's own culture, it should be noted that it is necessary to take into account not only cultural differences, but also cultural similarities.

The article is based on how foreign language teaching has developed into its current form. It also shows how the focus of foreign language learning is increasingly shifting to the individual. "Culture" becomes a particularly important term here and is defined in relation to the individual. Based on this thinking, the aim of foreign language learning is then set - "to enable the individual to grow beyond the limits of his or her native language and own culture". The article also considers this as a prerequisite for achieving other goals. contains several comments on the research, with particular attention to culture and geography. Foreign language teaching aims to teach the learner a foreign language so that he or she can use it for the desired purpose. foreign language Learning, different accents. Linguistics has always played an important role. The structuralist viewpoint regarded language primarily as a linguistic and social system, with special emphasis on trained linguists, logically speaking, in connection with their mastery. The vocabulary and grammar system of a foreign language, in particular, form an adequate basis for learning and communicating in the foreign language. In addition, the written form of the language had priority, since it was easier for linguists to make a written object of study than an oral one. As far as the individual is concerned, the goal of "allowing the learner to go beyond his native language and his own cultural boundaries" can be considered the most important task of foreign language teaching. For example, a learner can only fully expand his range of communication in a foreign language if he is first allowed to cross the boundary of his native language. Other goals are also of equal importance, depending on whether the teacher or the author of the curriculum and the authors of textbooks are aware of the need to move between the native language and the boundaries of his own culture. "To allow a person to grow beyond his native language and the boundaries of his own culture" also means that the differences between a foreign language. culture and language, and one's own culture and mother tongue have been consciously made the subject of instruction. This means, for example, that the learner is aware of the intervention, which is always linked to culture. Teaching a foreign language is an excellent opportunity to work through this experience and to enrich, expand and systematize the learner's cultural image. In this way, foreign language lessons help people to go beyond their culture and mother tongue [15]. This understanding naturally requires much more from foreign language teaching in schools than could be achieved with traditional system-oriented foreign language teaching. You are not only teaching a foreign language, but also developing a cultural image of each foreign language learner, which includes much more than just the language system. The entire culture, not just the language, must be taken into account.

5. Conclusion

In summary, it can be said that teachers are aware of the use of culture and intercultural relations in German as a foreign language lessons and consider the role of teachers in this regard to be very important. They find this topic very interesting and useful for future teaching. That is why they try to use these topics in their lessons and inform their students about them.

In conclusion, it can be said that language learning presents new demands that can no longer be met by traditional, extensive forms of teaching alone. Since the time required for courses cannot be increased arbitrarily, it is also necessary to use new ways of teaching

that are largely independent and, among other things, rely on new means of information and communication.

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