

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE AS A MEANS OF INTERCULTURAL
COMMUNICATION IN THE PROCESS
OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

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Nowadays, we can admit, that a place of a foreign language in the modern world has greatly changed. Foreign language proficiency is the foundation of any sphere of human activity. The ability to develop professional and personal qualities throughout life, is very essential. New realities make lifelong learning the key to successful adaptation of a person in society. There are different terms to refer lifelong learning, among them: «continuing education» (continuous education), «permanent education», «further education», «adult education» [1, p. 26].

Undoubtedly, personal, semantic, and life guidelines are developed in the process of lifelong learning. What is even more significant, the professional and educational aspect is being built, one of the vital aspects of self-realization is being carried out by means of education. Lifelong learning is a tool for the development of persons' creative abilities. The peculiarity of such education is its focus on the future.

Lifelong learning is a holistic process, as there are progressive changes in the following personal aspects:

- development of human creativity;
- comprehensive enrichment of the spiritual world of the individual.

- The educational process, which consists of consistently rising levels, also plays a significant role:

- persons get favorable opportunities to change their social status;

- the process of socialization is identified with new perspectives.

Significant changes have taken place in the material and spiritual spheres of the world community. The process of globalization inevitably expanded the opportunities for international interaction and communication. Political, cultural, and socio-economic relations have reached a completely different level.

The information age has opened a new page in the life of mankind. The following global changes have occurred:

- the nature of scientific and technical cooperation has qualitatively changed;
- digital technologies and the global network required a different data exchange model;
- the issue of intercultural communication has become acute.

The above factors have changed the status of a foreign language as a general educational discipline, from a simple lesson to a really demanded skill in the practical and intellectual activity of any specialist. Now a qualified specialist in any field of activity is considered to be someone who knows the language of international communication. Only such an employee has an opportunity to conduct a professional discussion with foreign colleagues.

Positive changes are also taking place in modern educational trends. A foreign language is no longer considered solely as a means of communication, but as the main mechanism of cognition in the system of an intercultural dialogue. The entire organization of the modern educational process is aimed at creating relevant and favorable conditions for language acquisition. The educational system is now reoriented to improve the conditions for learning languages of international communication, visual demonstration of the applied benefits of language knowledge. Foreign language communicative competence is considered to be fundamental. There are different approaches to the definition of the competence, but the basis of any competence is the ability to express thoughts clearly in the language and have a clear picture of national and cultural peculiarities of the country of the language being studied. This, in turn, is impossible without a constant, continuous expansion of the linguistic horizons [2, p. 96]. It is a deep educational process aimed at the formation and development of communication skills and socio-cultural development.

Knowledge of one of the languages of international communication in the modern world is relevant, it is an opportunity for cultural, professional, and personal growth, one of the ways to improve well-being and develop the outlook. In other words, the language of international communication in the realities of today is not only an instrument of international communication, but also one of the fundamental factors that make possible the social and professional development of the individual, carrying out his lifelong learning. This quality of a foreign language makes its learning even more important and valuable, because an intelligent person working on the process of self-

development and self-improvement always wants to see the result of his work. There are virtually limitless opportunities in the process of lifelong learning. This is a chance to get the desired prestigious job, and the reality of receiving an international grant within the framework of a student, scientific, research program; this is a prospect of changing social status, meeting new and interesting people. Unlimited travel opportunities and, in this regard, perhaps the most important thing is to experience a sense of comfort in the host country, being aware of your ability to touch and feel the color of the country through the language.

Mediation and intercultural understanding are integral parts of communication in a foreign language. The level of individual language acquisition and proficiency will always be different in the field of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This depends on the individual characteristics of a person, as well as on the social and cultural background, the individual, the environment, needs and interests. It has already been mentioned that the deeper the level of education of a person, the more serious his motivation is for learning, mastering new material within the framework of the language being studied. Self-education gives success in mediation and intercultural understanding.

That is why it is so necessary to talk about the continuity of education when it comes to foreign languages. The realities allow us to constantly improve our skills within the language context. Modern people are given the opportunity to travel, work, communicate, and learn languages in an informal setting throughout their lives. Right now, unlimited spaces have opened, giving a person a real chance to live and learn the language in the process of lifelong learning. For students, these are grants, prospects of research activities, and for businessmen-promising contracts concluded due to the ability to speak the same language with a partner. Ordinary people discover the world of travel and get knowledge of different countries of the language being studied.

Knowledge of foreign languages and an educated person have always been inseparable concepts, and free language proficiency of a civilized person was taken for granted. Now a foreign language has become a means of intercultural communication. Anyone can speak a language, existing in the system of lifelong learning.

Self-study is a huge advantage of lifelong learning. But it has reached a qualitatively new level. Previously, the phrase «self-study» was associated with the acquisition of a new material, which was

slightly beyond the requirements of the curriculum. Or it was in-depth study within the boundaries of this narrow specialization. Of course, we should not deny the benefits of such education, but often the knowledge did not find practical application, or was limited only to use in the field of professional interests. Today, self-study is no longer limited to the educational institution [3, p. 133]. A person, realizing his potential, can now include in this process: work, family, international relations, leisure, traveling and so on.

The individual must be aware of the limitless possibilities offered by modern living conditions. Such awareness can arise only if a person is able to focus on the requirements imposed on him by the realities of life. He needs to clearly define them and objectively evaluate them and then the person's chances to develop creativity in the process of lifelong living through a foreign language will increase.

It is necessary to note the importance of observing the principles of teaching a foreign language, dictated by new realities:

- accessibility, provision of conditions and guarantees of quality education for all learners;
- practical orientation and relevance of education;
- continuity, development of the system of updated education throughout life;
- variety of quality education for everyone;
- the international character of education.

Thus, we should again pay attention to the change in the status of a foreign language in the modern world, emphasize the need and relevance of studying it in the process of lifelong learning and note the importance of observing the principles of teaching a foreign language, dictated by new realities.

References

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