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IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS AS A MEANS TO FORM SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

The article deals with the problem of developing intercultural competence among students of a non-linguistic university using phraseological units and idioms. The study of phraseological units is considered one of the ways to overcome the cultural barrier. To form a linguistic picture of the world, a comparative analysis has been used based on studies of idiomatic expressions taken both from native and studied languages. In the course of the research, the tasks to develop ways to identify set expressions, as well as skills to use special dictionaries and a linguistic corpus for translating and interpreting idiomatic expressions have been solved. Much attention is paid to the problem of selecting language material and developing a system of exercises and monitoring the formation of skills. Based on the results of the survey and evaluation of written assignments alongside with oral responses of students, we can conclude that the proposed system of assignments is effective for the development of intercultural competence.

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1. Introduction

In intensive economic, social, political and cultural relations, the availability of an accomplished intercultural competence of a modern specialist is becoming increasingly important, as it ensures the success of international dialogue between representatives of different cultural communities (Desyatova & Malakhova, 2018; Malyuga et al., 2018; Malyuga & Orlova, 2018; Savitsky, 2019). The article considers the formation of cross-cultural competence in the process of teaching a foreign language for business communication. The task of forming this competence as an integral part of general competencies is formulated in the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching. The importance of developing cross-cultural competence is also recognised due to the requirements imposed on graduates of Russian universities. Among the list of major competencies, the Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education focuses on the ability of students to analyse and take into account the diversity of cultures and solve communication problems in the process of interpersonal and intercultural interaction.

The formation and development of cross-cultural and socio-cultural competencies in foreign language classes occurs in various ways, including studying the national-cultural context when working with set expressions (phraseological units, idioms, proverbs) of a foreign language. The study of such set expressions is important at all stages of teaching, but it plays more special role at the advanced stage.

By "set expressions" we imply phraseological units, idioms, proverbs, i.e. any set combination of words the meaning of which is not determined by the meaning of its separate elements. The use of these expressions is determined by the communicative situation and features of a national culture. The formation of lexical skills involves knowledge of social, situational, and ethical rules and norms. Therefore, the functional aspect should be taken into account in the process of learning vocabulary.

2. Problem Statement

The presence of a developed intercultural competence helps to achieve the goal of teaching foreign languages, namely, successful intercultural communication. It constitutes one of the basic competencies of a specialist and is a component of communicative competence. Learning a foreign language helps students understand the 'alien' picture of the world.

The formation of a secondary linguistic persona, i.e. a person's ability to intercultural communication based on mutual respect, tolerance, principles of cooperation and willingness to overcome cultural barriers has been the subject of a number of works by Russian and foreign scientists (Dementiev V.V., Elizarova G.V., Karaulov Yu.N., Kolker Y.M., Ter-Minasova S.G., Khaleeva I.I., Tsvetkova T.K., Fischer G., Lewis R., Knapp-Potthoff A., Rathje S., Thomas A.).

The norms of culture and expectations for the construction of a discourse are important for successful communication. In cases of cultural inconsistency, even with correct lexical and grammatical aspects of speech, communication may be disrupted. If the worldview of two languages and cultures is very different from each other and the language learners have not formed an intercultural competence, there is a possibility of cultural inconsistency. One of the ways to overcome cultural differences for students is to study phraseological and idiomatic units, because phraseological and idiomatic units play a special role in creating a linguistic view of the world. These units are associated with the cultural and historical traditions

of the people who speak this language, they reflect the national characteristics of the moral, aesthetic and ethical values.

The problem of forming a picture of the world using phraseological and idiomatic expressions is a topic of study in modern linguistics and the methodology of teaching foreign languages (Renchin Batsuren, A. Vezhbitskaya, Z.T. Gaidarova, L.R. Gataullina, V.M. Solntsev, etc.). Comparative study of phraseological and idiomatic units of different languages is of undeniable interest for researchers, since in the results of any comparison of several languages both common features and differences are clearly distinguished.

3. Research Questions

To conduct the study, a range of questions was formulated:

- How to teach students to identify set expressions in the text, i.e. teach them strategies to help identify signs of set expressions
- How to use (methods of use) dictionaries of phraseological units and idiomatic expressions, how to use linguistic corpus in the teaching process;
- What types of exercises are most effective for teaching, understanding and using set expressions in speech, allow organizing classroom and independent work of students;
- How to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed set of tasks for the formation of intercultural competence.

4. Purpose of the Study

After analyzing the identified Research Questions, Purpose of the Study was formulated. The purpose of this study was to identify ways of forming intercultural competence among students of economic specialties, to develop ways to optimize work on vocabulary, namely, on the study of set expressions.

To achieve the stated goal, a range of tasks was identified that must be solved:

- identify and articulate signs of set expression;
- develop criteria for the selection of vocabulary for active use;
- develop a system of exercises for effective training in the translation of set expressions and their use in speech;
- develop questionnaires for conducting a survey among students in order to evaluate the proposed working methods.

5. Research Methods

The following methods were chosen as the main research methods:

- analysis of didactic approaches to the development of lexical skills;
- student survey;
- selection and systematization of text material in the development of exercise systems;
- control and analysis of the results of reproductive and productive tasks by students.

6. Findings

The material for the study was the data of ideographic and phraseological dictionaries, and reference dictionaries of the German and Russian languages; the set of popular publicist texts from the Internet resources of modern German and Russian languages.

We have developed assignments that can teach students to identify, understand (translate) set expressions in a foreign language text and use them further in speech. Identification of these phrases may be difficult because our students are not linguists and in the early stages of training rely on the translation of single words. Thus, it is necessary to develop strategies for determining the main characteristics of a set expression and on their basis the identification of a translation unit, which will be not a single word, but the entire expression. The proposed exercises will help to resolve the above-mentioned problems.

Analysis of proposed fixed expressions. The goal is to identify signs of persistent expressions.

Assignment Example:

Read the set expressions below and answer the questions: What parts does this expression consist of?

Text analysis. The goal is to teach the definition of fixed expressions in the text.

Assignment Example:

Write out from the text the words that are combined with the proposed word and make a Mindmap with this word;

Project for group work: create a dictionary of fixed expressions.

To perform this project work, students were asked to use the corpus of publicist texts. Working with the corpus of texts is successfully used in teaching a foreign language, for example, to form a set of active vocabulary of students, to study a professional language. Students have the opportunity to select equivalents of set expressions, trace their meanings and functions in various contexts.

Use of special dictionaries for translation of set expressions (idiomatic, phraseological dictionaries), for example, the dictionary Duden Redewendungen Wörterbuch der deutschen Idiomatik (2013). This dictionary (4th edition 2013) contains more than 10,000 set expressions. Examples of using these expressions are mostly literary sources, but there are also links to text documents from the Internet. In addition to dictionaries, students are encouraged to use Internet collections of set expressions, for example: www.redewe.de, <http://www.redensarten.net>, <http://www.redensarten-index.de> etc.

The matches offered to students in their native language can demonstrate the features of the vocabulary of the language being studied, if the equivalents in the source language and the translation language do not match.

Examples of tasks:

- Correlate the set expressions highlighted in the text with the translation options. Use special dictionaries to complete the task.

- Rewrite the text, replacing the selected idiomatic expressions with synonyms (neutral vocabulary).
- Find set expressions in the text and correlate their meaning with the description of the expression meaning given before the text.

Use of set expressions in speech.

An example of the task: Fill in the gaps in the sentence using the appropriate fixed expression.

Cultural and social context.

Along with the development of the skill of using fixed expressions in speech, students need to provide students with cultural and historical information, which contributes to the formation and development of cross-cultural and social competency.

Survey of students. The survey was attended by 39 students from three groups studying German as the second foreign language in their 3rd year of studies.

Table 01. Survey results

I can	Yes		Not much		No	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
I know that set expressions are not freely combinable words.	36	92	3	7		
I know that set expressions can only be understood as a unit of content. (translation unit)	33	84	6	15		
I know that the general meaning of set expressions cannot be understood directly from the meaning of its components.	32	82	7	18		
I can translate set expressions with the help of dictionaries/e-dictionaries	30	76	5	13	4	10
I can understand the meaning of a set expression from the context.	36	92	3	7		
I understand that fixed expressions are culturally specific units of the German language.	29	74	6	15	4	10

As it can be seen from the questionnaire responses, which are presented in the above Table 01 the greatest difficulty for students is the ability of words to combine in set expressions and understanding the meaning of set expressions when relying only on a context. As practice has shown, although most students know that the meaning of a set expression does not follow directly from the meanings of its component parts, however, when translating, they do not use this knowledge. The reason for this lies in the fact that students can not recognize a set expression in the text and, therefore, incorrectly determine the unit of translation. The dictionary of the most common set expressions in professional texts and systematic work on this section of vocabulary during the entire training could solve this problem.

7. Conclusion

So, the ability to identify, translate and use set expressions in speech, including phraseological units, depends on the knowledge and understanding of social and cultural traditions of representatives of this society, and also involves the ability to use speech structures according to the context of communication.

After analyzing the answers to the questionnaire, we can conclude that the proposed task system is effective for the development of intercultural communication and the development of lexical skills. As a follow-up of this research, the authors aim to create a dictionary of the most used set expressions in the economic sphere, using a corpus of publicist texts on economic topics.

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