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A LITERARY TEXT AS A MEDIATOR IN INTER-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The article investigates the importance of reading literary texts in gaining cross-cultural competence for successful inter-cultural communication.

Reading literary texts facilitate fundamental mastering of culture, understanding of national mentality, creating deeply emotional positive attitude to another cultural values and historical heritage. The process of reading literary texts includes the following aspects:

- considering reading of literary texts as means of mastering reading and writing skills;
- choosing appropriate literary texts;
- carrying authentic-semantic analysis;
- molding socio-cultural competence while reading literary texts;
- making use of linguo-stylistic potential of literary texts for creating culturological image that arises in reader's consciousness depending on the contents of the analysis of the literary texts suggested.

The contents treatment of literary texts is of two approaches a language analysis of the language used and a literary analysis of the meaning. Keeping the balance of these two is rather preferable.

The article points out some literary models of the texts:

- the cultural model aimed on cultural acquisition;
- the language model focused on lexico-grammatical analysis;
- the personal growth model is considered as the interaction between the text and attempting to make the study of language and enjoyment of cultural aspect of literature resulted in fostering linguistic abilities, the combination of the cultural model and the personal growth model in more advisable.

Some significant ways of cultural infiltration into the language of literary texts are distinguished: aesthetic, sociological, semantic, sociolinguistic.

To solve the problem of revealing socio-cultural potential of literary texts the following criteria are determined:

- availability of socio-cultural information;
- the way the information is presented;
- semantic and stylistic filling.

The crucial steps to be taken for successful inter-cultural communication are singled out:

- establish conceptual cross-cultural bridges;
- foster an attitude of cultural relevance;
- work toward self-understanding;
- identify facilitating and interfering factors;
- develop cultural judgment.

The substantial socio-cultural contents of literary texts is a considerable investment into cross-cultural competence for inter-cultural communication as well as into the reader's sensitivity to how culture elements can become embedded in the language and affect both of which will contribute to overall inter-cultural communication.

Key words: literary text, cross-cultural competence, inter-cultural communication, culture, language, socio-cultural potential.

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ХУДОЖНІЙ ТЕКСТ ЯК ПОСЕРЕДНИК МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

У статті проаналізовано роль художнього тексту як посередника міжкультурної комунікації. Подано характеристику існуючих підходів до роботи з художнім текстом. Наведено й описано моделі художнього тексту, найбільш ефективні для формування міжкультурної компетенції для культурної комунікації. Визначено основні критерії відбору соціокультурного наповнення художнього тексту. Виокремлено шляхи проникнення культурного потенціалу літературного тексту через його мову, що дає змогу сформулювати поняття «літературний текст». Запропоновано певні кроки щодо досягнення успішної міжкультурної комунікації, якій сприяє читання літературних текстів.

Ключові слова: художній текст, міжкультурна компетенція, міжкультурна комунікація, культура, мова, соціокультурний потенціал.

Presentation of academic problem and its meaning. For centuries literature has played and still continues to play an important role in people's life and remains fundamental to their culture. Literature interacts with various cultural forms and contributes in gaining perception of complex relations across national and cultural boundaries, develops cross-cultural competence. Literature has always presented an important part in traditional education as well as in foreign language acquisition.

Reading literary texts (LT) in foreign languages is considered as a specific form of inter-cultural communication. This process modules reader's samples and models of accepted behavior develops constructive thinking, ability to analyze and estimate, create images and ideals about the facts of reality, their places in a national aspect of a language, i. e. background knowledge of a foreign country.

The "culture" concept of communication is the complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Without being plunged into language surrounding, a real source of information about a culture of a target language, is mainly LT. They facilitate instrumental mastering of the culture, penetration into national mentality.

Research analysis of the problem. The tasks of the modern research of the literary text reading in intercultural role of communication are laid in the works of more or less contemporary scholars of their country and abroad: G. Gachev, N. Kulibina, G. Pakhomova, T. Romanova, L. Smeliakova, G. Tomakhin, L. Zhyrnova, L. Zhuravleova, M. Zinovjeva, R. Carter, J. Harmer, M. Long.

The aim of the paper is to analyze the role of LT as a mediator in inter-cultural communication and cross-cultural awareness.

The **aim** of the paper puts the tasks:

- to overview the ways to treat LT;
- to distinguish the ways culture infiltrate language;
- to determine the means of representing socio-cultural potential of LT.

Content. The development of literary appreciation is a worth wide pursuit. It is something that can be done due to the means of LT which influence different aspects of inter-cultural communication. These means are: authentic and socio-cultural potential in learning another culture, in creating deeply emotional, positive attitude to the country and its people on the other side of the cultural bridge which authentic LT offer to the reader. This is the main reason for the LT to rank high among effective

tools in gaining cultural competence in inter-cultural communication.

Reading literary texts for this purpose comprises such aspects as:

- considering reading of LT as means of mastering reading and writing skills;
- choosing appropriate LT;
- carrying authentic-semantic analysis;
- molding socio-cultural competence while reading LT;
- making use of linguistic and stylistic potential of LT for creating culturological image that arises in reader's consciousness depending on the contents of the analysis of the LT suggested.

Actually, there are two distinct ways to treat LT in teaching languages. The first involves an emphasis on the analysis of the language used, the other is the examination of the text from a literary point of view, with a greater focus on meaning (Sanchez, 2009: 29). It is believed that keeping the balance between these two approaches shows that both can be integrated within the same scheme.

As Ron Carter and Michael Long have pointed out, some literature models are suggested:

- the cultural model;
- the language model;
- the personal growth model (Carter, Long, 1991: 37).

The cultural model is the most traditional approach to deal with LT. It is based on study literary movements and genres in their historical and social contents. It is mostly centered on cultural acquisition than on a target language gaining.

With language model LT can be used to focus on lexico-grammar aspects in the same way as they are presented in text books or in stylistic analysis. However, this model proposes a somewhat "reductive" approach to literature, since its linguistic activities are completely disconnected from the literary aspects of LT and could be used with virtually any LT.

The third one, the personal growth model suggests a quasi opportunity between the cultural model, as far as the text is used both to explore the cultural context and also to study the target language. Here the reader is encouraged to express his own opinions, feelings and personal experiences so that the interaction between the text and the reader takes place. This very model relies on the ability of literature to touch people, and takes advantage of that potential to offer a richer cross-cultural competence in inter-cultural communication. The model is drawn mainly on combination of the cultural model and the personal growth model, attempting to make the study and enjoyment of literature pos-

sible whilst also to foster linguistic abilities (Sanchez, 2009: 29).

Any challenge of “culture” can be summed up “as a dense backdrop, culture is implicated in every instance of language in use” (Montgomery, 2003). The ways in which culture can infiltrate language have been distinguished by Tricia Hedge: “*The aesthetic sense*: by this they mean the art, literature, music, media, etc. to be found in other cultures. *The sociological sense*: by this they mean what has often been called ‘life and institutions’, that is, the nature of family, work, leisure, customs, etc. *The semantic sense*: this relates to <...> the conceptual system embodied in the language. *The sociolinguistic sense*: by this they mean such things as politeness conventions, the way in which language is governed by issues of status or age in relationships and familiarity with rhetorical conventions in formal and informal letters, and other written genres” (Hedge, 2000: 38).

Literary texts provide a concentrated example of these senses of culture, both overtly and covertly. A short story, for example, may narrate the actions and interactions of a family. This would inevitably involve elements of the sociological sense of culture, which might prove surprising to a reader from another culture; but the reader would have little trouble recognizing the overt cultural differences in this case. The story may also, however, contain less overt areas of culture. These are more likely to lie within the semantic and sociolinguistic senses noted by T. Hedge.

Literary language is representational. There is no definitive, objective meaning that we can all point to when it comes to interpreting literary language, as there is with an instruction manual or any other use of referential language (Donald, 2012: 12–13).

There is one more immediate problem to solve is to determine criteria for revealing socio-cultural potential of LT.

The prominent scientist on the subject, L. Smelikova offers to take into consideration the following peculiarities:

- the availability of socio-cultural information in LT;
- the way of presenting such information from the point of reader’s view: an even distribution, “self comment” (extra text comment);
- semantic and stylistic filling with socio-cultural information (Smelyakova, 1995: 28).

Of all kinds of interactions, inter-cultural communication is by far the most difficult because it is exactly that form of communication where differences in cultural assumptions and values are most

vividly and strikingly perceived by counterparts. As Stewart and Bennett suggest for successful inter-cultural communication some necessary steps should be taken:

1. **Establish conceptual cross-cultural bridges.**
2. **Foster an attitude of cultural relevance**, which means that since a culture provides a complete system of meaning for conducting life, each culture possesses integrity and is neither inferior nor superior to any other culture. But in a structured situation (i. e. contextualized situation) for a specific purpose, one cultural system may work better than another.
3. **Work toward self-understanding.** An awareness of one’s own culture along with examples of contrasting cultures contributes to the individual’s understanding of her- or himself as a cultural being. This understanding assists in preparing for the hardships of culture shock and the frustrations common to working abroad or dealing with foreign nationals at home. Obtaining objectivity in appraising oneself as well as one’s counterparts and an ability to separate cultural from idiosyncratic factors in oneself and others is important to effectiveness in foreign cultures.
4. **Identify facilitating and interfering factors**, those which help work with foreign counterparts and those which are usually a handicap.
5. **Develop cultural judgment**, since any success relies on judgment, good will, and cross-cultural commitment. It is necessary to maintain a curious and open mind, to question and inquire, and to test our analyses and suggestions [7].

Conclusions. In the way of summarizing one should admit that reading LT greatly contributes to aimed and steady development of reader’s competence of cross-cultural awareness for inter-cultural communication.

As a consequence of processing LT a reader gains – reading competence – the ability of getting to grips with any LT independently on their genres linguistic features or literary language.

Moreover, substantially socio-culturally filled LT represent a considerable investment into the reader’s sensitivity to how elements of culture can become embedded in the language and affect meaning both of which will contribute to overall communicative competence.

It is high time to abandon the idea that cultural differences are minefields to communication and mutual understanding and accepted the challenge that cultural differences are the relevant source material to be employed for mutual benefit and cooperation.

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