FORMING SOCIOCULTURAL COMPETENCY THROUGH LITERARY TEXT INTERPRETATION

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The main aim of foreign language learning as defined by the curriculum is forming communicative competency. One of its elements is sociocultural competency that includes knowledge of country studies, culture studies, background knowledge etc. and ability to use it in the process of communication with representatives of different cultures. Sociocultural competency is that aspect of communicative ability which involves those specific features of a society and its culture which are manifest in the communicative behaviour of the members of this society. These features may be classified as "universal experiences", "social rituals" and "social conventions" [3, p. 95]. This background knowledge gives students cultural literacy the absence of which causes misunderstanding of the implicit information, information hidden between the lines in communication [1, p. 2].

The main components of sociocultural competency as defined by Alla Sariyeva are: 1) country study competency that is defined as the knowledge of the speech community, national character, politics and society, science, education, everyday life, customs and traditions; 2) linguocultural competency understood as the ability to perceive the language in its cultural function, with national and cultural peculiarities including knowledge of language units with national and cultural components in their meaning and ability to use them according to social and communicative situations; 3) sociolinguistic competency as the knowledge of peculiarities of national and communication etiquette and non-verbal behaviour and ability of using them in real life situations, ability to organize communication according to communicative situation, social norms of behaviour and social status of participants [2].

The elective course "Literary Text Interpretation through Linguistic, Social and Cultural Paradigms" for students enrolled in Master's programs examines the text as hierarchy of all poetic levels united by the author's intention, which is reflected in the author's choice of expressive means. Literary text is regarded as the source of information about material and language culture, history, realia and traditions of the speech community. As a result students are expected to develop the following abilities: to analyse the literary texts of English-speaking authors with reference to social and cultural aspects of the English language; to observe the connection between historic events and language development; to define the key elements of the cultural code of

the civilization reflected in the language. The process of text interpretation includes analysis of such traditional elements as genre of the story, kinds of conflict, plot, characters and their types, means of characterization, setting time sequence, point of view, tone, symbols, author's style, theme and central idea. But in this course it also focuses on culturally marked information the short stories and poems selected for analysis contain, and students get the task to explain how history and culture of a definite English-speaking country is reflected and represented in them.

To help students concentrate on culturally marked information in every story the introductory task has been developed to define in the text details of setting, appearance, clothes, historic and cultural realia as well as allusions and other information that can provide insight into the epoch described. The next stage is grouping the selected information. For example, in the process of analysing the short story "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle students defined such groups of details as clothes (*golden-rimmed glasses, astrachan overcoat, a semi-military claret-coloured smoking jacket with a black velvet collar*), parts of the building (*study, bed-chamber, servants' hall, conservatory, greenhouse, drawing-room*), servants (*housemaid, valet, under-gardener*), plants (*laurels, exotic plants*), law (*"we had become felons in the eyes of the law", "the action is morally justifiable, though technically criminal", "there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch"*), a code of gentleman's conduct *("a gentleman should not lay much stress upon this when a lady is in most desperate need of his help", "I give you my word of honour – and I never broke it in my life"*) and more. The obtained information helps the students to make conclusion about the social position of the characters, their moral values, wealth etc. The advanced task that students can be given is annotating or annotated translation of the story parts.

Feedback received from the students stated that these and similar activities help to focus on and select the necessary details of setting, appearance of the characters, their features, time of the action and make conclusions on the basis of the obtained data. It is a necessary step to complex analysis of the literary text through linguistic, social and cultural paradigms.

References

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