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# FORMING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH JOKES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSONS

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**Abstract:** This article examines the issue of developing students' intercultural competence through the use of jokes in foreign language classes. The study analyzes the didactic and linguocultural features of jokes and substantiates their role in the language learning process. It is demonstrated that, through jokes, students can acquire not only linguistic units but also cultural values, traditions, and the mentality inherent in the target language. The article also presents effective methods of using jokes in foreign language instruction and highlights their significance in enhancing students' communicative and intercultural competences, supported by relevant examples.

**Keywords:** foreign language and innovative approach, joke, intercultural competence, communicative competence, teaching methods, culture.

**Introduction:** In the context of globalization, learning foreign languages requires not only the acquisition of linguistic knowledge but also the development of skills for understanding different cultures and communicating with them effectively. In this regard, the formation of intercultural competence in foreign language education has become one of the most pressing pedagogical issues. This competence reflects students' ability to communicate appropriately and effectively with representatives of other cultures, as well as to understand their values and mentality.

In modern language teaching methodology, the inseparable connection between language and culture is widely recognized. Language is viewed as a social phenomenon that reflects the historical experience, traditions, and worldview of a particular people. Therefore, teaching a foreign language should not be limited to grammar and vocabulary instruction alone; it is also essential to incorporate cultural context into the learning process.

In this process, the use of innovative and interactive methods is of great importance. In particular, the use of jokes has proven to be an effective tool in foreign language teaching. Jokes are short, meaningful texts that often embody specific cultural contexts. Through them, students can acquire not only linguistic elements but also cultural characteristics inherent in the target language.

Currently, at the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, modern pedagogical technologies, including interactive and communicative methods, are widely employed in teaching foreign languages. In the teaching process at this institution, the use of jokes serves as an effective tool for increasing students' interest in lessons, enhancing their speaking activity, and developing their intercultural competence. Activities organized on the basis of jokes help students gain a deeper understanding of the linguocultural aspects of the language being studied. This, in turn, contributes not only to the improvement of their language proficiency but also to the development of their ability to engage in intercultural communication.

Therefore, this article analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of developing students' intercultural competence through the use of jokes in foreign language classes, using the example of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies.

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**Research Methodology:** The methodological foundation of this study is based on the scientific works of Uzbek and European scholars in the fields of foreign language teaching and intercultural competence. Among European researchers, the model of intercultural communicative competence developed by M. Byram substantiates the importance of cultural knowledge and skills in language learning. C.Kramsch emphasizes the inseparable relationship between language and culture and highlights the necessity of teaching them in an integrated manner. The theory of the communicative approach proposed by Canale and Swain was applied as the main methodological framework of this study. The humor theories of S.Attardo and V.Raskin served as an important methodological basis for explaining the linguistic and semantic features of jokes.

Among Uzbek scholars, J.Jalolov highlights the importance of the communicative approach in foreign language teaching, while Sh. Safarov provides a scientific justification of the relationship between language and culture based on a linguocultural approach. In the works of N.Mahmudov, particular emphasis is placed on the cultural function of language and its role in the educational process.

The study employed communicative and linguocultural approaches, as well as comparative-analytical and observational methods. These approaches contributed to the scientific substantiation of developing intercultural competence through the use of jokes in foreign language classes.

**Material and methods:** Within the framework of this study, the process of developing students' intercultural competence through the use of jokes in foreign language classes was analyzed. The research was conducted with the participation of students from the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, and interactive methods based on jokes were applied during the lessons.

The results of the analysis showed that jokes serve not only as a linguistic tool but also as carriers of cultural information in language teaching. In particular, activities based on the following English joke were received with great interest by the students:

*"Why don't scientists trust atoms? Because they make up everything."*

Through this joke, students understood the polysemy of the phrase *"make up"* and became familiar with the phenomenon of wordplay (pun) in English. The analysis revealed that such jokes encourage students to explore the implicit semantic layers of the language, thereby increasing their cognitive activity.

In lessons based on a Russian joke, elements of cultural stereotypes and irony were explored:

*– Where have you been?*
*– At the library.*
*– Then why do you smell like beer?*
*– What, don't people read books nowadays?*

Through this joke, students developed skills in identifying implicit meaning, understanding social irony, and interpreting it. As a result, they were able to grasp not only linguistic units but also socially embedded perspectives.

In addition, lessons based on jokes from Eastern languages introduced students to specific cultural features of the target culture, including discipline, respect, and social norms. This contributed to broadening their intercultural awareness and thinking.

For example, the English joke *"Why did the student eat his homework? Because the teacher said it was a piece of cake"* is based on an idiomatic expression, where *"a piece of cake"* means "something very easy." In the joke, however, this expression is interpreted

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literally, which creates a humorous effect. Through this example, students learn to distinguish between literal and figurative meanings and become familiar with idiomatic expressions characteristic of the English language.

Another English joke – *"Why don't we tell secrets on a farm? Because the potatoes have eyes and the corn has ears"* – is based on metaphorical expressions. Here, the words *"eyes"* and *"ears"* are used figuratively, creating a hidden meaning. Such jokes help students develop figurative thinking and understand the cultural features of the language.

Jokes in the Uzbek language also play an important role in developing students' cultural thinking. For instance:

*Teacher: Why were you late?*
*Student: Teacher, I came to class in my dream.*
*Teacher: Then why didn't you wake up?*
*Student: I was late there as well.*

This joke is based on exaggeration and an absurd situation, reflecting a type of humor common among students. It helps learners better understand national mentality and humor styles.

Another example:

*Teacher: If you had 10 apples and I took away 5, what would you have?*
*Student: A problem with you, teacher.*

This joke is built on an unexpected response and fosters creative thinking as well as free communication skills among students. Such jokes are effective tools for developing pragmatic competence.

The analysis demonstrated that, through the use of jokes, students acquire the following skills: understanding linguistic units in context; interpreting implicit meanings and irony; identifying and comparing cultural differences; and expressing their thoughts freely and logically. Activities such as discussing, interpreting, and retelling jokes significantly increased students' speaking activity. Students actively participated in lessons and engaged in interaction, which positively influenced the development of communicative competence. Observations also revealed that in lessons where jokes were used, students assimilated the material more quickly and retained it for a longer period. This can be explained by the emotional and engaging nature of jokes.

Overall, the analysis conducted on the basis of the experience of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies confirms that the use of jokes is an effective method for developing intercultural competence in foreign language classes. This method encourages students not only to learn the language but also to understand other cultures.

**Results and discussion:** The results of the study demonstrated that the use of jokes in foreign language classes is an effective method for developing students' intercultural competence. The research was conducted with the participation of students from the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, and the effectiveness of lessons based on jokes was observed.

The findings revealed that students' activity levels in lessons incorporating jokes were significantly higher compared to traditional classes. Students actively participated in the learning process and showed considerable interest in understanding, interpreting, and discussing jokes. This had a positive impact on the development of their communicative competence. During activities based on jokes, students: acquired new lexical units more quickly; learned to understand polysemous words and expressions in context; and developed skills in recognizing and comparing cultural features.

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According to the results, the use of jokes increased students' emotional engagement and contributed to better retention of the material in long-term memory. In particular, materials containing elements of humor were found to be more easily understood and remembered by students.

In addition, observations and interviews conducted among students showed that material learned through jokes was retained better than that learned through traditional methods and was used more actively in practical speech. Students became more inclined to express their thoughts freely, explain cultural differences, and make comparisons. Overall, the results obtained from the experience of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies confirm that the use of jokes in foreign language classes serves as an important didactic tool for: increasing the effectiveness of education; enhancing student motivation; and developing intercultural competence.

**Conclusion:** The findings of this study indicate that the use of jokes in foreign language classes plays a significant role not only in the formation of linguistic knowledge but also in the development of intercultural competence. In modern education, it is essential to consider the close interrelation between language and culture, and jokes serve as an effective didactic tool that integrates these two components.

The study revealed that lessons organized on the basis of jokes increase student engagement, enhance their interest in learning, and develop their ability to communicate freely. Through jokes, students learn linguistic units in a natural context, strive to understand implicit meanings and irony, and become aware of the specific cultural features of the target language. Jokes also enable students to identify and compare cultural differences, fostering qualities such as tolerance, respect, and openness. This, in turn, prepares them for effective participation in real communicative situations.

The results of the research conducted on the basis of the experience of the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies confirm that the use of jokes is an innovative and effective method in foreign language education. This approach not only improves the effectiveness of teaching but also plays a significant role in the development of students' intercultural competence.

In conclusion, the purposeful and systematic use of jokes in foreign language classes makes the language learning process more effective, engaging, and meaningful, and plays an important role in preparing students for communication in a global environment.

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