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TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BASED ON MEDIA TEXTS

Abstract. This article explores the use of authentic English-language media texts—specifically, advertising slogans and social media content—as a means of developing intercultural communication skills among students in English language education. The study emphasizes the importance of media literacy and cultural awareness in the process of foreign language acquisition. Through the analysis of American advertisements and real user comments from social media platforms, students were introduced to key cultural values and language features typical of English-speaking societies. The research also included a survey that demonstrated students' preference for learning about foreign cultures through social networks rather than traditional media. The findings suggest that media texts serve not only as linguistic material but also as cultural guides, promoting deeper understanding, empathy, and tolerance. The article highlights the effectiveness of integrating media-based resources into the educational process to foster intercultural competence in learners. Furthermore, it argues that exposure to authentic digital discourse enables students to recognize cultural nuances, humor, and social dynamics reflected in everyday communication. The study also underscores the role of critical thinking in interpreting online content, helping learners distinguish between

stereotypes and genuine cultural representations. Ultimately, the approach encourages active, reflective, and culturally responsive language learning.

Keywords: intercultural communication, interactive methods, critical thinking, formation of communicative competence, discourse analysis, media texts.

Introduction

Globalization has made intercultural communication an essential skill. Intercultural communication refers to the exchange of information and ideas between people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves understanding different ways of thinking, behaving, and communicating. Effective intercultural communication helps people avoid misunderstandings, build relationships, and work successfully in diverse environments.

In this context, media texts such as films, news articles, advertisements, and social media content, play a significant role in intercultural communication. They reflect cultural values, beliefs, and language use in real-life contexts, making them valuable tools for learning about other cultures. By analyzing media texts, learners can develop cultural awareness, critical thinking, and communication skills, which are essential for navigating today's globalized world.

Using media in teaching helps learners understand different perspectives, analyze cultural narratives, and enhance communication skills. However, its effectiveness depends on content selection and teaching methods.

This study explores the role of media texts in fostering intercultural competence, their impact on language learning, and the challenges of integrating them into education.

Literature Review

The role of media texts in developing intercultural communicative competence has drawn substantial interest from educators and researchers alike. Media literacy and the use of authentic media materials are increasingly seen as pivotal in foreign-language education, providing learners not only with linguistic input but with insights into cultural norms, values, and communication practices in English-speaking societies [1].

Recent international studies demonstrate this trend. For example, Amine Adraoui, Adiba Bousfiha, Merieme El Amine, and Es-said Mazizi [1] reveal how media literacy among EFL students contributes to intercultural communicative readiness. Irene Tsintsadze [2] addresses how media literacy, when seen through the lens of digital transformation, fosters intercultural awareness and critical engagement. Iryna Alyeksyeyeva, Tetyana Chaiuk, Elizaveta Galitska and Iryna Kovalchuk [3] show that authentic media content supports deeper interpretation, reflection, and cultural responsiveness among learners. Similarly, Will Baker [4] emphasizes that intercultural communication should be considered a central element of English Language Teaching methodology, while Mingshu Liu [5] highlights the significance of cultural content in English language teaching for enhancing students' intercultural competence.

In the Kazakhstani context, a growing body of research confirms the relevance of these themes. Rakhima Zhumaliyeva and Akbota Muratkyzy [6] explore how the competence-based approach to intercultural communication functions in Kazakhstan's higher education system, emphasizing the need to integrate cultural and linguistic dimensions. Aigul Yeleussiz [7] examines how EFL teachers in Kazakhstan perceive media literacy and its incorporation in classrooms, pointing to both challenges and opportunities. Aigul Yeleussiz and Gulmira Qanay [8] expand this perspective by addressing policy implementation and educators' attitudes toward media literacy in national education. Likewise, Perizat Yelubayeva, Sholpan Kudyarova, and Galiya Kulzhanbekova [9] investigate the effects of integrating media literacy into English language teaching, highlighting improvements in critical reading, listening, and communicative skills. Beibitkul Karimova, Zhazira Ailauova, Yeriyakul Nurlanbekova, and Baglan Bazylova [10] further demonstrate that cross-cultural and linguacultural competence can be effectively cultivated through media-based classroom practices.

These works collectively underscore that media texts operate not only as language resources but as cultural artefacts – vehicles through which students can engage with «ways of being» in target-language communities. Building on this foundation, the present study focuses specifically on using

authentic English-language media texts (advertising slogans and social media content) as tools for cultivating intercultural communicative competence among Kazakhstani learners of English. It extends prior research by drawing on real user comments and social-media discourse, thereby combining linguistic and cultural analysis in a media-rich learning environment.

Materials and Methods

This study investigates the role of media texts in the development of intercultural communication skills through a comparative analysis of advertisements and social media content, alongside a survey of students with diverse academic backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. The research applies discourse analysis, comparative analysis, and survey methods to explore how media texts convey cultural values and how students interpret them.

The first stage of the research involved a comparative analysis of advertisements and social media content. Media texts were selected using the mass sampling method from publicly accessible sources. These included advertisements from international brands such as Coca-Cola, Adidas, Apple, Reebok, and Dove, as well as social media posts by globally recognized public figures such as Elon Musk, Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Taylor Swift, and Emma Watson. The materials were collected primarily from platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. They were examined for linguistic, cultural, and communicative features, with special attention paid to how they express cultural norms through lexical choices, discourse structure, and implied meanings. Key lexical and phraseological units were identified, forming the basis for the second stage of the research.

As part of the instructional procedure, students worked with the selected media texts through a series of guided analytical and interpretive activities. These activities included identifying key words and phrases in advertising slogans and social media posts, interpreting their meanings from both linguistic and cultural perspectives, and discussing the cultural values and social ideas embedded in the texts. Students were encouraged to compare the represented values with those typical of their own cultural context and to reflect on differences and similarities in communication styles. Such tasks were designed to promote critical thinking, cultural awareness, and the development of intercultural communicative competence.

The second stage comprised a survey designed to assess how students from different faculties and academic levels perceive and interpret English-language media texts. The survey involved 65 students from NAO «Shakarim University of the city of Semey», located in the Abai region of Kazakhstan. Participants included both undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of programs, including Foreign Language: Two Foreign Languages, Economics and Management, Thermal Power Engineering, Technical Physics, Accounting and Finance, and Design. The questionnaire explored the frequency of students' exposure to English-language media content, their ability to identify cultural references, and their interpretation of selected lexical items. In the final part of the survey, students were asked to interpret a specific word or phrase previously identified in the media text analysis. This task was intended to evaluate the influence of cultural background on semantic comprehension.

The collected data was analyzed using discourse analysis and basic statistical techniques. The results were categorized based on recurring linguistic and cultural patterns found across the media texts and student responses. This approach provides insights into how media content contributes to learners' cultural awareness, supports the development of intercultural communicative competence, and facilitates more effective engagement in cross-cultural contexts within educational settings.

Results and Discussion

The comparative analysis of advertisements and social media posts revealed different strategies for communicating cultural values through media texts. In advertising, brands tended to use slogans and narratives that conveyed emotional and symbolic messages related to family, perseverance, individuality, and inclusion. For instance, the Coca-Cola company, through its well-known campaign «Holidays Are Coming», communicated themes of collective celebration and emotional warmth. Similarly, their slogan «Open Happiness» used metaphorical language to associate the act of drinking a soft drink with emotional satisfaction and joy. Another campaign, Adidas's «Impossible Is Nothing», emphasized personal growth and overcoming adversity. This message, rooted in self-

determination and the idea that limits are psychological, reflected core ideals of Western and especially American culture.

Reebok, with its campaign «Be More Human», employed nonstandard grammar to encourage self-improvement and physical strength. The slogan implied that being human is not a fixed state but something to strive toward, resonating with the cultural value of personal development. Dove’s «Real Beauty» campaign promoted authenticity and self-acceptance by challenging mainstream beauty standards. Through phrases like «You are more beautiful than you think», the brand encouraged psychological empowerment and inclusivity. Apple’s iconic slogan «Think Different» further contributed to this cultural narrative by celebrating innovation, creativity, and nonconformity. By intentionally breaking grammar rules, Apple emphasized that original thinking often requires rejecting conventional norms.

In contrast, the language used in social media posts by public figures was more personal, direct, and ideologically expressive. Elon Musk’s posts on the X platform (formerly Twitter), such as «Occupy Mars» and «Freedom of speech is essential» combined brevity with strong symbolic meaning. These phrases promoted innovation, autonomy, and the core American ideal of individual liberty. Michelle Obama’s statement «When they go low, we go high», which gained popularity on Instagram and Twitter, became a widely recognized expression of moral leadership and ethical resilience.

Oprah Winfrey, known for her inspirational tone, posted the phrase «Turn your wounds into wisdom» on Instagram. This metaphorical message reflects the Western notion that personal suffering can be transformed into strength and insight. Meanwhile, Taylor Swift and Emma Watson used their Instagram and X accounts to advocate for equality, inclusion, and social justice. Their language emphasized values like fairness, diversity, and shared responsibility especially in the context of gender discourse. These posts, while rooted in personal belief, also acted as tools for shaping public consciousness and engaging followers in broader cultural conversations (Figure 1).

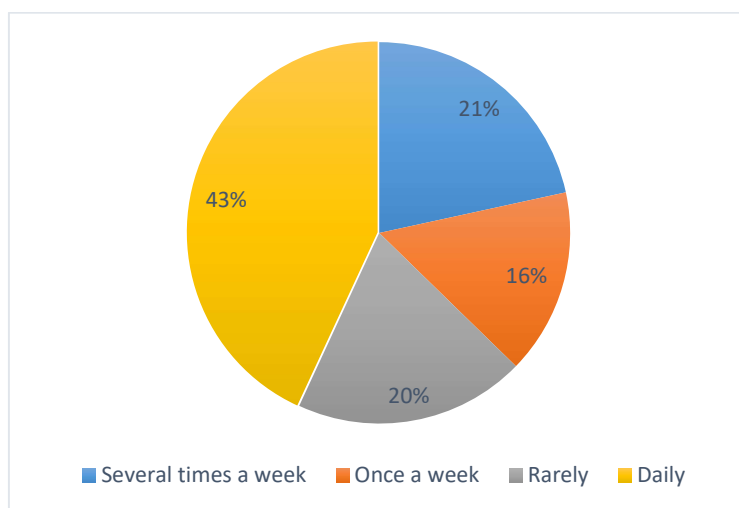


Figure 1 – Frequency of watching foreign news, movies, or social media content

The pie chart illustrates the frequency with which people watch foreign news, movies, or social media content. According to the results, 43 % of respondents reported watching such content daily, 21 % do so several times a week, 16 % watch it once a week, and 20% watch it rarely. We can observe that the majority of respondents (64 %) watch foreign content either daily or several times a week, indicating a high level of regular exposure to international media (Figure 2).

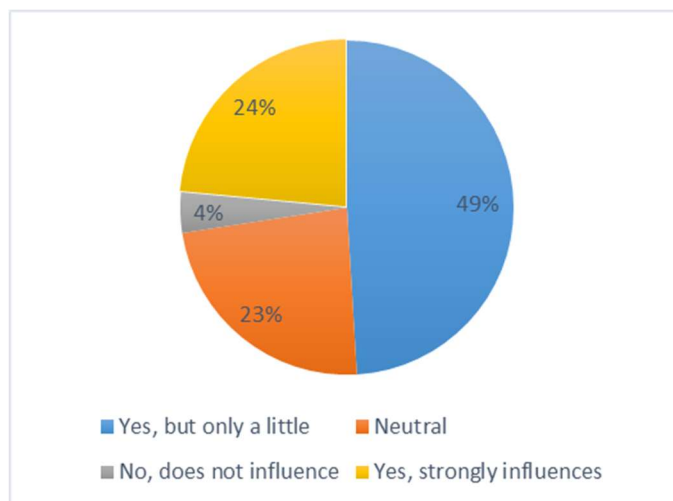


Figure 2 – Respondents’ perceptions of how foreign media content affects their views of other countries

The second pie chart presents respondents’ opinions on whether foreign news, films, or social media posts influence their perception of other countries. According to the data, 49 % believe that such content affects their opinion, but not significantly. Meanwhile, 24 % report that it has a strong influence, 23 % remain neutral, and only 4 % say that it does not influence their opinion at all (Figure 3).

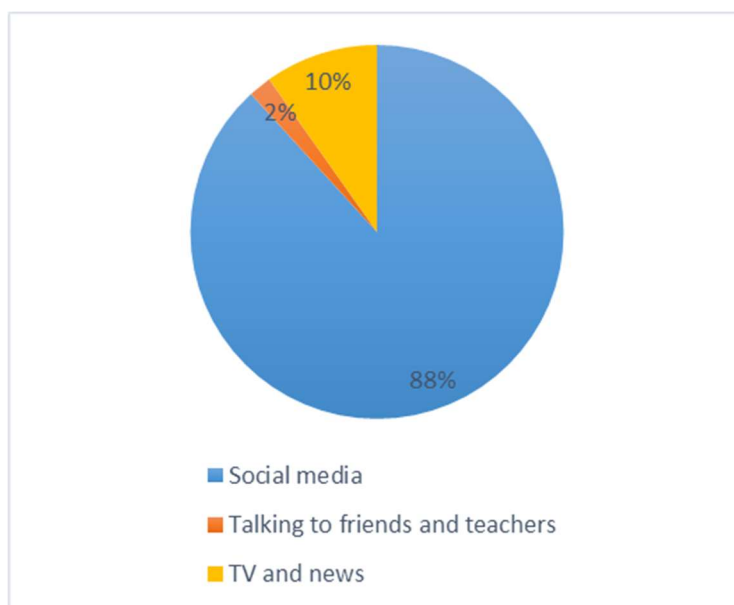


Figure 3 – Preferred media sources for learning about other countries

This pie chart illustrates the distribution of media sources respondents most frequently use to learn about other countries. A vast majority (88 %) reported using social media, followed by 10 % who rely on television and news websites. Only 2 % mentioned communication with friends or teachers as their primary source. We can observe that most respondents prefer informal and easily accessible platforms like social media to explore global topics.

A comparative analysis of advertising campaigns and publications on social networks reveals two different but complementary ways of forming and transmitting cultural values through language. Despite the fact that both media formats have ideological and cultural significance, their stylistic, structural and pragmatic features differ significantly. Advertising materials are usually compressed into short, emotionally saturated slogans with metaphorical and symbolic overtones, whereas posts on social networks more often reflect personal beliefs and can serve as tools for activism and self-

identification [1]. This section examines how these formats express key cultural values, especially prevalent in American society, and how these expressions can help in the learning process of intercultural communication.

To begin with, the advertising language is specifically designed to create associations between products and broader cultural ideals and emotional experiences. For example, Coca-Cola uses slogans such as «Open happiness» and «Celebrate Together», which are based on metaphorical language and emotional appeal. The verb «open» not only implies access, but also implies agency – the idea that consuming a product can lead to an immediate emotional effect. The phrase «Celebrate together» evokes associations with community and unity, which at first glance may resemble collectivist values. However, in the context of American culture, it reflects commercialized holiday traditions, especially around Christmas, and reinforces consumption as an element of emotional and cultural experience.

The Adidas slogan «The impossible is nothing» also serves as a vivid example of the connection of products with aspirations and values. Syntactic inversion emphasizes the word «impossible», while the general meaning asserts that restrictions are imposed by the person himself. This reflects the American ideal of self-determination and heroic individualism, where success is seen as the result of personal determination and perseverance [4]. The involvement of world-famous athletes such as Muhammad Ali gives the campaign emotional credibility and cross-cultural appeal, but the main message remains within the framework of the Western narrative of overcoming difficulties through personal strength.

The themes of personal transformation and empowerment are also developed in Reebok's slogan «Be more Human». The grammatically unusual construction used here will attract attention and encourage reflection. The idea that a person can become «more» human suggests that humanity is not a static state, but something that can be developed through discipline, physical change, and psychological resilience. Such ideas correspond to the American values of continuous self-improvement and personal growth. The slogan encourages consumers not only to achieve physical fitness, but also to create an idealized version of themselves that meets cultural expectations regarding effort, productivity, and success.

Dove's «Real Beauty» campaign offers a different approach, challenging established beauty standards. Unlike slogans calling for activism and transformation, Dove's ideas, such as «You're more beautiful than you think», focus on self-acceptance and authenticity. These messages reflect Western discussions about feminism, body positivity, and mental well-being. At the same time, they also function ideologically, promoting self-esteem as a commercial value -suggesting that self-acceptance can be both emotionally and socially liberating.

A pattern of norm-defying is also evident in Apple's slogan «Think Different». Going beyond the traditional standards of beauty or athletic achievement, this slogan uses a subversive approach, deliberately violating grammatical rules. This violation symbolizes and highlights the brand's innovative, rebellious, and visionary identity. The phrase celebrates nonconformity, originality, and risk taking-values deeply rooted in American entrepreneurial and educational culture [4]. By celebrating «the crazy ones» and «losers», the ad links creativity with individuality, positioning Apple as a cultural leader rather than just a technology company.

Although advertising slogans are carefully thought out and ideologically saturated, social media posts tend to reflect a more spontaneous and personal use of language. However, they also contain important cultural values. For example, Elon Musk's posts on the X platform (formerly Twitter), such as «Occupy Mars» and «Freedom of speech is essential..», reflect the language of protest and activism. The phrase «Occupy Mars» adapts the rhetoric of social movements (such as Occupy Wall Street) into a symbol of progress and technological discovery, which echoes the American mythology of expanding borders and freedom of human choice.

Continuing this theme, Michelle Obama's well-known phrase «When they go low, we go high» illustrates moral dignity and ethical leadership. Unlike Musk's futuristic and provocative style, her words emphasize politeness, strength, and emotional resilience in the face of negative circumstances. This rhetorical style appeals to American ideals of perseverance and honesty and often serves as a moral compass during periods of social discord or political conflict.

Similar metaphors expressing resilience can be found in Oprah Winfrey's Instagram post, where she says, «Turn your wounds into wisdom» This statement is rooted in the Western psychological narrative, where personal suffering is not seen as a weakness, but is perceived as an opportunity for personal growth. Such ideas are especially common in the American discourse on self-help, where the process of healing and development is closely linked to autonomy and emotional understanding.

Finally, many celebrities actively use their platforms to engage in cultural dialogue and activism, which highlights the ideological function of language on social media. For example, Taylor Swift and Emma Watson regularly publish materials supporting gender equality, diversity and inclusivity. Their messages contain terms such as «justice for all» and «gender as a spectrum», which reflect a discourse on human rights and progressive values. These posts, popular with a young audience, not only express personal beliefs, they shape public opinion and encourage civic engagement, becoming an important cultural influence in modern public debate.

The second stage of the study involved a survey aimed at exploring how students with different academic backgrounds interpret English-language media texts and slogans. A total of 65 students from «Shakarim University», Kazakhstan, participated in the survey. Participants represented a variety of majors, including Foreign Language: Two Foreign Languages, Economics and Management, Thermal Power Engineering, Technical Physics, Accounting and Finance, and Design. Regarding academic level, 77 % of the respondents were undergraduate students, while 23 % were enrolled in master's programs.

One of the key findings relates to the frequency of students' exposure to English-language media content. As shown in Figure 1, 43 % of respondents reported consuming such content daily, while 21 % did so several times a week. Another 16 % indicated that they engaged with foreign media once a week, and 20 % reported watching it rarely. These results demonstrate a generally high level of interaction with global media, especially through social and entertainment platforms.

The influence of foreign media on students' perceptions of other countries was also addressed. Figure 2 shows that 49 % of students felt that such media influences their views to some extent, while 24 % believed it had a strong influence. Only 4 % reported that it had no influence, and 23 % remained neutral. These findings suggest that although students may not always consciously acknowledge it, foreign media content contributes to shaping their cultural perceptions and awareness.

Regarding the preferred sources of information about other countries, the results presented in Figure 3 indicate a strong inclination toward social media platforms: 88 % of participants identified Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and similar networks as their primary source. Other responses included traditional media such as television and online news (10 %) and personal communication (2 %). When asked what they consider the most interesting media formats for learning about other cultures, 65 % of students again pointed to social media, while 23 % preferred films and TV series, 10 % chose news channels and newspapers, and only 2 % selected advertisements. This highlights the role of informal, visually engaging platforms in cultural learning.

Students were also asked what aspects of foreign content interest them most. The leading responses were language and communication style (67 %) and cultural traditions (63 %). A smaller portion of participants expressed interest in politics and social life (23 %), stereotypes and prejudices (19 %), and gender roles and habits (6 %). These preferences reveal a focus on everyday cultural codes and interpersonal dynamics, rather than formal or institutional themes.

In the final section of the survey, students were invited to interpret the slogan «Be More Human», which had previously appeared in one of the analyzed English-language media texts. Their responses demonstrated a wide range of personal reflections and cultural interpretations. Many students focused on the emotional and moral dimensions of the phrase.

For example, several participants interpreted «Be More Human» as a call to show empathy, compassion, and kindness in daily interactions. Phrases such as «be kind and able to empathize», «be sincere, not like a robot or a machine», and «be more caring and loyal toward others» were mentioned multiple times. Some respondents emphasized emotional authenticity, interpreting the slogan as an encouragement to express real emotions, not to hide behind social roles, and to stay true to one's character.

Other responses focused on self-improvement and moral responsibility. One student said, «It depends on the context, but I understand it as a call to become a real human being, to grow and develop», which reflects the influence of cultural values related to personal growth and ethical behavior. Another wrote, «To be more human means to show high levels of empathy and critical thinking».

There were also responses that highlighted tolerance, open-mindedness, and universal human values. For example: «Humanity should be prioritized despite everything – education, status, fame, race. We must be kind and open-minded with people». This suggests that some students associate the phrase with social responsibility and inclusion.

In summary, most respondents linked the slogan «Be More Human» with emotional sensitivity, authenticity, moral development, and social values. These interpretations suggest that the students were able to go beyond literal meanings and engage with the deeper humanistic message of the slogan, shaped in part by their own cultural perspectives. Students were also asked to interpret the slogan «Think Different», which originates from a well-known advertising campaign. Their answers revealed a strong tendency toward valuing critical and independent thinking.

Many students interpreted the slogan as a call to think independently and to form one's own opinions. Responses included: «Try to understand different opinions», «Think in your own way, don't repeat someone else's path», and «Don't follow the general idea of society – be different». These statements indicate that students associate the slogan with individuality and non-conformity.

Others emphasized creativity and innovation. Phrases like «approach things in a creative way», «don't be afraid to break stereotypes», and «look at things from a different angle» reflect a growing awareness of the importance of original thinking, which is essential in global communication and intercultural competence.

Some students highlighted the role of media literacy, stating that «Thinking differently is about critical thinking and being able to analyze media content». A few mentioned that this mindset involves «out-of-the-box thinking» or «not accepting the world as it is presented», showing their understanding of how slogans like this can encourage a more thoughtful interaction with information.

A particularly insightful response read: «This slogan is brilliant in its simplicity and power. It doesn't just provoke non-standard thinking – it creates a sense of uniqueness. It's like a challenge: don't be like everyone else, be someone who changes the rules». Such responses illustrate students' ability to interpret abstract and symbolic messages in media texts in a nuanced and culturally informed way [3].

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that both advertising discourse and texts in social networks play an important role in the formation of students' intercultural communicative competence. Analyzing authentic materials such as slogans, headlines, and content created by users on social media helps students become more aware of the cultural values, communication norms, and social attitudes that shape discourse in an English-speaking environment. Social networks, in particular, act as a preferred and effective tool for studying culture, due to their accessibility, relevance and popularity among young people.

In addition, the integration of advertising materials and content from social networks into the educational process helps to increase students' motivation, develop critical thinking and promote meaningful interaction with cultural diversity. By working with real media discourse, students develop the ability to interpret language in the context of culture, forming a more empathetic and flexible worldview. These conclusions emphasize that authentic media content should be considered as an integral part of modern foreign language teaching, focused on the development of intercultural competence.

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МЕДИАМӘТІНДЕР НЕГІЗІНДЕ МӘДЕНИЕТАРАЛЫҚ КОММУНИКАЦИЯҒА ҮЙРЕТУ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада ағылшын тілі сабағында студенттердің мәдениетаралық коммуникативтік дағдыларын дамыту құралы ретінде ағылшын тіліндегі түпнұсқа медиамәтіндерді – жарнамалық ұрандар мен әлеуметтік желілердегі контентті – қолдану қарастырылады. Зерттеуде шетел тілін меңгеру барысында медиасауаттылық пен мәдени хабардарлықтың маңыздылығы атап өтіледі. Америкалық жарнамалар мен әлеуметтік желілердегі пайдаланушылар қалдырған пікірлерді талдау арқылы студенттер ағылшынтілді қоғамға тән негізгі мәдени құндылықтар мен тілдік ерекшеліктерді анықтады. Сонымен қатар, зерттеуге сауалнама жүргізіліп, оның нәтижелері студенттердің шетел мәдениеті туралы ақпаратты дәстүрлі медиадан гөрі әлеуметтік желілер арқылы алуды жөн көретінін көрсетті. Зерттеу нәтижелері медиамәтіндердің тек тілдік материал ғана емес, сонымен қатар мәдени бағдар беретін құрал екенін, олар студенттердің мәдени құбылыстарды тереңірек түсінуіне, жанашырлық пен төзімділіктің қалыптасуына ықпал ететінін дәлелдейді. Мақалада білім беру процесіне медиаресурстарды енгізудің тиімділігі көрсетіліп, бұл студенттердің мәдениетаралық құзыреттілігін дамытуға мүмкіндік беретіні атап өтіледі. Сонымен қатар, түпнұсқа цифрлық дискурспен жұмыс істеу студенттерге күнделікті қарым-қатынаста көрініс табатын мәдени реңктерді, әзілді және әлеуметтік динамиканы тануға көмектеседі. Зерттеу онлайн-контентті интерпретациялау барысында сыни ойлаудың маңызын айқындайды, себебі ол студенттерге стереотиптер мен шынайы мәдени көріністерді ажыратуға мүмкіндік береді. Нәтижесінде, бұл тәсіл белсенді, рефлексивті және мәдени тұрғыдан жауапты тіл үйренуді қамтамасыз етеді.

Тірек сөздер: мәдениетаралық коммуникация, интерактивті әдістер, сыни ойлау, коммуникативтік құзыреттілікті қалыптастыру, дискурс-талдау, медиамәтіндер.

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ОБУЧЕНИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ НА ОСНОВЕ МЕДИАТЕКСТОВ

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается использование аутентичных англоязычных медиатекстов – в частности, рекламных слоганов и контента из социальных сетей – как средства развития межкультурных коммуникативных навыков у студентов в процессе обучения английскому языку. Исследование подчеркивает важность медиаграмотности и культурной осведомленности в процессе овладения иностранным языком. Анализ американской рекламы и реальных пользовательских комментариев из социальных сетей позволил студентам познакомиться с ключевыми культурными ценностями и языковыми особенностями, характерными для англоязычных сообществ. В исследование также был включен опрос, показавший, что студенты предпочитают изучать иностранные культуры через социальные сети, а не через традиционные СМИ. Полученные результаты показывают, что медиатексты служат не только языковым материалом, но и культурным ориентиром, способствующим более глубокому пониманию, эмпатии и толерантности. Статья подчеркивает эффективность интеграции медиаресурсов в образовательный процесс для формирования межкультурной компетенции у обучающихся. Кроме того, утверждается, что знакомство с аутентичным цифровым дискурсом помогает студентам распознавать культурные нюансы, юмор и социальную динамику, отраженные в повседневном общении. Исследование также подчеркивает роль критического мышления при интерпретации онлайн-контента, что помогает учащимся отличать стереотипы от подлинных культурных представлений. В конечном итоге данный подход способствует активному, осознанному и культурно чувствительному изучению языка.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, интерактивные методы, критическое мышление, формирование коммуникативной компетенции, дискурс-анализ, медиатексты.

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