**UP-TO-DATE TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO BUSINESS PEOPLE: INTERCULTURAL ASPECT**

**Волкова Екатерина Александровна**

Белорусский национальный технический университет

Cross-cultural business negotiations are an important part of international business. Undoubtedly, a good deal of business has been lost overseas due to errors caused by cultural differences. Negotiating is a long-lasting, complex process in itself. Yet, add the cultural aspect and it becomes remarkably complicated. Cross-cultural negotiation skills in today’s business people are being secured at the early stages of university education and improved by adequate attention to details using the means through which students will acquire knowledge about other cultures. The underlying principle is to examine cross-cultural dealings from the point of view of a practitioner, and to provide students with advice on how to do business in the best possible way dealing with foreign people. It is not enough just to understand a foreign speech, it is important to react in an appropriate way.

Lack of knowledge of essential differences in norms of verbal and non-verbal behaviour of native speakers inevitably results in cultural barrier no matter how grammatically correct your students’ speech is. If the students, soon-to-be business people, are unaware of the national customs of the target country, they may also be caught off guard by its people’s gestures, remarks and actions in the process of doing business with them.

Respectively, gestures and methods of communication vary from culture to culture: some differences are subtle whereas others are quite obvious. For example, a kiss on the cheek is an appropriate way to greet someone in many European countries, whilst this method is considered to be highly inappropriate in the United States of America. When business people from different cultural backgrounds communicate, those differences occasionally cause confusion and misunderstanding or difficulty sharing information. Correspondingly, the teacher’s objective is to train students on cultural diversity, business etiquette and on specific differences of communication between cultures. For example, if the target countries are the U.S. and England, the training should not focus primarily on the cultural and communicative differences in those two countries, but also the training should cover other potential partner-countries. Making students aware of the differences will help them better learn to communicate with foreign partners.

Films are one of the best ways not only to teach and practice a foreign language but to demonstrate cultural traditions, national values and specific features. When students experience intercultural contact visually and auditory, they begin to understand the cultural issues, body language and the concept of personal space of the target country.

For example, presenting a movie-clip, the teacher has to pay student’s particular attention to the gestures, signs and movements, for they occasionally contain unspoken messages. Hand and facial gestures, tone of voice, and walking out of the room can signal intentions that are not explicit in verbal comments. Thus, students are being accompanied by the teacher who guides them through the meetings and negotiations in a film and focuses on the potential misunderstanding on the spot.

Adding to the point, the teacher may frame-freeze a movie episode that is when a movie-clip is frozen at a certain point and students are given the possibility to predict the likely behaviour or potential remarks of the characters. Similarly, students receive an immediate feedback when the episode is played further on and they have the opportunity to check their predictions and, respectively, evaluate their knowledge of the target culture.

Films are helpful for all learning styles, including visual, auditory, and even kinesthetic ones if the teacher adds some post activities like a role-play, dubbing, etc. Respectively, the use of films fulfills the students’ need to develop their communicative and intercultural competence.

In addition, it is possible to do an extremely deep and vital research into the subtle cultural aspects of the target countries. The Internet today provides students with the latest online foreign news broadcasts, newspapers, thematic films and podcasts any time, anywhere, with or without a coach.

Introducing another culture's language, rules and norms for acceptable behaviour helps prepare the students to deal with business situations and potential conflicts as they arise.

In order to teach students to communicate and perform successfully on the international business arena, to increase their cultural knowledge, to improve their interaction skills and to develop a more critical cultural awareness towards the target countries and as a result to produce competent individuals – mainly, modern teaching methods should be applied at the University.

By acknowledging the importance of professional intercultural business communication university graduates acquire a valuable skill of effective cross-cultural communication which enables their businesses with foreign partners run smoothly and efficiently.