The Development of Students’ Inter-cultural Competence in the Process of Collaborative Foreign Language Learning at Tertiary Level

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Abstract. The article deals with the formation and development of students’ inter-cultural competence in the process of collaborative foreign language learning in a higher institution. Nowadays we can observe a shift in language pedagogy from mere transmitting facts and behaviours about English speaking countries to acquiring social and historical contexts that reveal meaning of cultural phenomena within larger cross-cultural networks: when authentic texts are used in relation to visual, musical and other texts of various kinds (Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch and Lam, 1998). The author of the article has created a model of intercultural competence which represents an integrative unity of socio-cultural and pluricultural competences which interact with each other within inner and outer environment. This inter-cultural competence is a part of collaborative competence worked out by the author. Collaborative learning can be considered to be an effective means of not only students’ learning a foreign language but also the development of their inter-cultural competence. The inter-cultural competence within the framework of collaborative learning is defined as a system of knowledge about the history and culture of the native country as well as the target country’s experience and skills in its use for successful intercultural communication developed in the process of learning, the ability to be a mediator between cultures as well as the ability to take into consideration specific features of the interlocutor’s culture.