Social and Cultural Aspects in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

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Abstract. This article discusses information on foreign language learning and teaching (strategies, principles, pedagogy and objectives) from documents of the EU and Republican bodies, decision making on it by informed and responsible professionals, research data on the alignment of an academic course with the students’ needs in foreign language teaching, reliable references and pedagogy, which amount to culture in execution in foreign language learning and teaching. The research aspect encompasses analysis of selected documents, which is followed by the author’s insights and generalizations, and data on classroom research into the development of an academic course, in which the teacher’s aspirations are trimmed and the students’ inclinations are satisfied. Analysis of the documents (their volume, the number of languages learnt and taught in the EU, the age of young learners) features as a quantitative aspect in foreign language education, while research into the development of an academic course and near-native proficiency as a measure of competence in foreign language learning feature as a qualitative aspect in EFL. The role of social attitudes and of individual culture are highlighted in the treatment of errors and in the selection of language standard in EFL, which are minor questions and feature as premises rather than as objectives in the discussion. The article promotes a harmony and moderation in aligning administrative and pedagogic requirements with educational goals and information, technological achievements and perfected instruction.

Key words: foreign language learning and teaching, lifelong learning, multilingualism, plurilingualism, early language learning, near-native proficiency, memory and context in foreign language competence.