

FORMING CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF LAW STUDENTS THROUGH CLASSICS

NESTERENKO, Ksenia (*Kharkiv, Ukraine*)

Nowadays in conditions of the world becoming tough, the English language spreading rapidly in all spheres of the globalized world gaining cultural competence is one of the means of language, personal and professional development. While teaching and learning the language it is important to know about the culture it is a part of, to work out the capacity for cultural assessment, to be adapted to the behaviour, attitudes, policies of the foreign language surroundings.

Cultural competence includes everything connected with national origin, history, geography, politics, religion, linguistic background, law, arts, etc.

Forming cultural competence means gaining knowledge about patterns of behaviour of the representatives of the culture, their ways of thinking and communication, their traditions and customs, beliefs and values, as well as specific institutions and their functioning. After all, a student is expected to have the capacity of application and integration of this knowledge in appropriate settings.

There are different methods of forming cultural competence available. One of them (and that one which is never old-fashioned) is reading classics. If it may be difficult for a modern law student to read all volumes of Shakespeare or Dickens, there are the ways for a teacher to try to arise in the students' interest for reading. A teacher can suggest pure reading episodes, following the plot or a character, describing a case or a situation, discussing the behavior of a character, commenting the phrases, images, etc, and what is more important, evaluating all of this from the point of culture.

Classical literature provides necessary components for gaining cultural competence. They are history and time, society and institutions, personal features and values, language functioning and its concepts.

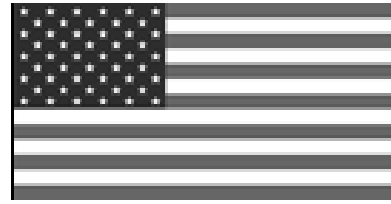
Law students should be advised to read classical literature with the background or episodes from the legal sphere. Thanks to this they will not only develop their language and feeling of it, they will go back to historic times which have formed the traditions, ways of thinking and behaviour and all those things spoken above. There is one important specifics of the English culture should be mentioned. It is its highly traditionalized political and legal systems, judiciary and etiquette and others. From time to time if learning about English legislative system and institutions we can find such terms as chancery appeal, King's Bench, the Inn or Old Baily, Master of Rolls and others which have come from historic times but are still in use.

Much information to cultural competence of law students can be taken from the novels of Charles Dickens, an outstanding English writer and the greatest humanist. Legal system of XIXth century England is sharply criticized in 11 of Dickens's 15 novels. The most famous are "David Copperfield", "Great Expectations", "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" and, of course, "Bleak House".

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In “Bleak House” the description of the Court of Chancery (now abolished and transformed) functioning reveals its disfunctionality and corruption. Numbers of attorneys and clerks running here and there collecting and fetching kilos of unnecessary papers, pretending they do an important work; depraved solicitors and barristers thinking about their own benefits; miserable judges who pretend to be venerable, and inefficiency of the Chancery are depicted by Dickens. The events in the novel might have happened on or about 1827, but it is still actual as a window to ineffective and corrupt judicial system which should be radically changed. Following the Act of Parliament in 1852 many faulty things as for judiciary and litigation shown in the novel were altered.

Dickens’s novels about lawyers are filled with legal terms. The students should be taught how to see, to find and to remember legal terms in fiction, how to connect them with characters and appreciate literature.



MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION OF UKRAINE
U.S. EMBASSY IN UKRAINE
TESOL-UKRAINE
IVAN FRANKO NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LVIV
Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of Foreign Languages for Humanities

2016 TESOL-Ukraine National Convention

GLOBAL CHANGES IN UKRAINE – GLOBAL CHANGES IN *ENGLISH TEACHING* IN UKRAINE

THE CONVENTION IS SUPPORTED BY REGIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE OFFICE,
U.S. EMBASSY, UKRAINE

Book of Convention Papers



THIS BOOK OF CONVENTION PAPERS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH *INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE*

Lviv, March 24-25, 2016

УДК 37.016: 008: 004 + 811.111 (73)' 25 – 26 (072)

It is recommended for publication by the Executive Committee of TESOL-Ukraine and the Organizing Committee of the 21st Annual TESOL-Ukraine Convention.

Global Changes in Ukraine: Global Changes in English Teaching in Ukraine: Book of Convention Papers / Comp. A. Radu. Eds. A. Radu, L. Kuznetsova. – Львів: ПП „Марусич”, 2016. – 233 + 4 p.

The collection includes convention papers of the reports made at The 21st Annual National TESOL-Ukraine Convention “Global Changes in Ukraine: Global Changes in English Teaching in Ukraine”, that took place in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv on March 24-25, 2016. More than 300 teachers from the higher and secondary educational establishments of Ukraine participated in the work of the Convention. The reports presented at the Convention deal with a wide range of research problems in the spheres of linguistics, discourse analysis, ELT methodology, CALL, sociolinguistics, translation studies, literature studies, etc.

The publication is aimed at EFL professionals, researchers, students, post-graduate students, and at all those interested in the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning English.

Глобальні зміни в Україні: глобальні зміни в викладанні англійської мови в Україні: тези доповідей (англ. мовою) / Укл. А. Раду. Ред. А. Раду, Л. Кузнецова. – Львів: Львів: ПП „Марусич”, 2016. – 233 + 4 с. вкл.

Збірник тез доповідей на 21 Всеукраїнській конвенції TESOL-Україна “Глобальні зміни в Україні: глобальні зміни в викладанні англійської мови в Україні”, яка відбулася у Львівському національному університеті імені Івана Франка 24-25 березня 2016 р. У конвенції взяли участь понад 300 викладачів вищих та середніх навчальних закладів України. Доповіді відображають широкий спектр досліджень, які здійснюються науковцями та викладачами вищих і середніх навчальних закладів у галузі лінгвістики, дискурсознавства, лінгвометодики, комп’ютерної лінгвістики та лінгвометодики з впровадження новітніх інформаційних технологій, соціолінгвістики, перекладознавства, літературознавства тощо.

Видання розраховано на науковців, викладачів, студентів, магістрантів та аспірантів, які вивчають англійську мову та на широке коло зацікавлених осіб.

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ПОСОЛЬСТВО США В УКРАЇНІ
АСОЦІАЦІЯ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ TESOL-УКРАЇНА

Наукове видання

**GLOBAL CHANGES IN UKRAINE:
GLOBAL CHANGES IN *ENGLISH TEACHING* IN UKRAINE**

2016 National TESOL-Ukraine Convention

**ГЛОБАЛЬНІ ЗМІНИ В УКРАЇНІ: ГЛОБАЛЬНІ ЗМІНИ
В *ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ* В УКРАЇНІ**

2016 Національна Конвенція ТІСОЛ-України

Тези доповідей

Англійською мовою

Укладання: *Алла Радю*
Комп'ютерне верстання: *Наталії Лобач, Наталії Якимів*

Підп. до друку 17.03.2016.
Формат 60x84/8. Папір офсетний. Гарнітура Times New Roman.
Друк на різогр. Умовн. друк. арк. 27,4+0,5.
Тираж 300 прим. Зам. № 418.

Видавничий центр: ПП „Марусич”.