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**EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE OF USING  
THE THEATRICAL ACTING METHOD  
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND FORMATION  
OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

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*The article deals with the analysis of the method of theatrical acting and the European experience of its application in teaching foreign languages and formation of intercultural communicative competence. We have identified the main aspects and components of the method of theatrical acting in foreign language classes. It is important to emphasize that through drama there is a constant interaction of students with the world around them, which is a priority in the process of their socialization and professionalization.*

**Key words:** *theatrical pedagogy, method of theatrical acting, foreign languages, communicative competence, intercultural competence.*

## **ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД ВИКОРИСТАННЯ МЕТОДУ ТЕАТРАЛЬНОЇ ГРИ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ ТА ФОРМУВАННІ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ**

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У статті проаналізовано європейський досвід використання методу театральної гри в навчанні іноземних мов та формуванні міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності. Висвітлено теоретичні та практичні підходи до застосування методу театральної гри в умовах процесу навчання й виховання студентів ЗВО під час занять з іноземної мови. На основі аналізу праць видатних зарубіжних науковців проаналізовано становлення й розвиток методу театральної педагогіки в педагогічній науці, визначено головні засади, що лягли в його основу та дали можливість широкого застосування у практиці. Виявлено основні функції методу театральної гри (освітньо-виховна, дидактична, терапевтична). Визначено його основні аспекти на заняттях з іноземної мови.

Наголошено, що театральна гра як метод навчання часто використовується прихильниками інтерактивних та сучасних методів навчання іноземних мов, які пристосовують цілі, знання, уміння, методи навчання до індивідуальних потреб особистості. Підкреслено, що використання методу театральної гри, як показує досвід зарубіжних країн, на лабораторних та практичних заняттях позитивно впливає на розвиток загальних та індивідуальних компетенцій студентів і допомагає їм краще опанувати комунікативні навички іноземної мови та формує низку вмінь. Постульовано, що в контексті навчання іноземної мови за допомогою естетичного переживання та психосоціального досвіду метод театральної гри допомагає легко, спонтанно і природно набутти педагогічних знань, знань з іноземної мови та досягти самостійності в діяльності, а також навчитися прийомів рефлексивної діяльності.

У статті зацентовано увагу на можливості застосування методу театральної гри як одного із ефективних методів у формуванні іншомовних комунікативних компетентностей і може застосовуватися як один із методів впливу на їх розвиток у навчальному закладі.

**Ключові слова:** театральна педагогіка, метод театральної гри, іноземні мови, комунікативна компетентність, міжкультурна компетентність.

**Formulation of the problem.** The relevance of this study is due to the fact that, in the context of deep socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and spiritual transformations taking place in modern Ukraine, one of the priorities of modernization of higher education is to ensure the quality of training of foreign language teachers capable of navigating in modern realities and responding adequately to them, finding optimal ways of application of modern teaching methods in their work. In the arsenal of means of forming the competence of foreign language teachers an important place is occupied by theatrical art, which has been used in educational practice since the time of Comenius, who considered it an effective means of developing young people's abilities, including social. The information period of society development further actualizes the problem of using theatrical tools and techniques in the educational process, because a professional must have a whole arsenal of knowledge and skills to establish contact and form professional competencies.

**Research analysis.** Among the Ukrainian scholars who studied the use of theatrical means in the general cultural and social development of youth in general, and future teachers in particular, the following should be mentioned: G. V. Lokareva, O. Komarovska, V. F. Morgun, M. Yu. Bykova, M. Levchenko, L. Masol, L. Churylina, L. Serykh, R. Korotkova and others. Ukrainian scholars and educators emphasize that the theatrical art, which is based on acting, while providing aesthetic pleasure contributes also to the comprehensive development of an individual, their social involvement and acquisition of professional competencies.

The purpose of the article is to analyze European applications of the method of theatrical pedagogy in teaching foreign languages and formation of intercultural communicative competence.

This purpose involved solving the following tasks:

- analyze the method of theatrical acting and the European experience of its application in teaching foreign languages;
- identify the main aspects and components of the method of theatrical acting in foreign language classes.

**Presentation of the main material.** The term “pedagogy of theatrical acting” in Europe, particularly in Austria, means:

- theater as an art form and its impact on the audience;
- theater as a means of education;
- achieving an educational goal through the staging of theatrical performances by students;
- dramatization;
- connection between acting and integrative pedagogy in researching social foundations of learning and role play;

- a practice based on a theatrical acting that promotes assimilation of aesthetic and psychosocial experience (Ruping, 1991, p. 76).

The concept of “pedagogy of theatrical acting” is complex, it includes a number of different forms, models and methods. The prominent Austrian researcher A. Neurot includes in the method of theatrical acting role-playing, interactive play, masked play, “Theater der Unterdrücktes” (“theater of the oppressed”), psychodrama and more. Another Austrian scholar, S. Weinz, refers to this method as pedagogical role-playing, animation theatre and the part rehearsing. Some Austrian researchers do not include psychodrama in the method of theatrical acting, but believe that educational drama belongs here, understanding the latter as a creative teaching method, acting and staging. The method of “theatrical acting” in pedagogy is an aesthetic teaching method that uses techniques and methods of theatrical acting and play staging (Ruping, 1991, p. 34)

Drama as a physical-aesthetic and at the same time emotional-cognitive approach in foreign language didactics uses the means of theatre for pedagogical purposes, in particular acquisition of performance language. In the foreground is a holistic learning process and action-oriented experience. By integrating theatrical and pedagogical methods, students are lured into language emergencies in which they are involved. Students become more active despite language difficulties or possible mistakes. The theatre offers a way to combine (foreign) language and action, overcoming the fear of failure and immersion in the natural flow of language. The use of language tools varies depending on the level and context. Language begins with emotions, and the body language is a kind of language, so dramatic education is a way to master a language. (Lauermann, 2003, Luchkevych, 2017, Pavlishak, 2019, Panteleimonova-Plaksa, 2008, Sysoieva, 2011, Zavhorodnia, 2009).

Until the 20th century, foreign languages were mainly taught using the grammatical method of translation. The main focus of foreign language teaching was on writing and reading. Classes were held in frontal form. Instead, the teaching of a foreign language, according to the German researcher F. Franke, should be based on the spoken language. This approach to language teaching became popular in the UK in the 1950s. However, the role of the student remained overlooked even then. Therefore, in the 1970's and 1980's, in addition to some alternative methods, such approaches were developed so that the student could speak as much as possible independently. As a result, students developed their own independence, autonomy and responsibility. Therefore, in the middle of the 20th century an attempt was made to form the competence of students in mutual communication. Thus, a theatrical performance was perceived as an opportunity to be understood by another person.

Thanks to the method of theatrical pedagogy, the student acquires:

- language learning skills / language learning strategies (student can study independently)
- phonological competence (they can correct words in a foreign language, pronounce and understand them when hearing from others)
- grammatical competence (they study the grammar of a foreign language, according to the level of competence)
- receptive competence (they can write texts or verbal statements corresponding to their level of understanding)
- lexical competence (they learn phrases on certain topics)
- productive competence (they can increase their level of oral speech and learn written speech in a foreign language)
- general competence (they acquire world knowledge and intercultural competence and can use this knowledge in relation to the foreign language) (Ruping, 1991, p. 65).

The teacher acts as a learning companion in the process of independent learning of the student.

The main goal of foreign language teaching nowadays is to acquire communication skills, which means that classes prompt students how to act properly in a foreign language according to their language needs. Language learning can only be successful if there are many opportunities to apply the acquired knowledge. For one, they can be action-oriented. Application situations can be achieved by direct intercourse between students, on the other hand, theatre can be used here as a means. Although theatre can be used in exceptional cases as a means of raising awareness of language rules, it can never completely replace them. In communicative didactics, all four skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing) occur on equal terms and are combined. The theatre can train all four areas, as well as vocabulary and grammar, and through creative, sensory and holistic experience, support the content of action-oriented learning. Theatrical methods are mainly used in the field of oral communication. Listening as a necessary condition for the functioning of communication especially encourages the use of methods of theatrical pedagogy, because while improvising important is the ability to enter and respond to verbal and nonverbal expressions of others, while demanding intense perception of others.

Doing theatrical work in a large group only works in the long run if the tasks are solved in small groups.

Today's practice of teaching a foreign language includes the concept of intercultural communicative competence. Students must have some knowledge of the countries whose languages they are studying and knowledge of

the differences and similarities between their origins and the target culture. In addition to knowledge and skills, this competence primarily also indicates attitudes and values, tolerance and openness to others who are different.

Because theatrical performances are about identification with roles and actions in fictional situations, students are better able to empathize with the sensory-physical experience. Simply put, they study foreign language habits and behaviours to embody the inner perspective of the target culture.

The theatrical game offers identification options and goes beyond simple role-playing games and simulations. Role-playing as a term mainly describes simulated situations in which social roles are adopted that do not provide a starting point for identification.

The three main aspects of the method of theatrical acting in foreign language classes include:

- Theatre suggests using language in context through seeming situations and encouragement (language competence).
- Theatre offers opportunities to identify learning content and thus promotes motivation to learn and connection with language learning.
- Theatre offers a connection to movement and emotion and thus encourages many connections.

In addition to the above, theatrical work promotes the development of skills related to personality (communicative activity of users/students of language not only through their knowledge, understanding and skills, but also through certain factors that characterize their respective personality, such as attitude, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types that contribute to their identity). Other personality-related skills, such as creativity, flexibility, or improvisation skills, are often cited as important requirements of the modern world. Theatre can achieve, promote, and support many things that contribute to holistic learning success today. (Robinson, 1995, p. 47).

The use of theatrical acting, as shown by the experience of foreign countries, in laboratory and practical classes has a positive effect on the development of general and individual competencies of students and helps them better master the methods of teaching and forms a number of skills that can be divided into 3 groups.

1) Linguistic skills:

- Use and expansion of language tools for oral communication
- Learning spoken language (including fillers and particles)
- Acquisition of sociolinguistic skills, such as language labelling, social relations, polite conventions, register differences
  - Assimilation of paralinguistic means, such as body language, speech sounds (challenges)

- Elimination of speech inhibitions
  - Promotion of fluent speech (fluidity, consistency, accuracy, cooperation, spontaneity, ability to improvise, reliability and flexibility)
    - Improve pronunciation, prosody and articulation
    - improving communication and interaction skills (speaker's handbook, active listening, sensitivity)
      - Combined learning of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills
      - Understanding the aesthetic value of language and literature
- 2) Personal skills:
- Self-confidence and trust
  - Self-presentation
  - Self-discipline
  - Empathy and distance of roles due to change of point of view
  - Ability to concentrate
  - Independent and external perception
  - Emotional intelligence
  - Identification
  - Ability to criticize
- 3) Social skills:
- awareness of intercultural skills (respect, tolerance and openness to other / strangers, acceptance of intercultural differences)
    - teamwork and willingness to cooperate
    - conflict management
    - flexibility
    - aesthetic and artistic competence in the art of theatre
    - Imagination and creativity
    - Get acquainted with language and body language design tools
    - Use of breath, voice, speech
    - Improvisation: interaction, spontaneity, flexibility
    - Acquaintance with aesthetic means of a role, registration of a room and a scene
      - Stage writing
      - Familiarity with various forms of drama and theater
      - Stage interpretation of texts. (Hess, 2001, p. 73).

In the context of new foreign language teaching with the help of aesthetic experience and psychosocial experience, the method of theatrical acting in pedagogy helps to easily, spontaneously and naturally acquire pedagogical knowledge, achieve independence in activity, learn techniques of reflective activity. In addition to aesthetic experience, during the organization of theatrical production is important educational pro-

cess, social experience and correction of the educational process (Ruping, 1991, p. 22).

Features of the method of theatrical acting, which exist in close cooperation, are as follows:

1) passion (a person needs acting, because it helps them to activate the strengths of their character and abilities, which they do not know about – this is facilitated by the rehearsing, staging and presentation of a play);

2) physical competence in harmony with the senses (theatre requires active physical work and thus develops the emotional facets of the individual; demonstrating a certain theatrical role, a person acquires a new social experience);

3) focus on practice and activity (pedagogical theatrical acting is an activity-oriented practice; we mean physical and emotional activity, despite the artistic and aesthetic design, still real and full of new experience; theatrical acting motivates new experiments, attempts and freedom to make decisions because they can be repeated, it changes desires and ideas and builds a close link between reality and opportunity, encourages reflection on daily activities and promotes their improvement);

4) the possibility of pedagogical experiment and research (the practice of theatrical acting focuses on pedagogical orientation, where the priority is creating conditions for learning socio-pedagogical experience; it arouses interest, creativity, combines theatrical art and life experience; participants have the opportunity, experimenting, combining old and new, acquired knowledge);

5) group and collective activities – theatrical acting – always group and collective activities, where common experience, life stories and purpose are used to express certain ideas, such a method always reflects the group and its dynamics as an important element of socio-pedagogical work, theatre is a public art that opposes social isolation;

6) social orientation and social criticism (working in a group, the participants give individual traits to the play, tolerantly cooperating with other participants, form universal social forms of joint activities; the play also reflects social themes and problems) (Lauermaun, 2003, p. 303).

The features and components of this method are as follows:

– theatrical acting is a means of self-expression of all people – not only actors;

– Much attention during theatrical acting is paid to the human body as the first word of the theatrical dictionary: to master theatrical art, a person must own his body;

– the method of theatrical acting is the acquisition of skills and abilities, as well as an element of research work. Theatrical acting is a joint at-



tempt, analysis, search, because all together learn – both actors and spectators – the discovery of a new experience and the solution of specific problems;

- staging a play requires a wide range of activities, spontaneity, freedom of choice and freedom of creativity, it enriches consciousness and professional experience. (Lauer mann, 2003, p. 303).

**Conclusions.** Thus, the method of theatrical pedagogy helps to form foreign language communicative competencies and can be used as one of the effective methods of influencing their development in school. At the same time, with the help of this method, teachers can find ways of therapeutic and educational impact of art on the personality of each student. It is important to emphasize that through drama there is a constant interaction of students with the world around them, which is a priority in the process of their socialization and professionalization. In addition, the method of theatrical pedagogy promotes the development of emotional and sensory sphere, memory, attention, activity, which effectively affects the development of communication skills. It is about discovering one's own strengths, self-determination and special changes in the search for new life situations, which contributes to personal independence and new social experience, i. e. the successful solution of everyday situations, which leads to the ability to use appropriate competencies. Socio-cultural orientation of activity promotes the development of independence of people with their aesthetic, communication and social needs and skills. Understanding art turns into a form of knowledge and interaction as a basis for understanding, reflection and active participation. With the help of art and culture, people have to organize their own lives. Important conditions for the use of this method are the duration of time, as well as the process of creative approach to the situation and voluntary participation of students.

We see **prospects for further research** in a detailed study of the method of theatrical acting in the formation of communicative competencies of foreign language teachers in universities.

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