

## COMPETENCIES THAT IMPROVE LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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**Abstract:** *This article highlights the competencies that are important in learning a foreign language, and it highlights ideas on developing students' abilities to consciously manage their learning process, set goals, plan their activities, and evaluate their results.*

**Keywords:** *Student independence, foreign language education, learning process, goal setting, activity planning, evaluation of results, student autonomy.*

The concept of learner autonomy, as a characteristic feature of foreign language education, is the ability of students to consciously manage their own learning process, set goals, plan their activities and evaluate their results. In modern pedagogical approaches, this concept is considered an important methodological principle, since the process of language learning is not limited to lessons, but also requires continuous independent activity. When learner autonomy is developed, students have the opportunity to independently learn new words, work with authentic materials, and organize listening and speaking exercises on their own. This contributes to a deeper and more sustainable development of their language competence<sup>222</sup>.

Learner autonomy is also directly related to increasing students' intrinsic motivation to learn. In the process of independent activity, students feel responsible for their knowledge, which leads to their more active involvement in the educational process. For example, the learner chooses learning strategies that are convenient for him, controls the pace of learning, and uses additional resources to achieve his personal goals. This approach increases the self-confidence of the learners and prepares them to use the language in real communicative situations. At the same time, the role of the teacher is also important, who should guide the learners to independent learning, teach effective learning strategies, and provide regular advice<sup>223</sup>.

The importance of student independence in foreign language education is increasing in the global information space. Modern technologies and online resources provide students with the opportunity to learn a language at any time and place. With the help of electronic textbooks, mobile applications and virtual platforms, students can consolidate their

<sup>222</sup> Holec H. *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1981. – pp. 3–35.

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knowledge and develop their speech skills. This serves to individualize the educational process and has a positive effect on the personal development of students.

In addition, student independence also contributes to the effective formation of communicative competence. Students who have learned to learn independently quickly adapt to a new language environment, correctly use language tools in problem situations and freely express their thoughts. This is of great importance in their future academic and professional activities.

#### Strategies for fostering intrinsic motivation in language learning

Forming intrinsic motivation in the process of learning a foreign language is one of the important conditions for increasing educational effectiveness. Intrinsic motivation is associated with the student's personal interest in learning a language, the desire to develop himself and enjoy learning. In the presence of such motivation, students are more actively involved in the learning process, work independently with additional materials and strive to develop speech skills. Therefore, teachers need to use effective strategies aimed at developing intrinsic motivation in the lesson.

One of the main strategies for increasing intrinsic motivation is to select educational materials that match the interests and needs of students. Authentic texts, videos, tasks based on real-life situations form a positive attitude towards language learning in students. For example, classes organized on topics that interest students - travel, technology, culture or sports - increase their activity in the lesson. This approach helps to perceive language learning as a personal need, not a mandatory task.

Supporting students' independent activity also plays an important role in developing intrinsic motivation. Giving students the opportunity to make independent choices, for example, allowing them to determine the topic of a project or the method of learning themselves, increases their sense of responsibility. This strengthens students' positive attitude towards their learning process and helps them to assimilate knowledge more deeply<sup>224</sup>.

Creating a stimulating and supportive learning environment is also an important strategy. The teacher should recognize students' successes, encourage them not to be afraid of mistakes, and provide positive feedback. This increases students' self-confidence and strengthens their interest in learning. Interactive methods, group activities, and communicative tasks also serve to strengthen intrinsic motivation.

Modern technologies are also effective tools for developing intrinsic motivation. Online platforms, mobile applications, and multimedia resources allow students to learn a language in an interesting way. Gamification elements, such as accumulating points or passing levels,

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<sup>224</sup> Gardner R. C. *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold, 1985. – pp.73–90.

increase students' interest in the learning process. At the same time, the fact that students track their results encourages them to learn more actively.

Self-directed learning skills are important in the process of learning a foreign language. These skills include the ability of students to independently plan their own educational activities, set goals, monitor their own knowledge and analyze the results. In modern pedagogical approaches, language learning is not limited to the lesson process, but also requires continuous independent activity. Therefore, the formation of independent learning skills in students is one of the important tasks of foreign language education.

Independent learning skills increase students' responsibility for learning. Students learn the language more deeply by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, choosing effective learning strategies and using individual learning methods. For example, activities such as independent learning of new words, listening exercises using audio materials or writing in a diary enrich students' speech experience. This process strengthens students' self-confidence and builds a positive attitude towards learning<sup>225</sup>.

Independent language practice is an important tool for developing language skills. Students can practice a foreign language through various activities outside of class. For example, reading books in a foreign language, listening to podcasts, watching movies, or participating in online conversations allows them to learn a language in a natural environment. Such activities increase students' vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop fluency.

Modern technologies are further expanding the possibilities for independent learning. Mobile applications, online courses, and interactive platforms allow students to practice at their own level and pace of learning. Through electronic tests and self-assessment tools, students monitor their progress and plan further learning strategies. This serves to individualize the educational process.

The role of the teacher is also important in organizing the process of independent learning. The teacher should teach students effective learning strategies, give independent assignments, and regularly monitor their activities. Providing encouraging feedback increases students' motivation and increases their interest in independent learning. Self-directed learning skills and independent language practice are important factors in the effective acquisition of a foreign language. These skills increase students' responsibility, develop their speech competence, and prepare them for independent learning throughout their lives.

Cultural awareness plays an important role in the effective learning of a foreign language and its use as a means of communication. Language is not only a set of grammatical rules and vocabulary, but it is also closely related to the customs, values, social behavior and

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<sup>225</sup> Williams M & Burden R. *Psychology for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. – pp. 193–210.

communicative traditions of a particular people. Therefore, in order to use the language correctly and effectively, students must also understand the cultural characteristics of the language being studied.

Cultural awareness is an important component of communicative competence. When students use a foreign language in real communication, they must not only know how to construct correct sentences, but also how to choose the appropriate style of speech for a particular situation. For example, formal and informal forms of address, methods of greeting, or the culture of interaction during a conversation may differ in each society. Failure to take these differences into account leads to communicative misunderstandings. Therefore, explaining the cultural context in the process of language learning increases the effectiveness of students' communication<sup>226</sup>.

Cultural awareness also increases students' interest in the language. Getting to know the traditions, lifestyle, art and history of foreign countries increases students' motivation to study the language in more depth. For example, authentic texts, video materials or project work on cultural topics help students understand the connection between language and culture. This makes the learning process more meaningful and interesting.

The use of interactive methods in foreign language lessons is effective for developing cultural awareness. Through group discussions, role-playing games and presentations, students can model different cultural situations. For example, giving assignments on the customs of welcoming guests or methods of business communication in different countries develops students' cultural thinking. This increases their adaptability to the global communicative environment.

Building cultural awareness also develops tolerance and open-mindedness in students. By studying different cultures, students learn to respect the values of other peoples, which is an important factor for effective international communication. These skills are especially relevant in the modern process of globalization. Cultural awareness is one of the important conditions for the effective acquisition of a foreign language and its use in real communicative situations. Integrating the cultural component in the language teaching process develops students' communicative competence, prepares them for international communication, and helps them to successfully function in the global world.

The formation of intercultural competence in foreign language education plays an important role in students' effective and correct use of language. Intercultural competence is understood as the ability of students to communicate with representatives of different cultures based on mutual respect and understanding. Integrating cultural elements in the process of

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<sup>226</sup> Littlewood W. Communicative Language Teaching, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. – pp. 89–104.

language learning makes students' speech activity more meaningful and prepares them for real communicative situations.

The use of authentic materials in the lesson is effective in developing intercultural competence. For example, activities based on videos, articles, interviews or texts on cultural topics about foreign countries broaden students' worldview. Also, through role-playing games, project work and group discussions, students can model different cultural situations. This process develops not only their language skills, but also their social and communicative competence<sup>227</sup>.

Intercultural activities form tolerance, open-mindedness and a sense of global citizenship in students. For example, tasks based on comparing holidays, customs or everyday life in different countries develop students' analytical thinking. Such activities help students use the language in real-life contexts and increase their communicative confidence. The integration of intercultural competence into language teaching activities is an important component of foreign language education. This approach develops students' communicative competence, prepares them for global communication and shapes them in accordance with the requirements of modern society.

The role of the teacher in foreign language education is not limited to imparting knowledge, but also includes the formation of students as independent and motivated individuals. According to modern pedagogical approaches, the teacher acts as an organizer, guide and advisor of the educational process. This is of great importance in the development of students' independent learning skills<sup>228</sup>.

The teacher's support increases students' self-confidence and forms a positive attitude towards the learning process. Encouraging feedback, setting clear goals and teaching effective learning strategies increase students' intrinsic motivation. For example, the teacher can develop a sense of responsibility by giving students independent tasks, organizing project activities or introducing self-assessment methods. The teacher also needs to create a comfortable and positive psychological environment for students. A tolerant attitude towards mistakes, recognition of each student's success, and organization of activities based on cooperation increase students' motivation. This increases their speech activity and strengthens their interest in language learning.

The teacher's guiding role is also manifested in the use of modern technologies. Creating opportunities for students to learn independently through online platforms, electronic resources, and mobile applications increases the effectiveness of education. At the same time,

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<sup>227</sup> Benson P. Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning. London: Routledge, 2011. – P.15–32.

<sup>228</sup> Byram M. Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997. – P.34–52.

the teacher should regularly monitor the activities of students and provide the necessary methodological assistance. The teacher's support and correct guidance are an important factor in forming students' independent learning skills and developing their internal motivation. This serves to increase the effectiveness of foreign language education and prepare students for lifelong learning.

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