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THE RELEVANCE OF CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY FOR LEARNING ENGLISH BY MEANS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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UNESCO has stressed upon the utter importance of the promotion of critical media literacy formation for learners worldwide. Special recommendations for guiding students are primarily based on free information declaration. They focus on the efficient implementation of different media and information sources for critical social interactions and sustainable development; accessibility of new information and knowledge for all citizens; free participation in media content production; impartiality of information and knowledge sources; every citizen's right to express his/her opinion freely in a secure information setting; adequate production, assessment and application of media and information technologies at every phase of social life [7].

The study of modern scientific works enabled pointing out the essential aspects of critical media literacy, necessary for students, among them: the ability of students to level the artificially created information structures and comprehend the modes of their creation; students' ability to interpret the meanings of media messages, based on personal experience, demands and inclinations, current trends, formed national and gender ideas, social and cultural backgrounds, etc.; the ability of students to be cognizant of diverse opinions and form their own position.

Teachers apply critical media literacy approach to teaching English as a foreign language, because they want to support their students' discovery of relations between language and social, cultural, and political spheres of its application, as well as learning tools and themes that have analogies in their native language culture by investigating their own identities and contradictions in comparison to other nations [6, p.75]. Critical intercultural approach to teaching English is supposed to be a key point in the formation of intercultural communication skills of students, their critical thinking, social and reflexive skills. Furthermore, this approach stimulates and motivates students' progress in learning English by inserting their own culture and personal interests amid

the learning process. It is vectored to the development of students' critical comprehension of media content, so it enabled their perception of media messages as a "distorted version of reality" [4, p.100]. Social media sources, involved in learning English as a foreign language, require the usage of teaching technologies that greatly contribute to the creation of authentic linguistic environment for target language learners [3, p.2].

Due to this approach, students also learn information about media, its types, tools and algorithms of its influence. It is essential, because media, and in particular social media, has considerably impacted the area of education by challenging the limitations of the traditional frontal teaching, supporting interaction between students and academia [2, p.99]. When social media potential is used for learning English, students become co-producers of learning information content and active participants of the educational process. Students are persistently forming their communicative competence by means of social media, getting a scenario for their own information content from social media models, applying and imitating the target language patterns and intonations that prepares them for real communicative practices and situations (Mc Dermott, 2013).

In our study students' critical media literacy formation is regarded as a process of teaching students how to access and recognise the valid content and symbolic forms that enable information, knowledge and cultural phenomena transmission for their social and professional expression and communication.

Being restricted to use mostly digital and virtual facilities because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, students and academicians were able to express themselves and communicate through the social media, search for information, consciously perceive and critically interpret information obtained from different media, separate reality from its virtual imitation, i.e. understand the reality constructed by media sources.

In the process of the research it has been concluded that the following groups of students' skills are essential for learning English by means of social media: skills to look for and select relevant information out of multiple digital resources and assess its status, reliability and acceptance; skills to produce and present valuable content in various media formats and genres, regarding target audience and algorithms of media influence; skills to cooperate and benefit from the partnership in various virtual joints for gaining intercultural experience and language practice.

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DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Nowadays, one of requirements to the modern highly skilled specialist is knowledge of foreign language. A free professional communication allows student to be the competitive and professionally mobile participant in intensively developing international relations, to open economic clear zones for foreign investments, to create international enterprises.

The relevance of the problem under investigation due to the fact that the formation of communicative competence as a component of professional competence is a prerequisite for successful professional activity of future specialist, regardless of their specialty.

Thus, the term "communicative competence" was introduced into the scientific space by Gamperz & Hymes (1972) and other American scholars consider communicative competence as an ability that is formed in the process of interaction between the individual and the social environment [3].

According to Hymes (1972) 'communicative competence' refers to the level of language learning that enables language users to convey their messages to others and to understand others' messages within specific contexts. It also implies the language learners' ability to relate what is learnt in the classroom to the outside world. From this perspective, Hymes (1972) described the competent language user as the one who knows when, where and how to use language appropriately rather than merely knowing how to produce accurate grammatical structures.

Hymes' ideas about the 'communicative competence' were later developed by Canale and Swain in 1980 who introduced a theoretical model of 'communicative competence'. Their concept of 'communicative competence' refers to "the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of rules of language use" [2; 6].

Canale and Swain's model of 'communicative competence' consists of three domains of knowledge and skills. They are 'grammatical competence', 'sociolinguistic competence' and 'strategic competence'. Grammatical competence refers to accurate knowledge of sentence formation and