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CULTURALLY SENSITIVE SPHERES IN TEACHING PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF HUMANITIES

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The paper focuses on the cultural component in teaching the English language to students specializing in English, Journalism and Law. This is a case study where the authors pursued the following aims:1) to find out culturally sensitive spheres where students need more attention; 2) to evaluate the level of students' cultural competence; 3) to outline the ways of coping with difficulties; 4) to work out recommendations to eliminate the difficulties. A mixed procedure was elaborated based on open and closed questionnaires carried out among senior students at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Forty-seven students majoring in English, 42 – in Journalism and 52 – in Law were involved in the research carried out in the autumn term of 2020. The results of the survey show that students are fully aware of the necessity to develop cultural competence. The contrastive approach revealed different culturally sensitive spheres for students of three groups. The research discloses the necessity to integrate more deeply cultural studies into the curricula of specialties under investigation.

Key words: culturally sensitive sphere, English, journalism, law, teaching, ELT.

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Introduction. *Culture* is the notion that is itself at the intersection of philosophy, sociology, linguistics, and other humanities. Cultural anthropologists claim that culture is in two places at once. First, it must be in the environment, where it appears, in our case it is some shared knowledge, social behaviour or custom. Secondly, culture must be in a person's mind as a set of ideas for understanding and evaluating knowledge, belief, custom or social behaviour [8; 24; 25]. Cultural learning is a dynamic, ongoing process for students and teachers. Cultural diversity in the student population has a notable impact on teaching and learning [12, p. 18].

Cultural approach in English language teaching (ELT) to students of humanities also responds to Byram's call to bring the learning of culture into the research that deals with foreign language teaching and learning [6]. It is axiomatic in his view that cultural learning has to take place as an integral part of language learning and vice versa. Learners are committed to their culture and in Byram's view, the learner's aim "must be to participate in the foreign culture and experience it from within as well as observe it and understand it from without" [6, p. 49].

"The goal of striving for cultural competence is to remove barriers to access," because cultural differences in the sphere of law can obstruct communication and trust in various professional spheres [18, p. 144]. Barriers to access occur when misunderstandings prevent successful communication. Increased cross-cultural competency, be it a classroom, in the sphere of law or journalism, creates a better ability to build trusting relationships and communicate successfully.

Cultural studies within foreign language teaching offer possibilities to bridge different cultures and eliminate misunderstandings that may arise when a 'consumer' of one culture perceives and interprets facts, behavior, body language and words of the person who belongs to another culture [2; 3; 11; 14]. The content of culture has clear parallels with the content of language, as a language itself is a kind of a cultural system. This is particularly evident in foreign language teaching.

In our case study, cultural sphere of English as a foreign language education was chosen for a number of reasons. First, in today's globalized world cross-cultural awareness is essential to our students as they get ready to work in an increasingly diverse domestic and international job marketplace. Secondly, since cultural studies are extremely wide and significant in foreign language education, we have narrowed the effect of culture to one aspect of English as foreign language teaching. Thirdly, there is a need to specify a particular range of cultural directions and disciplines which are crucial for the specialties students are majoring in.

Previous Research in the Area. The study is fully in line with the current tendency of intercultural communication, merging different cultures [4; 5; 20; 22; 23]. The research has been carried out within the framework of the theory of American scholar C. Kramsch, stating that "culture and language are inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience" [13, p. 217]. In our case, we deal only with a small part of the domain where language and culture intersect and different cultures coexist. In these cases we have situations, quoting Mikhail Bakhtin, when the learner takes "the image of another's language and outlook on the world" [1, p. 108]. According to C. Kramsch, it is in the

teaching of culture "where foreign language teaching has encountered difficulties" [13, p. 1].

Professional training, be it a teacher, a lawyer, a journalist, refers to a great extent to the social sphere, thus necessitating a cultural approach to ELT. This aspect was under scrutiny of quite a number of scholars [5; 16; 21]. Although culture is present in ELT from the very first day, it is always in the background. For English language students, the dichotomy of language and culture is prominent on the lexico-semantic level. "Socio-historic and cultural perspectives to the lexicon of the English language" constitute an important part of cultural studies for non-native students of English, especially those who do it professionally [7, p. 444].

Promoting cross-cultural awareness is an important aspect of professional training in legal education. Students' focusing on the cultural context of legal analysis has both pedagogical and institutional advantages. Each law student brings multiple social group identities to the learning environment, identities to which society has ascribed meaning and given status [24, p. 211]. The primary pedagogical advantage of cross-cultural analysis is development of critical thinking. A multiple-perspective approach, which is based on it, prepares students for practice in a multicultural society. They become "culturally competent" and sensitive to different cultural perspectives about what is fair or persuasive.

Yamazaki and Kayes suggest that educators and researchers need to understand cross-cultural collaborative learning as: (a) building relationships; (b) valuing people of different cultures; (c) listening and observing so as to understand the culture; (d) coping with ambiguity; and (e) translating complex information into the language of another culture [15, p.182].

Cross-cultural competency enables lawyers to create trusting relationships with their clients as well as effectively communicate with and understand their clients' needs [18, p. 156]. Student's cross-cultural communication skills can be taught through watching and interpreting videos of interviews, simulated role-playing in class and student reflections. Students can identify various introductory rituals used by different cultures and integrate them into their simulated interviews, dialogues, role-plays, or moot-courts [17]. They can also practice deep listening skills and interpreting nonverbal cues, so important in the sphere of law.

Although journalism is of quite recent origin, unlike law, scholars claim that they have much in common [19]. This is due to the fact that both are deeply social and human-centered. Journalism is a fast developing sphere. and these days we are witnessing a tendency of this specific "language of newspapers" to transcend the limits of the realm of newspapers and magazines, finding its way into social media, thus widening rapidly the sphere of its usage. In general, it is no longer confined to the press – it has become of major importance in advertising, websites, social networks and many other forms of communication.

The relationship between journalism, culture and society is a symbiotic one. Journalism influences culture on the one hand, and it is influenced by it on the other. In fact, as some argue, journalism is culture, a set of cultural practices which frame experience and public consciousness of the here and now [9; 26; 27]. Professional journalists are much exposed to cultural and social tendencies, they are on the verge of social changes, and hence, their cultural tolerance is of utmost importance. Journalistic skills are of little help to the community if

journalists are not fully aware of their responsibilities to the society. As Weaver asserts in his cross-national and cross-cultural book, the traditional Western role model emphasizes "non-involvement and a watchdog function" of journalists [26, p. 492].

To provide students of journalism in Ukraine with adequate cultural studies within ELT, educators strive to effectively pursue the twofold aim of acquainting learners with both cultural specificity of journalistic work and cultural subtleties of the language of press and media. Comparative studies of journalism, although not on Ukrainian-English grounds, have become immensely popular in recent times, yet a range of challenges still remain [10]. Cultural challenges in Ukraine besides the social sphere, are also in the language of newspapers. They are seen as intrinsic to the journalistic culture in the English speaking countries. These are headlinese and tabloidese, unusual grammar, abundance of wordplay and cultural references. These peculiarities make professional training challenging for non-native speakers.

Methodology. To solve the problems put forward in the study we used methods from both linguistic and cultural anthropology. Those are: a) the comparative method used to study the correspondences between English and Ukrainian languages and cultures that have a common origin; b) contrastive analysis by means of which English and Ukrainian are studied with a view to identify their differences. Both these methods are relevant to our study since they pertain to language and culture thus allowing us to view them as a dichotomy. In order to ensure the efficient collection and processing of information, we coordinated such techniques as classroom research and participant observation. The research also includes cross-cultural analysis and systematization. The mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methodology was then applied to the collected corpus in search of further development and incorporation of relevant cultural studies into the content curricula of corresponding specialties.

Participants. The study case was carried out with students majoring in English (47 people), law (52) and journalism (42) at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv during the autumn term of 2020. Those were senior students, English and law – 4th year, journalism – 3^d and 4th year students.

Research Procedures. The study procedure included two stages. The first one was a closed-ended questioning in which we sought answers to the question: What are most culturally sensitive spheres in professional English for the three groups of students? This task was performed on a contrastive Ukrainian-English basis.

Students in three groups were shown videos. In order to have the same approach and similar framework, all students were shown TED talks in the corresponding fields: education (English), law (Think like a lawyer) and journalism [28; 29; 30]. In order to have common grounds for further analysis, we have elaborated one follow-up questionnaire. Here is the sample:

- 1. The situation and context were:
- a) similar to the one in Ukraine;
- b) totally different;
- c) slightly different.

- 2. The behaviour of participants was:
- a) similar to the one in Ukraine;
- b) totally different;
- c) slightly different.
- 3. Communication of participants was:
- a) similar to the one in Ukraine;
- b) totally different;
- c) slightly different.
- 4. The content of the described situation was:
- a) similar to the one in Ukraine;
- b) totally different;
- c) slightly different.
- 5. The form of the described situation was:
- a) similar to the one in Ukraine;
- b) totally different;
- c) slightly different.
- 6. I had difficulties with cultural realia of the situation:
- a) a lot;
- b) no at all;
- c) some.
- 7. I had difficulties with professional English:
- a) a lot;
- b) no at all;
- c) some.
- 8. I had difficulties with cultural peculiarities in the language:
- a) a lot;
- b) no at all;
- c) some.

The above-mentioned questioning was accompanied and expanded by the second open-ended detailed description of cultural differences in the corresponding professional fields between English and Ukrainian. These written tasks were classified and then studied in two approaches: a) contrastive, Ukrainian vs English; b) content analysis (the students' comments and references to cultural issues). In this way we intended to identify how respondents signal cultural spheres in their professional fields which are most sensitive and need utmost attention to cope with.

When analysing the content, we have singled out such items as reference to the language in the professional field, reference to the behaviour, the way of communication, reference to the form and context of the situation. Nearly all of them exploit the ability to analyse cultural differences in professional situations.

Research limitations. TED format sets some limitations on the experiment since it describes professional situations which gives us uniformity in the experiment. All specialties involved presupposed a broad range of professional contexts both with and without lively communication. Moreover, it was the first experience of students in this sphere.

Results and Discussion. The results of the survey were summarized in the following table. For convenience, the obtained data are given in percentage.

Table 1 Comparative summary of the results

Questions	Language	Law	Journalism
1. The situation and context were:			
a) similar to the one in Ukraine;	a. 41%	a. 45%	a. 52%
b) totally different;	b. 0%	b. 1%	b. 0%
c) slightly different.	c. 59%	c. 54%	c. 48%
2. The behaviour of participants was:			
a) similar to the one in Ukraine;	a. 21%	a. 31%	a. 12%
b) totally different;	b. 13%	b. 3%	b. 5%
c) slightly different.	c. 66%	c. 66%	c. 83%
3. Communication of participants was:			
a) similar to the one in Ukraine;	a. 18%	a. 22%	a. 32%
b) totally different;	b. 10%	b. 6%	b. 10%
c) slightly different.	c. 72%	c. 72%	c. 58%
4. The content of the described situation was:			
a) similar to the one in Ukraine;	a. 38%	a. 33%	a. 46%
b) totally different;	b. 2%	b. 2%	b. 21%
c) slightly different.	c. 60%	c. 65%	c. 33%
5. The form of the described situation was:			
a) similar to the one in Ukraine;	a. 31%	a. 41%	a. 10%
b) totally different;	b. 9%	b. 2%	b. 38%
c) slightly different.	c. 60%	c. 57%	c. 52%
6. I had difficulties with cultural realia of the			
situation:			
a) a lot;	a. 2%	a. 2%	a. 0%
b) no at all;	b. 16%	b. 15%	b. 79%
c) some.	c. 82%	c. 83%	c. 21%
7. I had difficulties with professional English:			
a) a lot;	a. 1%	a. 1%	a. 5%
b) no at all;	b. 38%	b. 47%	b. 60%
c) some.	c. 61%	c. 52%	c. 35%
8. I had difficulties with cultural peculiarities			
in the language:			
a) a lot;	a. 21%	a. 11%	a. 7%
b) no at all;	b. 3%	b. 13%	b. 21%
c) some.	c. 76%	c. 76%	c. 72%

Results of the questionnaire among students majoring in English testify to the fact that cultural similarities prevail over differences. In all of the questions, the answer 'slight (some) differences' prevail. Questions in the survey refer to such cultural spheres: culture of professional situation – questions 1, 5; general cultural background (behavior,

communication) – 2, 3; the discussed content of professional situation – 4, 6; culture and the language – 7, 8. As we see, the professional situation (q. 1) either coincides completely (41%) or is slightly different (59%). The form in which the situation is presented, specific rituals (q. 5) are in general the same (91%), and only 9% of students see them as totally different. Concerning general cultural background: behaviour (q. 2), here 87% consider it similar or slightly different from Ukrainian, whereas 13% think it is totally different; culture of communication yielded the following results, the same or slightly different – 90%. Although most of the respondents have not noticed essential differences in the content of educational situation (q. 4 – 98%), some cultural realia were still present for the majority (q. 6 – 84%). If most of the students did not have difficulties with professional English (q. 7 – 99%), many pf them had some problems with cultural peculiarities in English (q. 8 – 76%).

The contrastive approach to the descriptions has revealed the following results. There is a tendency to evaluate them in the two linguocultures as not very different – 85%. There was, however, a distinction within this evaluation between "slight difference in the professional situation" and difference resulting from the fact that "working conditions are different". Some of the students attributed cultural differences to broader social contexts which definitely influence the existing situation. Contrastive analysis yielded one more difference in teaching styles which is the degree of tolerance. The quality was mentioned in more than a half of all papers and this testifies to deeper incorporation of cross-cultural studies in English-speaking countries.

The analysis of the content has yielded the following results: in most descriptions ($\pm 60\%$) behaviour and communication were evaluated as more friendly and open. What concerns professional behavior, certain classroom rituals are quite similar to those in Ukraine and only $\pm 15\%$ students mentioned this item. Cultural peculiarities of the English language were indicated in $\pm 80\%$ descriptions which means that this is the sphere that is to be given priority. However, it has to be admitted that majority of the students ($\pm 90\%$) did not indicate any problems with professional English.

Results of the questionnaire among law students majoring in legal English testify to the fact that cultural similarities prevail over differences. In all of the questions, the answer 'slight (some) differences' prevail. As we can see, the professional situation (q. 1) either coincides completely (45%) or is slightly different (54%). The form in which the situation is presented, specific rituals (q. 5) are almost Concerning general cultural background: behaviour (q. 2), here 97% consider it similar or slightly different from Ukrainian, whereas only 3% think it is totally different; culture of communication yielded the following results, the same or slightly different – 94%. Although most of the respondents have not noticed essential differences in the content of the described situation (q. 4 – 98%), some cultural realia were still present for the majority (q. 6 – 85%). If most of the students did not have difficulties with professional English (q. 7 – 99%), many had some problems with cultural peculiarities in the English language (q. 8 – 76%).

The results of the research have shown that the form of the described situation, behaviour of the participant and communication are slightly different from Ukrainian ones due to different attitude of the society to lawyers: in the United Kingdom and USA lawyers

are considered to be respected members of society while in Ukraine the function of a lawyer is somewhat diminished. Some of the students stated that cultural differences also concern the way of life, commitment to work and utter awareness of being an honest and decent member of society.

The analysis of the content has revealed the following results: in most descriptions ($\pm 65\%$) behaviour and communication were evaluated as more sincere and friendly. Concerning professional rituals, most law students agree that they are quite similar to those in Ukraine, only $\pm 10\%$ of respondents focused on them. Students also expressed their interest in cultural peculiarities of the English language in the sphere of law ($\pm 30\%$) whereas the majority of the students ($\pm 90\%$) did not indicate any problems with professional legal English.

The overall questionnaire results obtained from the students of Journalism are summarized in the third column of Table 1. It has been found that the perception of culturally different content in the student's sphere of studies does not hinder correct interpretation and understanding. In the majority of questions, figures indicate that there are slight cultural differences, and, as shown by the next highest figure, some aspects of the cultural situation are considered generally similar to those in Ukraine.

The situation and context (q. 1) are viewed as slightly different by almost half of the respondents, 52% consider those to be similar to that in Ukraine. In contrast, the form of the described situation (q. 5) is seen as slightly different (52%) or totally different (38%) by the large majority, while only 10 % consider it to be similar.

General cultural background (q. 2, 3) is perceived as slightly different by the highest proportion of users. From the numbers it is clear that only 12% of the students find behavior of the participants of the cultural situation similar to that of their countrymen.

The questions concerning the discussed content of the professional situation (4, 6) yield figures that point to the larger proportion of similarity in this respect. For instance, as much as 79% claim to have no difficulties with cultural realia of the situation, and the content of the described situation is totally different for only 21% of the respondents.

According to the obtained answers to question 7, we can deduce that 60% of the students have close to none difficulties with understanding professional English in the videos, 35% have some difficulty, whereas only 5% encountered considerable problems perceiving professional jargon. Some difficulties with cultural peculiarities of the language are experienced by the largest percentage of students (72%) compared to 21% of those who have no difficulties. Figures show that only 7% encounter significant difficulties in this respect.

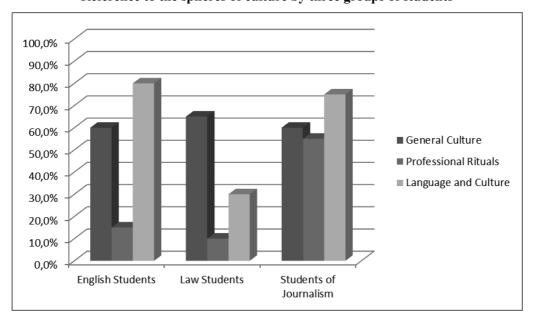
It can be concluded that most Ukrainian students have certain difficulties perceiving the situation discussed due to the discrepancies in the media and journalism culture in the USA and Ukraine. Essentially, this variation is caused by the difference in the form of presentation (much or some difficulty for 90% of the respondents), as well as some difficulties in understanding cultural peculiarities of the language (72%). Although the communication and behaviour bear slight differences for the major proportion (58-83%), professional English caused no difficulties for 60%.

When analysing the descriptions, we have noticed that the majority of students ($\pm 60\%$) paid attention to the differences in behaviour and communication. As most of them indicated, British and American journalists look more independent and safe in comparison with Ukrainian colleagues. Another problem which has already come to the surface in the closed-ended questionnaire is that form and content of the questions discussed by journalists do not always coincide judging from the perspective of Ukrainian professional culture ($\pm 55\%$). Serious political or social issues may be discussed in the light, jokey form. The students also mentioned the so-called 'watchdog function' of journalists ($\pm 50\%$) and the responsibility for the materials journalists prepare.

The content analysis has yielded the following results: in most descriptions ($\pm 60\%$), behaviour and communication were evaluated as more friendly, tolerant but at the same time firm and aggressive. Cultural peculiarities of the English language were mentioned in nearly two/thirds of the descriptions, especially in the sphere of essay, review and story writing ($\pm 70\%$). The majority of students expressed the necessity of classes aimed at review, story and essay writing in English as contrasted with these types of writing in Ukrainian. Students are aware of cultural differences in writing in the two languages, and what they need is the course in contrastive rhetoric. =

The results have been analysed and illustrated in the diagram. All cultural issues raised by students have been divided into three groups: 1– dealing with general social culture; 2 – dealing with professional culture, the so-called professional rituals; 3 – dealing with cultural peculiarities as reflected in the language.

Diagram 1
Reference to the spheres of culture by three groups of students



The results of the study show that cultural studies in the professional field are beneficial for the students of humanities. The data obtained in the case study are fully in line with other studies [6, 10, 12, 24, 26] which claim that cultural studies should be incorporated into foreign language teaching of humanities students.

Our aim was to find culturally sensitive spheres in professional English of different specialties with a view of eliminating shortcomings connected with underestimation of cultural studies. Formation of intercultural professional competencies and soft skills in communication are vital for our specialists to enable their successful professional performance in the global business environment.

Due to the differences in Ukrainian and American cultures in the above-mentioned spheres, we expected to see more substantial deviations and difficulties for Ukrainian students. However, they turned out to be not so serious. There are, of course, some intercultural nuances in professional fields that may cause misunderstandings, mistrust, and low professional performance.

The results testify to the fact that all three groups of students need courses in general cultural anthropology. Courses in the culture of professional journalism may be introduced to students majoring in this specialty. Cultural peculiarities of the English language are of interest to students of English and journalism.

Conclusions. The main outcome of the case study is that cultural similarities prevail over differences in all three spheres (English, Law, Journalism). Differences refer mainly to general social contexts. The results have revealed that for students of English and law cultural differences in professional fields are negligible, whereas future journalists see certain differences in professional cultural rituals. In general, we may claim that profession is the sphere that unites rather than separates. This result coincided in both closed and openended questionnaires.

The English language in its cultural dimension turned out to be equally equivocal for all groups of students, although the split of preferences was different. Those majoring in English need courses in linguistic and cultural anthropology, while students of journalism necessitate courses in contrastive English-Ukrainian rhetoric. Law students are interested in the cultural aspect of English used in legal spheres.

The outcome of the study allows us to conclude that certain shifts could be introduced in curricula content of the specialties under investigation: courses in general cultural anthropology can be introduced in all three specialties; courses in cultural aspect of English can be introduced for students of English and journalism; students of journalism need courses in contrastive rhetoric.

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КУЛЬТУРНО-ЧУТЛИВІ СФЕРИ У ВИКЛАДАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ СТУДЕНТАМ ГУМАНІТАРНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

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У статті розкрито значення культурологічного компонента у викладанні англійської мови студентам гуманітарних спеціальностей, а саме, англійської філології, журналістики та права. У викладанні англійської мови професійного напрямку виявляються комунікативно-культурні розбіжності, які можуть ускладнювати взаєморозуміння. Набуття міжкультурної комунікативної компетенції є необхідною умовою для всебічної професійної підготовки студентів, тому дослідження мало на меті: 1) визначити культурно-чутливі сфери, що потребують уваги викладача; 2) оцінити рівень культурної компетентності студентів; 3) окреслити шляхи подолання труднощів; 4) випрацювати рекомендації для усунення труднощів. В експерименті були використані методи лінгвістичної та культурної ан-

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тропології, міжкультурний аналіз і систематизація. Для реалізації цілей було проведене соціологічне дослідження серед студентів 3-4 курсів факультетів іноземних мов (англійське відділення), журналістики та юриличного факультету Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка. Автори розробили закритий та відкритий опитувальники, які було використано у вказаних групах студентів в осінньому семестрі 2020 року. Дослідження включало перегляд учасниками експеримента ТЕД виступів на теми викладання англійської мови як іноземної, правничу та журналістську тематику із наступним опитуванням, проведеним у два етапи: перше у вигляді закритих питань щодо вразливих сфер в українській та англійській професійних культурах та друге як відкрита письмова частина, покликана деталізувати культурні відмінності у відповідних професійних середовищах. Результати опитування засвідчили, що студенти повністю усвідомлюють необхідність розвивати культурологічну компетентність, особливо у професійній сфері. Порівняльний підхід виявив різні культурно-чутливі сфери для трьох груп студентів. Студентам англійського відділення більше необхідно зосередитись на культурній антропології Великобританії та США, студентам журналістики необхідні знання в контрастивній англо-українській риториці, майбутнім правникам варто більше зосередитись на професійній культурі юридичної сфери. Дослідження показує, що необхідно глибше інтегрувати культурологічні студії у навчальні програми спеціальностей, які були об'єктом дослідження.

Ключові слова: культурно-чутливі сфери, англійська мова, журналістика, право, викладання англійської мови.