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Course

Date

Necessity to Learn French Today

Every language is a mirror of society, a living organism that exists and changes under the influence of historical, political, and social conditions. Languages reflect different cultures and, at the same time, are the key to understanding these cultures. Today, it is common to study English as a foreign language, as an international means of communication. However, this does not diminish the importance of learning other foreign language like French.

The demand for knowledge of a language has changed in recent years. For several centuries French was spoken even at the court of the British monarch, but, today, there is an opinion that the French language is losing its influence. The language struggle, one of the fiercest but not always visible wars, is ongoing. French has a long and long tradition as the international language, which it was from the Middle Ages to the middle of the twentieth century (Sala). French borrowings may be found in many languages. The most “French” language is English, whose vocabulary consists of more than 50% of French words (Simons) – probably, English became the first thanks to these borrowings. It may be claimed that in a period of rather an aggressive introduction of the Anglo-American language in the world, the French need to persistently and resolutely defend their language, their national interests, and calls on other nations to preserve linguistic diversity.

Then, it seems rational to state that the French language is spoken all over the world. Today, French is represented not only in its historical homeland – France – but also in other countries around the globe, performing the functions of international communication

(Simons). The modern French-language map of the world shows that French is the sixth most common in the world; moreover, it is the world's second language, which is studied as a foreign language. In today's world, it is no longer possible to limit oneself to the knowledge of only one foreign language, even as comprehensive as English. In the XX century. Moliere's tongue is indeed inferior to Shakespeare's, but its position remains significant: French is the world's second-largest foreign language, and it is the only language, along with English, with "planetary geography" to be studied and used on all five continents (Sala). France has the largest network of cultural and educational institutions abroad.

French is the second language of international relations, the official language of diplomacy. French is both the official and working language of all European and most international organizations (Laverack). Among them are the UN, UNESCO, the European Union, the Council of Europe, NATO, the International Olympic Committee, the World Trade Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and others. All diplomatic notes of the Vatican are composed in this language. It should also be mentioned that French is the language of international law. French is the official working language of many international legal institutions due to the traditions of French legal and administrative competence (Laverack). It is one of the languages of such organizations as the European Court, Amnesty International, Lawyers Without Borders, Interpol, and others. By the way, in cases that require great precision, the French language is used even by English justice.

On the other hand, it may be suggested that in comparison with the English language, French is more complicated for learning within the global scope, and for international communication, English is fully sufficient. Nowadays, English is studied by almost all institutions of higher education as an integrated element of curricular, and future specialists become fully acquainted with this language. In this regard, there is no necessity to learn French as students around the world are already getting the foundation to participate in

international relations, by studying English. According to such an opposing opinion, the time “wasted” on French may be used to gain a more in-depth understanding of vital subjects in the framework of a specialization. However, this position seems to be less reliable than the one discussed above. The crucial point here is the cultural diversity that is to be implemented at the global level, which alleviates interactions and communication between nations – a basis for appropriate international relations. The key element of this diversification is learning various languages that are essential to understand a particular culture, and there is a plethora of French-speaking countries.

To conclude, the above discussion provides evidence and arguments that maintain the position according to which learning French is a necessity nowadays. The crucial points are as follows; first, French has a long tradition of international language; second, French is spoken around the globe; third, it is a language of international relationships. The opposing position that English is sufficient for appropriate global communication was claimed unreasonable – an emphasis in this regard was on the essence of cultural and language diversity.

Works Cited

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