



EFFECTIVENESS OF KNOWING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES.

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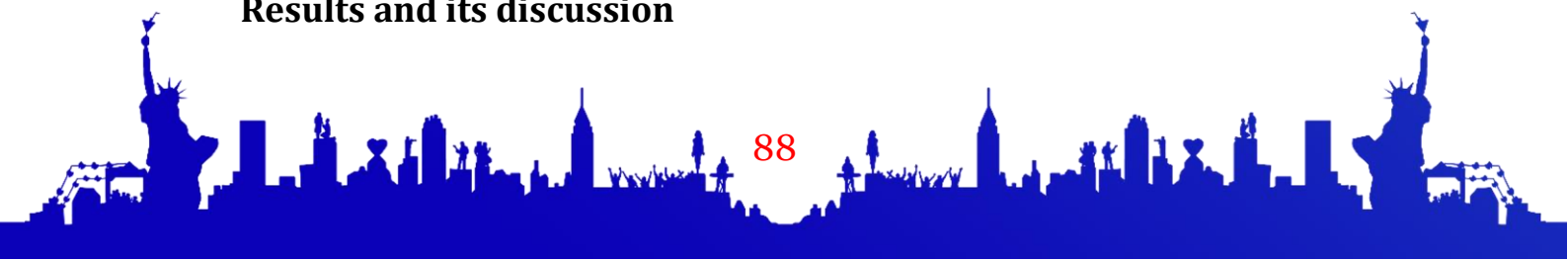
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Abstract. Today, many experts agree that learning at least one other foreign language has many advantages not only for the individual who seeks to learn it, but also for the society of which he is a member. The article focuses on some important qualities of a leader and offers suggestions on how to develop them in English, French or German language learners. We believe that knowing a foreign language will help leaders to develop much-needed leadership qualities such as flexibility, open-mindedness, good teamwork, good listening and good communication skills. Without these qualities, it will be very difficult for them to work not only in the international environment, but also in the national environment.

Keywords: leadership, qualities, foreign languages, leader qualities.

Introduction. Nowadays specialists have introduced the concept of "global leader", "a leader comfortable working with different nationalities, communication styles and motivations" [1, p. 58-81]. The learning of foreign languages is a key criterion that would enable one to become such a global leader. Emma Buckby in "6 Ways a Foreign Language Enhances Your Global Leadership Skills" enumerates six ways in which learning a foreign language can help one become a better leader. She is of the opinion that such an experience expands the way people communicate and the way they are perceived by their audience; gives the speaker a broader world perspective. It is also helps the learner understand more about the context, about the way people say things; another problem encountered by monolinguals is the fact that they generally use references from their own language and culture and thus the number of people that can understand them greatly diminishes and so does the effectiveness of their speech; those who speak more languages understand the context better and they are capable of understanding things that to others may appear ambiguous and that otherwise may lead to misunderstandings; by learning a new language, one also learns about a new culture and in this manner they become more empathic and more tolerant [3].

Results and its discussion





The countries that fail to take measures regarding the improvement of the level of knowledge of foreign languages of their citizens will find themselves in a predicament. In their paper entitled America's Foreign Language Deficit, David Skorton and Glenn Altschuler discuss the serious problem the United States is confronted with, the one represented by the too few Americans who can speak a language other than English as compared to Europeans. The statistics presented by the two authors are dire: "Only 18% of Americans report speaking a language other than English, while in Europe it 53% speak more than one language, and even more do elsewhere" "As we globalize and work across more countries, more significant than knowing a second or third language, there is a rising need for people skilled in understanding context that stems from how people speak or interact. This goes beyond issues of inclusiveness and having a culturally diverse workforce. It is much more an issue of leadership in being about to comprehend and hold different perspectives readily and why people may think in different ways.

We take as a starting point the definitions of leadership given by Mohandas K. Gandhi according to which "leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people" and that of Peter Drucker who is of the opinion[5] that "The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say "I". And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say "I". They don't think "I". They think "We"; they think "team". They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but "We" gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done" . From these two definitions we notice that the leaders of today and, very probably the leaders of tomorrow, (will) have to display not only the "classical qualities" mentioned by all the specialized books in the field, but we can also detect a growing insistence upon a good mastery of soft skills, which are subjective and difficult to quantify, skills that could be acquired or bettered during foreign language classes.

Improving leadership qualities during the foreign language classes The leadership qualities the foreign language professors can develop most successfully in the ones they teach are best summarized by C.Perry Yeatman and Stacie Nevadomski Berdan in their work entitled Get ahead by going abroad: A woman's guide to career success. This book aims at teaching women how to succeed in obtaining an international position and on how to secure it. In the authors' view, good leaders must know more than one language, they must be





adaptable, flexible, open minded, they have to prove to be good team players, they need to listen and to communicate clearly [3].

“Flexibility is what enables individuals to generate new ways to solve a problem, adapt to changes in routines, and adjust to the unexpected”. Many teachers nowadays are engaged into collaborative partnerships with their students. Teachers have to really listen to the students and to offer them choices. There are instances when cadets can choose from a list of military topics the one they want to write an essay on or to deliver a presentation on. Flexibility is also fostered by the fact that teachers permanently emphasize the things that the students do well, by the fact that they take into considerations the changes the cadets suggest in the case of certain activities, by encouraging their sense of humor.

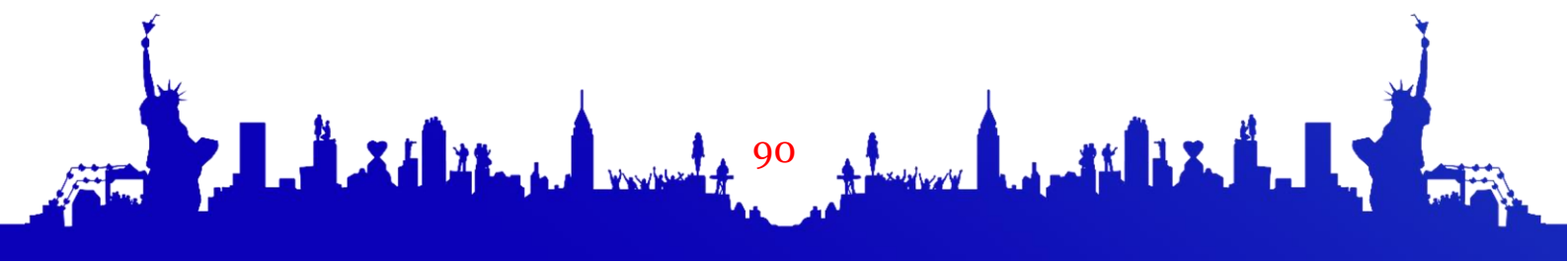
Without teamwork, very few foreign language classes would be successful. By asking the students to do exercises in which they are asked to listen to a recording and afterwards to fill in the gaps of a text with the missing information, we also facilitate their transformation into listeners who are more attentive not only to the recorded speech but also to one another. Such an example of listening activity would be the one requiring students to “Listen to the audio clip and fill in the blanks with the missing words”, an exercise that is taken in Standby.

Even if the leadership qualities our paper focuses on are not mentioned in the syllabus, we have to keep in mind that as teachers we are not only sources of knowledge regarding the subject matter we are specialized in but also sources of experience and in this quality we should deliver lessons on foreign languages as well as lessons on life.

There are very few people who are born with all the necessary leading qualities. For the great majority it is extremely hard, but with courage and perseverance leading can be learned.

Conclusion

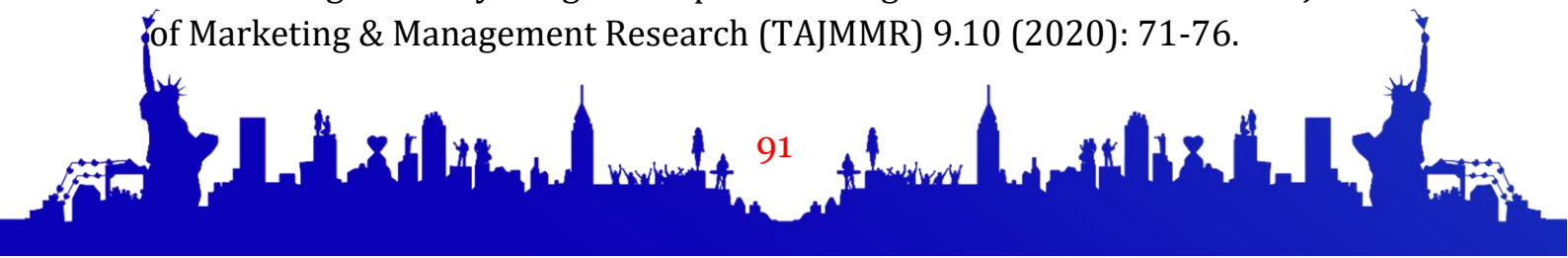
Leading people is not easy. It is complex. It can be frustrating. It is time consuming. It's about emotions and expectations. Leading people is about mobilizing and optimizing the talent and skills of yourself and others in order to achieve results. And it is about the willingness to hold up the mirror and be very self-aware about your strengths and limitations – and maintaining the capacity to grow and develop.





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