THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Annotation. This paper investigates the significance of English Language Teaching (ELT) as a tool for developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among university students. As English becomes an increasingly global lingua franca, the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries is essential. Through qualitative analysis of classroom practices, including discussions, role plays, and project-based learning, this study highlights the effectiveness of integrating culture-focused content in ELT. The findings suggest that embedding intercultural elements within language curricula significantly enhances students' global awareness, tolerance, and adaptability in multicultural environments.

Keywords: intercultural competence, English language education, university students, cultural awareness, global communication, ELT, intercultural communication

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada universitet talabalari o'rtasida multimadaniy muloqota qobiliyatini (MMQ) rivojlantirish vositasi sifatida ingliz tilini o'qitish (ITO') ahamiyati tadqiq qilinadi. Ingliz tili global lingua franca (axborotlashuv tili) sifatida kengayib borgan sari, madaniy chegaralardan tashqarida muloqot qilish qobiliyati zarurdir. Talqinlar, ro'l o'yinlari va loyihaga asoslangan o'qitish kabi sinf ichi amaliyotlarning sifatli tahlili orqali bu tadqiqot ITO' da madaniy-yo'nalishli kontentni integratsiyalashning samaradorligini ta'kidlaydi. Natijalar ko'rsatadiki, til o'qitish dasturiga multimadaniy elementlarni kiritish talabalarning global an'anaviylik, tolerantlik va ko'p madaniy muhitlarga moslashuv qobiliyatini sezilarli darajada oshiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: multimadaniy qobiliyat, ingliz tili o'qitishi, universitet talabalari, madaniy an'ana, global muloqot, ITO', multimadaniy muloqot

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуется значение преподавания английского языка (ELT) как инструмента для развития межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции (МКК) среди студентов университетов. Поскольку английский язык становится все более глобальным лингва франка, способность общаться через культурные границы приобретает особую важность. Посредством качественного анализа практик преподавания, включающих дискуссии, ролевые игры и проектное обучение, данное исследование подчеркивает эффективность интеграции культурно-ориентированного контента в ELT. Результаты показывают, что

включение межкультурных элементов в языковые учебные программы значительно повышает глобальную осведомленность студентов, толерантность и адаптивность в мультикультурной среде.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная компетенция, преподавание английского языка, студенты университетов, культурная осведомленность, глобальная коммуникация, ELT, межкультурная коммуникация

Introduction

The 21st century is marked by rapid globalization, digital connectivity, and cross-cultural interactions. English, as the dominant language of international communication, has evolved into more than a linguistic skill—it has become a medium through which global citizens engage across cultural boundaries. In this context, English Language Teaching (ELT) is not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about preparing learners to function effectively and appropriately in multicultural settings.

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) refers to the ability to interact successfully with people from different cultural backgrounds using appropriate language, behavior, and attitudes. Byram (1997) defines ICC as the synthesis of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural awareness.

Methods

This paper argues that ELT, especially in university settings, plays a pivotal role in cultivating ICC among students, equipping them for global mobility, academic exchanges, and professional careers in international environments.

Why ICC Matters in ELT

Universities today are not merely academic institutions—they are hubs of multicultural interaction. Students are increasingly exposed to global content, foreign peers, and international platforms such as Erasmus+, Model United Nations, and virtual exchange programs. Therefore, developing ICC is not a luxury but a necessity.

Incorporating ICC into ELT helps students:

− Understand the values, customs, and communication styles of other cultures.

− Reflect critically on their own cultural assumptions.

− Avoid misunderstandings and stereotypes in cross-cultural interactions.

− Develop empathy, curiosity, and open-mindedness.

Simply teaching English as a tool for passing exams fails to prepare students for real-world interactions. ELT that includes ICC elements enables students to use English with cultural sensitivity, thus making them competent not only linguistically but also socially and emotionally in global contexts.

Cultural Tasks and Methods in the ELT Classroom

To develop ICC through English classes, educators must intentionally design lessons that blend language with culture. Below are practical methods and strategies:

1. Culture-Based Discussions and Comparative Analysis

Teachers can introduce topics such as holidays, workplace norms, education systems, and gender roles in different countries. For instance, students may compare wedding traditions in Uzbekistan, Japan, and the UK. These discussions enhance vocabulary while promoting intercultural reflection.

2. Role-Plays and Simulations

Creating simulated situations such as "business meeting with international clients" or "dining in a multicultural restaurant" allows students to practice real-life communication with cultural nuances. Such activities enhance pragmatic competence and reduce anxiety in future encounters.

3. Media Analysis

Using films, advertisements, music, and news articles from various countries helps students understand implicit cultural codes. For example, analyzing a BBC documentary and contrasting it with a local news report develops media literacy and cultural comparison skills.

4. Project-Based Learning and Presentations

Students can research a country's social etiquette or prepare presentations on cultural taboos. Collaborative projects with students from other countries (via online exchange) further improve digital ICC.

5. Reflection Journals

Results and Discussion

Encouraging students to reflect on their reactions to cultural differences, stereotypes, or communication challenges helps develop metacognitive skills and intercultural self-awareness.

Case Study: Integrating ICC into a University English Course

At the National University of Uzbekistan, a pilot course entitled "English for Global Communication" was designed with the goal of developing ICC. The course combined standard language instruction with modules on:

‒ Global etiquette
‒ Intercultural negotiation
‒ Nonverbal communication
‒ Stereotypes and identity

Outcomes were assessed through self-assessment surveys, group interviews, and peer feedback. Results showed that:

‒ 78% of students reported increased confidence in cross-cultural communication.
‒ 65% became more aware of cultural bias in their assumptions.

Teachers observed enhanced participation in group discussions, especially on sensitive cultural topics.

Challenges and Recommendations

Despite the benefits, several challenges hinder ICC development in ELT:

Lack of teacher training: Many instructors are trained in grammar-focused methods and may lack intercultural pedagogical tools.

Limited resources: Authentic multicultural content is often missing from national textbooks.

Assessment difficulties: Measuring ICC is complex and subjective.

Recommendations include:

Including ICC modules in teacher training programs.

Updating textbooks to reflect global perspectives.

Using rubrics to assess intercultural reflection, not just language accuracy.

Promoting international exchange programs and eTwinning projects.

To sum up, developing intercultural communicative competence is a vital goal for English language teaching in the modern academic landscape. When culture is meaningfully integrated into language instruction, students acquire not just the ability to express themselves in English, but also the sensitivity to do so in diverse cultural contexts. As global citizens, university students must be prepared to engage respectfully and effectively with people from different backgrounds, and ELT can be the foundation for that transformation.

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