

THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This article explores the vital interconnection between language and culture in the context of foreign language education. It emphasizes that language cannot be fully understood or effectively used without cultural awareness. The study highlights the importance of intercultural communication in fostering communicative competence, including not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural sensitivity. Drawing on research by Brown (2007), Lantolf (2006), and others, the article argues that cultural content enhances learners' abilities to use language meaningfully in real-life situations. The increasing impact of globalization, migration, and digital communication makes intercultural competence essential for modern language learners. The article concludes by calling for educational policies that integrate language and culture to prepare students for communication in a diverse world.

Key words:

Language and culture, foreign language learning, intercultural communication, communicative competence, cultural awareness, language education, globalization, intercultural competence.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola xorijiy til ta'limida til va madaniyat o'rtasidagi uzviy bog'liqlikni o'rganadi. Unda tilni to'liq tushunish va uni samarali qo'llash madaniy xabardorliksiz mumkin emasligi ta'kidlanadi. Tadqiqot kommunikativ kompetensiyani shakllantirishda madaniyatlararo muloqotning muhim rolini ochib beradi. Bu kompetensiya nafaqat lingvistik bilimlarni, balki madaniy sezgirlikni ham o'z ichiga oladi. Brown (2007), Lantolf (2006) kabi olimlarning ishlariga tayanilgan holda, maqolada madaniy mazmunning o'rganuvchilarning tildan real hayotda ma'no bilan foydalanish qobiliyatini oshirishdagi ahamiyati asoslab beriladi. Globallashuv, migratsiya va raqamli muloqotning kuchayib borayotgani zamonaviy til o'rganuvchilari uchun madaniyatlararo kompetensiyani muhim omilga aylantirmoqda. Maqola yakunida esa til va madaniyatni birgalikda o'qitishga qaratilgan ta'lim siyosatini ishlab chiqish zarurligi ta'kidlanadi, bu esa talabalarni turfa madaniyat vakillari bilan samarali muloqotga tayyorlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar

Til va madaniyat, xorijiy til o'rganish, madaniyatlararo muloqot, kommunikativ kompetensiya, madaniy xabardorlik, til ta'limi, globallashuv, madaniyatlararo kompetensiya.

Introduction

The intersection of language and culture has emerged as an important focus in the evolving field of foreign language education. Traditional instruction of foreign languages and cultures presented the two as separate subjects, whereas new approaches to language teaching and learning stress their interrelation. Not only can the two not be pulled apart without losing the meaning of either language or culture, as Brown (2007) rightly noted. This realization has fundamentally transformed how we teach and learn foreign languages today.

The discipline of intercultural communication is dedicated to teaching students the traditions, customs, and body language of other nations. This cultural content enhances the learning of speaking, listening, reading, and writing the language while supporting traditional language learning as well. It also encourages understanding, empathy, and the ability to adjust language to the environment. Language skills may still be underdeveloped and unproductive in everyday exchanges without the cultural background, as Lantolf (2006) has demonstrated.

A number of important causes have made the demand for intercultural competency increasingly pressing. One is the worldwide movement in language instruction toward communicative competence, which encompasses not only vocabulary and grammar but also the capacity to use language effectively in everyday contexts. Early language teaching techniques paid little attention to sociocultural context, which limited students' ability to handle complicated social interactions in a second language, according to scholars like Pemberton (2024) and Tran & Duong (2018). More recent study addresses this deficiency by arguing for a stronger focus on cultural literacy, which teaches students not just what to say but also how and when to say it based on the cultural context.

Discussion

The increasing occurrence of cross-cultural interactions—driven by globalization, migration, and digital communication—has underscored the need to incorporate culture into language education (Gulomova, 2020). With international trade, travel, and social media, learners today are more likely to connect with individuals from various cultural backgrounds than ever before. Consequently, language education should extend beyond traditional textbooks and grammar exercises. It must equip learners to communicate effectively and respectfully in multicultural environments. Intercultural communication focuses on providing learners with insights into the traditions, customs, and nonverbal cues of different cultures. This cultural knowledge enhances conventional language teaching and improves all four communication skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also fosters empathy, open-mindedness, and the ability to adjust language use based on context. As Lantolf (2006) pointed out, without cultural context, language skills can be superficial and ineffective in real-life situations.

Recent research from various sources supports the need to integrate culture into language learning. For instance, a recent article in ScienceDirect discusses the difficulties of teaching English in public colleges in Uzbekistan, particularly due to the absence of cultural context in state-approved textbooks. The study suggests incorporating cultural awareness into curriculum development to enhance intercultural communication results. Similarly, findings from CyberLeninka and Taylor & Francis Online indicate that teaching culture alongside language not only improves communication with native speakers but also helps students feel more confident in a connected world.

Conclusion

In summary, merging language and culture is not just a passing educational trend; it is essential. As the world becomes more interconnected, the ability to communicate across cultures is crucial. Language education that includes intercultural communication cultivates individuals who are more competent, confident, and culturally aware. For educators and policymakers, the objective should be more than just teaching a language; it should be about preparing students to use that language meaningfully and respectfully in a diverse world.

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