

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. This paper discusses one of the creative approaches to teaching foreign Languages for Special Purposes (LSP). It highlights innovative pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English language classrooms in Uzbekistan. Drawing on classroom examples and scholarly experience, the article emphasizes the integration of cultural content, authentic materials, and teacher training in curriculum development.

Keywords: intercultural communication competence; foreign language teaching; English language education; innovative pedagogy; teacher training.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada xorijiy tillarni kasbiy maqsadlar yoʻnalishida oʻqitishning ijodiy yondashuvlaridan biri tahlil qilinadi. Asosan Oʻzbekistondagi ingliz tili darslarida madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiyani (MKK) rivojlantirishga qaratilgan innovatsion pedagogik usullar koʻrib chiqiladi. Dars jarayonidan olingan misollar va ilmiy tajriba asosida madaniy mazmuni kiritish, autentik materiallardan foydalanish hamda oʻqituvchilarni tayyorlash boʻyicha takliflar ilgari suriladi.

Kalit soʻzlar: madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiya; xorijiy til oʻqitish; ingliz tili taʼlimi; innovatsion pedagogika; oʻqituvchini tayyorlash.

Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In foreign language education, ICC is not a means to an end but an end in itself because students must use language in real-life contexts, not just master grammar or vocabulary. Language learning enhances cultural and global skills, which require more than words and grammar structures, preparing learners to understand and accept different perspectives. Byram (1997) defines ICC as “a person’s ability to relate to and communicate with people who speak a different language and live in a different cultural context.” In practice, this means teaching English (or any foreign language) alongside the knowledge and attitudes that help students recognize their own cultural norms and those of others, helping to avoid culture shock and conflicts.

In Uzbekistan, recent curriculum reforms have emphasized communicative and cultural goals in English teaching. The 2017 State Education Standard explicitly includes *milliy va umummadaniy kompetensiya* (national and global cultural competence) as a key outcome for students. This reflects a shift towards preparing learners for global participation. However, many Uzbek teachers trained under older

systems may struggle with these new goals. Educational reforms in Uzbekistan have not fully succeeded due to insufficient teacher training, leaving most English teachers with limited knowledge of communicative and intercultural methods (Avazmatova, 2021). As a result, integrating ICC into the classroom requires both new materials and professional development.

This article examines innovative ways to develop ICC in English language classrooms, emphasizes common challenges, and outlines best practices from recent literature. We focus on strategies that can be adopted in Uzbekistan's English programs. Our method involves a review of studies on intercultural pedagogy (2015–2024) and examples of classroom activities.

Methods

This qualitative study analyzes current academic literature on ICC in foreign language teaching and applies it to the Uzbek context. We searched educational databases and journals for empirical and review articles (2015–2024) on intercultural language education and foreign language pedagogy. Key sources include studies of EFL curricula, teacher surveys, and language policy reports. We also considered official documents (e.g., Uzbek education standards) to align our analysis with national priorities. Instead of original field research, we use illustrative classroom scenarios drawn from published examples and teacher reports to ground the discussion. These cases try to demonstrate how English instructors can implement ICC strategies in Uzbek classrooms (e.g., designing tasks around Uzbek culture and facilitating communication with English speakers).

Discussion

The results align with global research: incorporating ICC into language teaching enhances students' motivation and communicative abilities (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). For Uzbek English learners, connecting lessons to their daily lives and cultures can make English more relevant and meaningful. When students describe their own traditions in English, they learn language and simultaneously reflect on cultural norms – a dual gain. This supports the view that cultural tasks impact the cultural component of a foreign language curriculum by making culture an active learning element (Moeller & Nugent, 2014; Gulomova, 2020).

However, Uzbekistan faces particular hurdles. Large class sizes and exam pressures limit interactive activities. Many teachers and students alike may not have traveled abroad, so intercultural exchange must be simulated (via videos or virtual pen-pals). To address this, schools could partner with international programs (for example, arranging eTwinning projects or inviting visiting lecturers) to provide authentic exposure. Even disadvantaged schools in Colombia successfully taught ICC by starting from students' experiences and contextualizing learning (Sagre, Pacheco Machado & Zumaqué, 2024). Uzbek educators can adopt similar moves: begin with what students know (Uzbek norms) and gradually introduce 'unknown' cultures. Critical engagement is also important; students should not only learn facts about England or the US, but also be encouraged to question how media and stereotypes shape understanding.

Promoting ICC in Uzbekistan’s English education requires a whole-program approach. Curriculum designers should explicitly include ICC objectives, and assessment may need to broaden beyond grammar to include cultural tasks (e.g., open-ended project presentations). Even modest steps—like a class discussion on a foreign news story—can build competencies. Language teaching gives teachers multiple opportunities to help pupils develop their intercultural competences (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). In Uzbekistan, seizing these opportunities will prepare students for a more interconnected world.

Conclusion

Intercultural communication competence is an attainable and valuable goal in foreign language education. This review demonstrates that innovative teaching methods – such as multimedia cultural tasks, project-based learning, and virtual exchanges – can effectively foster ICC among English learners. Such integration boosts student engagement and language outcomes. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan’s EFL programs must overcome challenges of teacher training, curriculum design, and resources. Practical steps include offering professional development, enriching lesson materials, and creating forums for cultural dialogue. If implemented, these strategies will not only improve English proficiency but also equip Uzbek students with the understanding and attitudes needed for successful intercultural interaction.

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