

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN MONOCULTURAL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. Intercultural competence has become an essential skill in today's globalized world. However, teaching this competence in monocultural classrooms presents various challenges. This article is devoted to considering the difficulties teachers face when trying to promote intercultural awareness in environments where cultural diversity is limited. It also discusses the importance of developing students' sensitivity to global issues and highlights some methods that can help overcome these obstacles.

Keywords: intercultural competence, monocultural classroom, cultural awareness, education, challenges.

Annotatsiya. Madaniyatlararo kompetentsiya bugungi globallashtirilgan dunyoda muhim mahoratga aylandi. Biroq, ushbu kompetentsiyani monokultural sinflarda o'qitish bir qancha muammolarni keltirib chiqaradi. Ushbu maqolada o'qituvchilar madaniy xilma-xillik cheklangan muhitda madaniyatlararo ongni targ'ib qilishda duch keladigan qiyinchiliklar haqida so'z boradi. Shuningdek, til o'rganuvchilarda global muammolarga nisbatan ijtimoiy mas'uliyat va sezgirlikni rivojlantirish zarurligini maqolada asoslanadi hamda ushbu muammolarni hal etishda duch kelinadigan to'siqlarni yengib o'tish yo'llari tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: madaniyatlararo kompetentsiya, monokultural sinf, madaniy ong, ta'limdagi muammolar.

In the 21st century, intercultural competence is one of the key skills required for successful communication across cultures. It involves understanding, respecting, and effectively interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. However, in many countries, classrooms remain mostly monocultural, meaning that students share similar ethnic, religious, or linguistic identities. In such settings, teaching intercultural competence becomes more complicated. In this article, the main challenges of teaching intercultural competence in monocultural classrooms and suggests possible solutions will be highlighted.

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to communicate and interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. It includes knowledge about other cultures, empathy, open-mindedness, and the ability to reflect on one's own cultural identity (Dziedzic & Zawadzka, 2022). As global

communication becomes more common, the importance of teaching these skills increases, even in classrooms that are not culturally diverse.

Monocultural Classrooms as a difficult setting

In monocultural classrooms, students often grow up in similar environments with shared traditions, values, and worldviews. This lack of exposure to diversity creates several challenges:

Limited Motivation: Students may not understand the importance of intercultural competence if they have not had personal experiences with other cultures (Czerwińska, 2022).

Stereotypes and Biases: Without real-life contact, learners may form stereotypes based on media. (Şahin, 2015).

Lack of Materials: Teachers may not have access to culturally diverse resources or suitable training to incorporate intercultural content (Tillaeva & Ibragimova, 2023).

Avoidance of Sensitive Topics: Topics like religion, gender roles, or global conflicts may be considered too sensitive, so educators might avoid discussing them (Dziedzic & Zawadzka, 2022).

Many language teachers report that they feel unprepared to teach intercultural skills. According to Şahin (2015), teachers often focus on grammar and vocabulary because they are unsure how to integrate cultural education into their lessons. Additionally, a lack of institutional support and limited training further complicate their efforts. Teachers also face pressure from school administrations and parents who may prioritize academic outcomes over global competencies.

Possible Solutions

Even in monocultural settings, teachers can promote intercultural understanding through creative methods:

- *Global Content:* Using stories, films, and news from different countries can introduce cultural diversity in the classroom (Tillaeva & Ibragimova, 2023).
- *Virtual Exchange:* Technology allows students to connect with peers from other countries, helping them gain direct experience of other cultures.
- *Critical Thinking:* Encouraging students to question stereotypes and reflect on global issues helps develop empathy and awareness.
- *Focus on Local Diversity:* Even in seemingly monocultural societies, regional, generational, and socio-economic differences can serve as starting points for cultural comparison (Czerwińska, 2022).

In conclusion, teaching intercultural competence in monocultural classrooms is challenging but necessary. Students need to be prepared to live and work in a globalized world, and this includes understanding and respecting cultural differences. Although teachers face difficulties such as limited exposure, resources, and training, with the right support and methods, intercultural competence can still be effectively developed.

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