

## DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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**Abstract.** This article explores the importance of developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in foreign language learning. It focuses on the most crucial aspects of intercultural communicative competence, its use in the globalized world, and practical means of integrating cultural learning into language teaching to enhance learners' intercultural competence and authentic communication skills. The study emphasizes the teacher's role in guiding the students' cultural awareness.

**Keywords:** intercultural communication, foreign language, competence, teacher's role, cultural difference, communicative approach

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada chet tillarni o'qitishda madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiyani (MKK) shakllantirishning ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Unda madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiyasining asosiy tarkibiy qismlari, globallashtirish sharoitidagi dolzarbligi hamda o'quvchilarning madaniy sezuvchanligini va haqiqiy muloqot ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga xizmat qiluvchi pedagogik usullar ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqotda o'qituvchining madaniy ongli til o'rgatishdagi muhim roli alohida ta'kidlanib o'tiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** madaniyatlararo muloqot, chet tili, kompetensiya, o'qituvchi roli, madaniy farq, og'zaki yondashuv

### **Introduction**

In previous years, the principal objective of foreign language teaching (FLT) was predominantly centered on linguistic mastery—especially the ability to read and analyze literary texts written in the target language. The emphasis lay heavily on grammar, vocabulary, and text interpretation, with the ultimate goal of achieving learners' access to the so-called “great works” of literature. It was not until the 1980s that scholars and educators began to critically reassess the role of culture in language education. This renewed approach to language teaching led to extensive research in to the complexities of culture and unchanging role in achieving effective communication skills (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Kramersch, 1998). These studies emphasized that real communicative success in teaching foreign language more than just mastering grammatical proficiency and fluency, but also on a deep and sensitive understanding of the target culture.

To develop ICC effectively, language teachers can employ a variety of pedagogical methods that integrate cultural acquisition into the FLT curriculum. The following are some of the methods that can be used in class:

- Immersion in culture by using authentic material is one of the best methods of exposing students to the target culture. Authentic materials such as newspapers, films, songs, advertisements, and social media messages are extracted from the cultural context of the target language. These resources give learners actual information on the customs, values, and communication patterns that are characteristic of the culture being learned (Lustig & Koester, 2010).
- Task-Based Learning (TBL): Task-based learning engages learners in tasks that require the practice of intercultural communication. Through the creation of tasks that imitate intercultural communication scenarios (e.g., interviewing individuals or debating on cultural matters), instructors can empower learners to implement intercultural communicative competence in real life (Byram & Morgan, 1994).
- Intercultural Exchanges and Collaborations: Establishing collaborations with educational institutions from other nations or arranging virtual contact between students from various cultural backgrounds can be an exceedingly productive approach. These exchanges give students a first-hand overview of the lives of people and offer a window for intercultural communication and educational exchange (Byram, 1997).
- Role play and simulation are chances to allow students to participate in cultural scenarios and utilize language within contextualized settings. Educators can design activities in which students assume roles typical of the target culture, e.g., traveling to a foreign location or attending a cultural festival, thus allowing for the development of their cultural competence in a controlled setting (Lustig & Koester, 2010).

### **Discussion**

In response to this growing recognition, Michael Byram introduced the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in 1997, which extended beyond the limits of traditional communicative competence. ICC emphasizes not only linguistic proficiency but also the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to engage appropriately and effectively across cultures. Consequently, today language teachers are increasingly expected to prepare learners for real-life intercultural encounters by integrating cultural content and authentic practices into the teaching process. In this article the components of ICC, its relevance in the FLT context, and the pedagogical strategies that can be employed to foster intercultural competence in the language classroom will be explored (Gulomova, 2020).

Inter-culture Communicative Competence (ICC) consists of several interrelated elements instead of language skills per se. These elements allow individuals to communicate effectively across cultures. Michael Byram's model specifies five primary dimensions of ICC:

1. Attitudes: One of the fundamental elements of Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) is the cultivation of positive attitudes

towards diverse cultures. They encompass an inquiry disposition, openness, and a readiness to interact with individuals of various cultural backgrounds. Educators need to cultivate these tendencies in their students and motivate them to approach cultural differences with respect and an open mind (Kramsch, 1998).

Knowledge entails not only an understanding of the target culture but also that of the learner's own culture. It consists of being attuned to social practices, values, norms, historical contexts, and social behaviors. This component emphasizes learners' need to have a sensibility of those cultural dimensions which have an influence upon language use (Byram, 1997).

2. Interpreting and Relating: This dimension focuses on being capable of interpreting and relating experiences between various cultural worlds. It calls for learners to identify and evaluate cultural meanings, keeping in perspective the specific situation in which such meanings are created (Kramsch, 1998). By doing this, they are capable of facilitating crossing of cultural borders as well as communications across cultures in varying settings (Byram & Morgan, 1994).

3. Discovery and Interaction Competences: Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) entails the ability to interact in a significant way with those who are competent in the target language. These involve the use of communication strategies to manage cultural misunderstandings and to fit into new cultures (Lustig & Koester, 2010). Through these competences, students enhance their ability to handle intercultural interactions in real life (Byram, 1997).

4. Critical Cultural Awareness: Critical capacity to analyze one's own personal cultural assumptions, and to analyze cultural practices from an informed and reflective standpoint, is necessary. It enables learners to understand the dynamic nature of culture and motivates them to carry out a critical examination of their own cultural norms in relation to the target culture (Lustig & Koester, 2010). It aids students in challenging cultural stereotypes and developing a more complex conception of their own and other cultures (Kramsch, 1998).

The integration of ICC into FLT is not only imperative for several reasons, but it is also a response to the new world order and the needs of modern language learners. With the global village being more internationally integrated, cross-cultural communication is not a luxury but a necessity. The following are some compelling reasons why ICC is an essential component in FLT:

Multiculturalism and Globalization: In globalization, students are coming into contact with people of different cultures increasingly. Instruction of ICC enables students to manage multicultural environments inside and outside classrooms. It qualifies them to interact with target language speakers in a culturally apt and contextualized fashion (Sultanova D., 2025).

**Communicative Competence:** Conventional FLT has primarily focused on grammar proficiency and fluency as being the key elements. Yet, in actual everyday communicative environments, cultural competence becomes just as vital. ICC guarantees learners are not only provided with language proficiency but also with the capacity to apply the language in culturally suitable manners (Kramsch, 1998).

**Promoting Tolerance and Mutual Respect:** By infusing language learning with cultural education, teachers promote tolerance and mutual respect among students from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

### **Conclusion**

The inclusion of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in foreign language education is imperative in the contemporary world where globalization has become a reality. Unlike conventional language instruction which laid great stress on grammatical accuracy, newer approaches acknowledge the significance of cultural awareness, critical thinking, and competent intercultural communication. ICC includes not only linguistic ability but also attitudes, knowledge, and abilities through which learners can interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultures. With more globalization that characterizes how we interact, incorporating ICC in language teaching prepares students to be flexible and culture-sensitive to equip them for real-life communication encounters. At the end of it all, facilitating both linguistic and intercultural competence implies ensuring the learner is not just competent in a language but is capable of having respectful, well-informed interactions across cultures.

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