

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A GOAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL CONTEXTS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. Cross-cultural competence plays much more pivotal role in today's globalized and interconnected world. The article delves into the reasons why cross-cultural competence is one of the most important goals of teaching foreign languages. Moreover, effectiveness of this competence on communicating in any part of the world is also discussed in this paper.

Key words: communicative competence, teaching, important, intercultural, ability, diverse

INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural competence, also known as intercultural competence, is the ability to effectively interact with people from different countries with diverse culture and traditions. Nobody denies that globalization is taking place around the world: different businesses are being run internationally, people are traveling where they want, online platforms are connecting people globally. So, nowadays, intercultural competence has become an invaluable asset not only for people traveling or running their own business, but also those who are learning a foreign language. It is because it fosters mutual respect, enables collaboration, enhances adaptability, cultural understanding as well as personal growth, all of which are of great significance in 21st century. This research paper supports the integration of cross-cultural competence into educational practices, emphasizing it as essential for preparing students for the opportunities along with the challenges of globally interconnected era. Several intercultural exchange programs, the experiential learning opportunities and inclusive curricula that reflect diversity of multifaceted community make students competent enough to contribute to the society and engage effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds [1].

MAIN PART

Cultural awareness

One complex aspect of cross-cultural competency is cultural awareness, which calls for a thorough comprehension of all of its nuances. The complex process of recognizing and understanding one's own innate cultural prejudices and presumptions while also cultivating an understanding of the values, beliefs, and customs that support other cultures is this crucial aspect. In order to fully understand how their cultural identities intricately form and impact their perceptions, behaviours, and interactions in a diverse and multicultural society, it encourages students to set out on a path of self-reflection.

To embark on the path of cultural awareness, students must engage in a profound exploration of their own cultural backgrounds. This entails examining their upbringing, societal influences, and the cultural paradigms that have shaped their worldviews. By scrutinizing these aspects, students can discern the lenses through which they perceive the world and recognize the potential biases and assumptions that might color their interactions with individuals from different cultural backgrounds [2]. Concurrently, cultural sensitivity invites pupils to set out on an adventure of inquiry and learning about the diverse fabric of various cultures. Developing an empathetic viewpoint that aims to comprehend the viewpoints and experiences of people from those cultures is just as important as learning about diverse cultural traditions. It challenges students to develop a courteous and open-minded mindset, encouraging sincere cross-cultural comprehension and peaceful relationships with others from all backgrounds. Essentially, cultural awareness is a fundamental component of cross-cultural competency development, enabling students to negotiate the intricacies of our globalised world with tact, deference, and a deep understanding of the diversity that enhances our common human experience.

Empathy

A key element of cross-cultural competency is empathy, which goes beyond simple comprehension to include a deep bond with people from different origins. It stands for the ability to truly understand and experience other people's thoughts, feelings, and viewpoints, irrespective of their cultural or ethnic background. Through exposure to many viewpoints, introspection, and hands-on learning, empathy may be actively developed and improved. It is not only a passive quality. Institutions can enable students to become more culturally aware, receptive, and equipped to handle the challenges of our heterogeneous society by highlighting the value of empathy in educational environments. By doing this, students are better equipped to support inclusivity, make constructive contributions to global discussions, and strive towards creating a more peaceful and cohesive global community.

Adaptability and flexibility

The ability to flexibly modify one's behaviours, attitudes, and expectations when faced with cultural differences is known as adaptability, and it is a key element of cross-cultural competency. It is a flexible ability that gives students the ability to deal with new and culturally varied circumstances with a deep feeling of openness and a sincere desire to learn. More than simply having the ability to adjust, adaptability in the context of cross-cultural competency refers to the willingness to actively engage with cultural variety and welcome new experiences. This trait empowers pupils to step beyond of their comfort zones, face the unknown, and appreciate the diversity of viewpoints [1].

The use of cross-cultural competence in foreign language teaching

Schools are at the forefront of helping kids develop cross-cultural competency, which is an essential ability in the globalised world of today. Schools and universities can use a number of efficient tactics to accomplish this. Incorporating curricula that cover global histories, languages, and customs enhances students' comprehension and admiration of various cultures. Encouraging foreign partnerships and exchange programs provides hands-on opportunities for cross-cultural engagement, strengthening communication and empathy abilities. Students' competencies can be further developed by leading workshops and seminars on intercultural communication, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity training. Furthermore, promoting involvement in ethnic groups

and events gives students practical chances to interact with others from different cultural backgrounds, strengthening their feeling of connection and global community. By using these all-encompassing strategies, educational establishments can greatly enhance the competency of students.

Participating in practical experiences, including study abroad options, cultural immersion programs, and service-learning initiatives, may be a potent catalyst for introducing students to a variety of cultures, helping them to overcome their stereotypes, and fostering deep personal development. Students' perspectives are broadened and they are given the cross-cultural competency they need to prosper in our increasingly linked world thanks in large part to these experiential learning programs. Students enrolled in cultural immersion programs are immersed in the rituals, traditions, and everyday life of a particular culture [3]. Students acquire firsthand knowledge of the values, beliefs, and customs of the host community through direct interaction. Their preconceptions are challenged by this entire experience, which makes them rethink any biases and assumptions they may have. By giving students the opportunity to live and study abroad, study abroad programs elevate this experience to a new level. Students handle the complexities of everyday life in a new cultural milieu in addition to receiving academic enrichment. They acquire linguistic proficiency, adjust to various social mores, and cultivate a profound understanding of cultural variety. Community service and experience learning are combined in service-learning initiatives. Students actively participate in their communities, using their knowledge and abilities to solve problems in the real world. Apart from that, to ensure rewarding student exchange programs, institutions can partner with diverse colleges, universities, and organizations worldwide. These programs immerse students in foreign cultures through activities like studying abroad, living with host families, and collaborating with local peers. Such experiences foster intercultural competency, holistic growth, and a deeper understanding of daily life, extending learning far beyond the classroom. One of the most important ways to help children develop cultural sensitivity and awareness, furthermore, is to incorporate a variety of viewpoints and cultural content into the curriculum. This method actively involves students in a diverse range of international experiences that extend their perspectives and enhance their comprehension of the globe, going beyond simply recognizing cultural differences[4]. Students are exposed to a wide range of cultural lenses through which to view the world when varied perspectives are infused into curricula. They come to many cultures, traditions, and belief systems, which challenges their assumptions and promotes an open-minded perspective. Students gain an appreciation for the diversity of human experiences that transcend cultural boundaries and the complexity of human cultures as a result of this exposure [5].

CONCLUSION

All the things considered, because it bridges the gap between linguistic skill and cultural comprehension, cross-cultural competence is crucial in foreign language instruction. Teachers equip students to handle a variety of social situations with tact and assurance by incorporating cultural insights into language training. This all-encompassing method promotes respect for one another, improves communication abilities, and equips students to participate actively in a globalised society. In addition to enhancing language instruction, putting a strong emphasis on cross-cultural competency develops internationally conscious, flexible people who can succeed in multicultural settings.

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