

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC INTUITION AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING IN DEVELOPING COMPENSATORY COMPETENCE OF LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Annotation: This article examines how cultural-linguistic intuition and reflective learning develop compensatory competence in first-year EFL students. Intuition is presented not only as grammatical sensitivity but also as an emotionally and culturally grounded ability, working alongside reflection to help learners manage linguistic gaps. Drawing from the Uzbek educational context, the article underscores challenges such as limited language exposure and proposes strategies like peer collaboration, context-rich input, and visual support. It integrates insights from key scholars to advocate for interdisciplinary, strategic approaches to language learning.

Key words: cultural-linguistic intuition, compensatory competence, reflective learning, cognitive inference, language strategies, linguistic intuition, autonomous learning.

The ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language is a central aim for EFL learners, especially in linguistic universities. First-year students often struggle with fluency, accuracy, and intercultural adaptability, facing limitations in vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic understanding. These gaps necessitate the use of compensatory competence – the ability to strategically manage linguistic deficiencies. Recent studies highlight the growing importance of cultural-linguistic intuition (CLI), a complex phenomenon encompassing not only subconscious grammatical recognition but also intercultural sensitivity, emotional awareness, and socio-pragmatic understanding [10]. This intuition is shaped by both spontaneous language exposure and structured learning contexts and plays a critical role in the student's capacity to navigate unfamiliar communicative terrain.

Cultural-linguistic intuition is a holistic cognitive-emotional capacity enabling learners to make contextually appropriate linguistic choices, even in the absence of full lexical or grammatical knowledge. It aligns with Chibukhashvili's interpretation of CLI as the immediate emotional response to conformity with or deviation from linguistic and cultural norms [3]. CLI consists of interwoven cognitive, emotional, motivational, and technological dimensions. These include linguistic thinking, empathy, emotional intelligence, intercultural motivation, and communicative creativity. As argued by Bogatikova [2] and confirmed by Sarapulova and Nogovitsyna [10], CLI is "non-conscious speech and non-verbal behavior appropriate to a specific situation, conditioned by national-cultural and ethnopsychological characteristics." In this context, CLI serves as an internal compass, guiding linguistic choices in real-time.

Reflection complements CLI by enabling learners to consciously monitor, analyze, and refine their communicative output. Drawing on Kolb's experiential learning theory [6], reflection allows for the transformation of implicit knowledge into explicit understanding through cycles of experience, reflection, and conceptualization. Reflection is also crucial for the development of autonomy and intercultural competence, as it encourages learners to evaluate their communicative behaviors in light of cultural expectations and to adapt accordingly. Sarapulova and Nogovitsyna emphasize that the combination of intuitive insight and reflective adjustment fosters communicative flexibility and resilience [10].

Intuition and reflection represent dual yet complementary levels of cognitive inference. Intuitive inference is fast, holistic, and emotionally charged, enabling learners to react quickly based on prior linguistic experience. Reflective inference, on the other hand, is deliberate, analytical, and conceptually structured. It allows learners to critically evaluate their language use, check the appropriateness of intuitive responses, and develop strategies for future improvement. This dual mechanism enhances the learner's ability to maintain communication even under linguistic constraints – a capacity defined as compensatory competence [12].

Compensatory competence refers to the ability to overcome linguistic limitations using strategic techniques such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, approximation, switching to the mother tongue, or using non-verbal cues. First-year students, often limited in vocabulary and grammatical range, rely heavily on such strategies to communicate effectively. The development of CLI strengthens this competence by providing students with an intuitive grasp of acceptable alternative expressions, while reflection ensures these strategies are continually refined and expanded [4, 8].

This approach proves to be particularly important for school learners in Uzbekistan who face linguistic challenges due to limited exposure to English outside the classroom, scarce access to quality English instruction, and reduced opportunities for authentic communication [5]. Compensatory competence, closely linked to strategic competence, enables learners to compensate for gaps in grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation by utilizing strategies such as guessing from context, using non-verbal cues, circumlocution, and code-switching [7, 9]. According to Makhkamova [7], these belong to cognitive and communicative strategy domains that enhance learners' problem-solving and adaptive communication skills.

Instructional techniques such as providing context-rich materials, using visual aids and authentic texts, encouraging peer interaction, and facilitating feedback-centered activities are especially effective for Uzbek learners. In particular, the use of culturally familiar materials bridges students' prior knowledge with English language input, enhancing comprehension and engagement [11]. Teachers should also incorporate diagnostic tools to identify learners' needs and personalize support to foster development of compensatory competence more effectively.

To cultivate CLI and compensatory competence, educators are encouraged to apply a combination of emotional engagement, cultural immersion, interdisciplinary learning, and reflective practices. These include motivational, emotional, cognitive,

and technological components supported by multimedia cases and task-based environments. Sample case studies such as “Mood Loto,” “Unexpected Meeting,” and “Cultural Mosaic” engage learners at emotional and cognitive levels, fostering empathetic communication and intuitive language use in rich communicative scenarios.

In practice, effective methods for promoting CLI include exposure to authentic materials, storytelling, role-plays, cultural simulations, and digital tools for language immersion. Activities such as guided self-reflection, peer feedback, and think-aloud protocols help transform spontaneous intuition into strategic awareness. Moreover, the integration of multimedia programs such as “World Without Borders” creates a dynamic digital environment where students can independently explore intercultural communication patterns while receiving formative feedback.

From a pedagogical perspective, educators should prioritize creating emotionally meaningful, culturally authentic, and reflectively rich learning experiences. Emphasis should be placed on the development of communicative creativity, intercultural sensitivity, and the ability to adapt language to varied sociocultural contexts. Teachers are encouraged to adopt process-oriented approaches that emphasize multiple drafts, continuous reflection, and task-based learning to ensure the integration of intuitive and reflective processes.

In conclusion, the enhancement of compensatory competence in EFL learners is most effective when grounded in both cultural-linguistic intuition and reflective practice. These processes enable students to engage with language not only as a system of rules but as a dynamic medium for intercultural interaction. By equipping learners with intuitive, reflective, and strategic tools, educators can support their transition into confident, adaptive, and culturally competent communicators.

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