

## APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the article is to provide orientation, clarification of basic concepts, encouragement to put these into practice, and meaningful practical support for the development of intercultural competence in the classroom. Intercultural competence can be developed in different ways through different types of education. Experience, comparison, analysis, reflection, the usage of different approaches, exercises, classroom activities, role-plays, comparative translation materials, students' performances, foreign films and co-operative action, as briefly outlined below in this article.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Culture Barrier, Intercultural Competence, Communication, Comparative, Prediction.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Culture plays a significant and integrative part in learning and teaching English as a foreign language. Indeed, several scientific researchers have found that culture and language are inseparable and its relationship to the learning or teaching language process is interrelated. Even though foreign language learners might be successfully bilingual, they need to be bicultural because foreign language learning has consisted of linguistic competence, communicative competence, and cultural awareness. Concerning to teaching culture in EFL classes in an explicit or implicit way, teachers use different approaches, methods and techniques to help learners to overcome the difficulties in language learning as well as culture learning. Intercultural competence is the ability to interact and communicate with people from different cultures in a respectful and effective way. It is the bridge between diversity and inclusion and is key to creating welcoming learning environments.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

As we know, cultural competence has three important components: active listening, demonstrating empathy, and effective engagement. Foreign language teachers deal with teaching culture in different ways: through culture and civilization courses or through classroom

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activities. Learning activities can be undertaken individually, in syndicate groups, or in plenary sessions. Activities can be planned during the session or program or as homework assignments outside training time. The methodologies used in the program preferably vary; on the one hand, they are based on the various learning styles of participants, while on the other hand they are related to the intended outcomes of a certain activity. The program activities should be balanced in the level of challenge. Participants usually like to interact with each other but not all the time. In our programs, we also use the discussion on learning outcomes to explain why certain methodologies are chosen. Variation in methodology will keep participants and facilitators engaged and expand their attention span. [3,p36]

We, as foreign language teachers, should help our students to understand the influence of their own cultural values, attitudes and beliefs and show interest in learning about other cultures and teach them interact positively with people from diverse backgrounds. Over time, through communication and interaction, members of a culture develop history, patterns, customs and rituals that distinguish them from other groups and influence how they interact with each other as well as outsiders. While creating this set of shared experiences, group members develop specific ways of communicating verbally and nonverbally (e.g. discourse norms, cultural scripts). Consequently, 'Culture is communication and communication is culture' [4, p 204]

Language learning provides students with a greater range of communicative ability and another perspective for viewing the world. Students are taught knowledge of the target culture, including variation in verbal and nonverbal communication, cultural values, beliefs and attitudes, cultural practices In order to avoid stereotyping and so on. We experience intercultural contact with our eyes and ears, begin to understand it. Films can promote awareness, curiosity and interest in other cultures and respect for diversity. They enable students to develop empathy with the protagonist from whose point of view the story is told.

As teachers of general or academic English, we employ a range of media and explore a variety of topics in the process of providing stimulus and practice for our students. Yet few resources have the easy and universal appeal of films. It is perhaps the most interesting and accessible medium we can use with students to stimulate real discussion and debate in the classroom. What's more, it provides near-authentic listening material, and generates a wide range of associated reading material, from the irresistibly scan able BFI and IMDB websites, through to newspaper articles and reviews, and academic journal or book treatises. Exploration of the culture and society of a linguistic community has always been an implicit part of language teaching, and film offers an abundance of interesting perspectives on people, periods and places. Furthermore, film dialogue is unlike most of the somewhat idealized discourse provided in course books, in that it tends to reflect the whole gamut of social and regional variation in the language. [6, p1]

Defining culture as a systematic way of thinking and behaving within a group requires that we think of culture beyond any simple groupings of nationality, ethnicity, or gender. Contemporary posters and pictures of actors, singers, films, writers, books, and famous places should be put on the walls in the classrooms. Teachers' aim is to attract the learners' attention, evoke comments and maintain the cultural atmosphere

## **ROLE PLAY**

Activities to raise awareness of different perspectives will develop learners' skills of observation, interpretation and decentering as well as their openness and non-judgmental thinking. These activities may take the form of a verbal description or visual recording of an event, action or phenomenon that can be supplemented by or juxtaposed to descriptions or visuals of the same event, behavior or phenomenon provided by others who see these from different perspectives. For example, it is interesting to read, compare, analyze, discuss and perhaps even act out three different accounts of the same day's events in a school or summer camp written in a diary form by three children coming from very different backgrounds with different values, norms, skills and knowledge and perhaps with different languages. [1,47]

Students have to gain enough knowledge in the sphere of intercultural competence, which are intercultural knowledge, intercultural skill, intercultural attitude and intercultural awareness while learning a foreign language. Educational games also rely on shared meanings and norms, which can often be sites of conflict among educational stakeholders. Current research on educational games suggests that a high degree of alignment should support learning.

Using role-play to teach cultural competence gives learners the opportunity to learn the material from a different perspective. When learners engage in role-play, they take on a new persona. This provides students with deeper insights into the responsibilities of members of the healthcare team, such as the role of the nurse, dietitian, or patient. While every role on the healthcare team is important, the patient's role is at the center. Therefore, when using role play to teach cultural competence, students should assume the role of a patient. In so doing, it cultivates the student's interpersonal abilities.

Participating in role-play allows learners to practice and develop skills with the help of techniques that is useful in encountering patients in real life situations. While learning any kind of information about the chosen material, the learners get more exposure through these constructed tasks and activities; it increases their understanding of other cultures step by step. This, in turn, translates into increased respect for other cultures. Respect of others is a critical component of cultural competence that must be cultivated in school and necessary for success in clinical practice today.

To successfully implement role-play exercises, instructors must deliberately bring to light various issues that students may face in practice. Specific items that instructors should consider when developing role playing activities include: [8.p32]

- ✓ Objectives;
- ✓ Time frame for the activity;
- ✓ Role specifications;
- ✓ Monitoring the role play process;
- ✓ Relating role play to theory;
- ✓ Delineating criteria to grade performance;
- ✓ Indicating the role of observers;
- ✓ Facilitating constructive analysis.

When designing a role-play exercise, instructors must consider the type of role-play and clinical content to include. There are five types of role play, all of which can be employed depending on the anticipated outcomes. The first type of role play is “Role-play as a creativity technique.” This type of role play is designed to elicit ideas from the role play experience. Learners must “body storm,” meaning they take part in a staged situation, which allows them to empathize with the character in the given situation. The actors transform into the characters which offers insight into the specific role. [7, p54]

One of the fruitful and important activities is called Prediction. *Prediction* engages students actively by predicting a half told story, guessing the contents of an article or a book based on the headlines, predicting the contents of a topic based on a few pieces of information. This should evoke the students’ curiosity and interest to talk, no matter if their predictions are correct or not. The topic of adoption can be discussed in deeper ways and different cultural views can be compared. This activity is more suitable for advanced mature learners.

**Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs sayings and stylistic devices:** As the sub branch is closely connected with translation, it looks upon the latter problems. Being a translation of the target language, it mainly depends on the cultural background knowledge, so that the learners have to know many aspects of both the target and the source language. This knowledge includes many aspects, such as art, history, geography, philosophy, science ...etc. All languages contain different principles and values, and they are allowable in some cultures and in others are forbidden. Each society has its own “idioms” or “proverbs”. For example, if someone said: “That test was a piece of cake”, (a piece of cake refers to that test was easy), “You will do fine on your presentation. Go break a leg out there”, (break a leg is used for wishing someone to do well/ good luck), “Speak of the devil Jenny! We were just talking about your new car”, (speak of the devil is to indicate when you see someone or something happens unexpectedly while talking about them). Therefore, the success in translating these sentences does not only depend on understanding its words or structures, but it also determines the cultural background of the target language. [9,p30]

Translating proverbs word-by-word is not an appropriate means to express the essence of proverbs in other languages because of cultures that occur in their contents in the target language. The comparison method is one of the most used techniques for teaching cultures. This technique concentrates on discussing the differences between the native and target cultures. Cultures should be compared, because cultures never remain static, they are constantly changing and different generations interpret things differently. In comparing with Uzbek, we can find some definitions of these proverbs. As foreign language teachers, we try to give the translation of proverbs, idioms paying attention to national mentalities of both languages. “That test was a piece of cake”

“You will do fine on your presentation. Go break a leg out there”

Every linguistic person, a foreign language teacher is also a cultural person. Linguistic characters are therefore capable of performing the function of the “language” of culture. The cultural barrier is related not only to differences in speech norms, but also to the different meanings introduced by the communicators. By comparing two languages, we can also teach our language learners not only the language but also the culture.

As it is seen from the example, in compared languages, the quotation is expressed by the name of the “dog” and in Uzbek; it is given by the name of human being.. What to say, I wonder..., - the captain was thinking deeply. There is a proverb in our nation “All is over bar (but) the shouting.”

The translation of this proverb in Uzbek and English is very close. In both languages, birds are used. However, in Russian equivalence translation- an animal is used.

“But you fancy, ladies and gentlemen,” Ferdyschenko cried with sudden inspiration, only think with what eyes we shall look at one another tomorrow, for instance, after we have told our tales!” “Nothing venture, nothing has” Nastasia Philippovna observed derisively.

The way proverb reveals culture diversity can be connected with the patterns of value dimension, which conveys the information of a culture's deep meaning. Working and comparing proverb in classes have a number of beneficial outcomes. Though the language used in proverbs is often quite simple, the correct use of these phrases requires critical thinking and cultural awareness. Focusing on proverbs offers an authentic and engaging context for student discussion. Students will develop the ability to use figurative language communicatively and will build awareness of the cultural information that is hidden in common sayings. If you have a diverse and multicultural class, students will be exposed to proverbs from other cultures and will have the chance to identify similarities and differences within their communities. It is one of the successful activities comparing proverbs. Proverbs help students develop both the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary for successful communication and connection across lines of difference.

The next activity, which we often work with our students, is translation. Translation equivalence norms require as nearly as possible a common sense of the source, target text and culture. When the sense in the target text is transgressed, equivalence norms are completely broken, and the translation is considered unsatisfactory. If a translation is made at a low level of equivalence, the norms are relatively broken, and the translation is regarded as acceptable. The translator should be able to choose words that pass the concepts of the phrase correctly and properly.

The use of hyperbole can be seen in the above lines in the meeting of China and Africa, the jumping of the river over the mountain, the singing of salmon in the street, and the ocean being folded and hung up to dry are exaggerations, not possible in real life.

In Uzbek translation, we tried to give some expressions, which are close to Uzbek people, Uzbek national colourings instead of using “till China and Africa meet” and “the salmon sing in the street”. In both languages, we can also notice the usage of exaggerations by giving national colourings and devoting the readers to appreciate the sense of love by the poet.

Comparing three types of translation, we found out totally three different cultures, different phrases, explanations and customs. However, meaning is very close. We worked not only with comparative translation but also with different cultures.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Developing intercultural competence through education is a powerful tool for achieving intercultural understanding, appreciation and respect. It can help people to develop the competence, which they need for engaging in meaningful intercultural dialogue and for living in harmony with those who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from themselves.

The EFL teacher must implement the intercultural approach in a diplomatic, tactful, skillful, and conscious way. Systematic intercultural training is a precondition for educating a new generation of young people who will not only tolerate, but also understand, accept, and respect people from different world cultures, will communicate with them successfully, and will learn through communication.

The successful development of intercultural competence relies on education and training professionals, religious, spiritual and community leaders, parents and of course foreign language learners themselves.

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