DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Olimova Gulchehra Mannon qizi
4th year student of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract: This article explores the development of intercultural communicative competence through English language learning in high schools. It examines how language instruction can enhance students' cultural awareness, communication skills, and ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds. Particular attention is given to authentic materials, classroom discussions, role-playing activities, and intercultural projects. Drawing on established research in intercultural education, the article highlights the importance of integrating cultural knowledge with linguistic proficiency. It also provides practical examples of classroom strategies that promote respectful and effective intercultural communication.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence, English language teaching, cultural awareness, high school education.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, English language education plays an important role in preparing students for communication across cultural boundaries. Learning English involves not only acquiring grammatical structures and vocabulary but also understanding how cultural values, traditions, and social expectations influence communication. Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) refers to the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence involves knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpretation and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. These components are particularly relevant to high school students, who are developing their social identities and communication abilities. Therefore, English language instruction should provide opportunities for students to explore cultural differences, challenge stereotypes, and develop respectful attitudes toward diverse communities.

The role of English language education in intercultural development

English functions as an international language used by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, successful communication requires more than grammatical accuracy; learners must also recognize differences in communication styles, politeness conventions, and

social behavior. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes the relationship between language and culture, suggesting that language learning involves understanding cultural meanings and social contexts. Integrating cultural content into English lessons enables students to develop linguistic proficiency alongside intercultural awareness.

For example, students can compare different ways of expressing politeness:

"Give me your book".

"Could you please lend me your book?"

Both sentences communicate a request, but the second generally expresses greater politeness. Teachers can use such examples to discuss how the appropriateness of expressions depends on context, relationships, and cultural expectations rather than assuming that all members of a culture communicate identically.

Innovative strategies for developing intercultural competence

One effective approach involves using authentic materials, including short videos, interviews, articles, and literary texts that represent diverse cultural perspectives. Such materials introduce students to different lifestyles, traditions, and communication practices. For example, students may read short texts about Navruz in Uzbekistan and Thanksgiving in the United States. They can then discuss similarities and differences between the celebrations while exploring their historical and cultural significance. Another useful strategy is role-playing, which allows learners to practice communication in intercultural situations. Students can simulate conversations between international classmates, tourists, or participants in educational exchange programs.

Example:

Student A: "In my country, we usually greet older people with particular respect. How do people greet each other in your culture?"

Student B: "Greetings depend on the situation. In formal settings, people often shake hands, while friends may greet each other more casually".

This activity encourages students to ask questions, exchange cultural information, and avoid making assumptions about unfamiliar customs. Deardorff (2006) identifies attitudes such as respect, openness, and curiosity as important elements of intercultural competence. These qualities can be encouraged through collaborative projects and classroom discussions.

Challenges and pedagogical recommendations

Despite its educational benefits, developing intercultural communicative competence presents several challenges. Limited access to authentic materials, insufficient classroom time, and students' existing cultural stereotypes may influence the effectiveness of intercultural instruction. Teachers should

therefore create inclusive learning environments where students can express different perspectives respectfully. Cultural comparisons should emphasize diversity within communities rather than presenting national cultures as fixed or uniform.

For example, students can complete a project entitled "Cultural Diversity in English-Speaking Communities," examining how language, traditions, and social practices vary across different regions and communities. Teachers may assess students' progress through reflective writing, presentations, discussions, and collaborative assignments that demonstrate cultural understanding and communication skills.

Conclusion

Developing intercultural communicative competence is an essential objective of contemporary English language education. By integrating cultural knowledge with linguistic instruction, teachers can prepare high school students for meaningful communication in diverse social environments. Authentic materials, role-playing activities, cultural comparisons, and collaborative projects provide valuable opportunities to develop cultural awareness, empathy, and effective communication skills. However, successful implementation requires appropriate teaching materials, inclusive classroom practices, and continuous reflection. Ultimately, English language education should help students become not only proficient language users but also respectful and culturally aware communicators.

REFERENCES

1. Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Multilingual Matters.
2. Kramsch, C. (1993). Context and Culture in Language Teaching. Oxford University Press.
3. Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. Journal of Studies in International Education, 10(3), 241–266. [https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002]
4. Council of Europe. (2020). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Companion Volume. Council of Europe Publishing.