

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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Annotation. *Intercultural competence has become a crucial skill for EFL/ESL learners in today's globalized environment. The various aspects of intercultural competence have been examined in this article, emphasizing how crucial it is for students to be able to successfully negotiate cultural differences and communicate across boundaries. The article also highlighted the difficulties and approaches in evaluating intercultural competence and the essential part that educators play in helping students navigate the complexity of cross-cultural communication as cultural mediators.*

Keywords: *competence, communicative competence, intercultural communicative competence, language competence, multimedia, computer technology, information technology*

MADANIYATLARARO KOMPETENTSIYANI SHAKLLANTIRISHDA O'QITUVCHILARNING ROLI

Annotatsiya. *Madaniyatlararo kompetentsiya bugungi globallashgan muhitda EFL/ESL o'quvchilari uchun hal qiluvchi mahoratga aylandi. Madaniyatlararo kompetentsiyaning turli jihatlari ushbu maqolada ko'rib chiqilgan bo'lib, talabalar madaniy farqlarni muvaffaqiyatli muhokama qilishlari va chegaralar bo'ylab muloqot qilishlari qanchalik muhimligini ta'kidladilar. Maqolada, shuningdek, madaniyatlararo kompetentsiyani baholashdagi qiyinchiliklar va yondashuvlar va o'qituvchilar o'quvchilarga madaniy vositachilar sifatida madaniyatlararo muloqotning murakkabligini boshqarishda yordam beradigan muhim qism ta'kidlangan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *kompetentsiya, kommunikativ kompetentsiya, madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetentsiya, til kompetentsiyasi, multimedia, kompyuter texnologiyalari, axborot texnologiyalari*

РОЛЬ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ В РАЗВИТИИ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ

Аннотация. В современных условиях глобализации межкультурная компетентность стала важнейшим навыком для учащихся, изучающих английский язык. В этой статье были рассмотрены различные аспекты межкультурной компетентности, подчёркнуто, насколько важно для студентов уметь успешно преодолевать культурные различия и общаться через границы. В статье также освещались трудности и подходы к оценке межкультурной компетентности и важная роль, которую играют преподаватели, помогая студентам ориентироваться в сложностях межкультурной коммуникации в качестве культурных посредников.

Ключевые слова: компетентность, коммуникативная компетентность, межкультурная коммуникативная компетентность, языковая компетентность, мультимедиа, компьютерные технологии, информационные технологии.

In order for EFL/ESL students to achieve intercultural competency, teachers are essential. They assist students in navigating the challenges of cross-cultural communication in addition to serving as language learning facilitators. To ensure they are prepared to mentor their students, educators must also pursue continual professional development to hone their own intercultural competencies. Fostering intercultural competency also requires establishing a varied classroom atmosphere that values cultural variety. These roles and responsibilities are thoroughly examined in this section.

Teachers act as cultural mediators in the intercultural learning process, bridging the cultural divide between students and the target language culture. According to Gay (2018), teachers play a crucial role in assisting pupils in comprehending and interpreting the cultural meanings that are ingrained in language. In addition to imparting linguistic knowledge, this position calls on teachers to support cultural learning by giving students the resources they need to understand and value the subtle cultural aspects of the language they are studying.

Teachers must assist students in contrasting and comparing the norms of the target culture with their own as cultural mediators. Teachers must assist students in comprehending the fundamental causes of these disparities and cultivate an appreciation for cultural variety as part of this process, which goes beyond merely pointing out differences. Effective cultural mediation, according to Gay (2018), entails assisting students in embracing a variety of viewpoints and realizing that no one cultural framework is fundamentally better than another. By doing this, educators support

students in gaining the empathy and cognitive flexibility required for effective cross-cultural communication.

Moreover, teachers must be aware of the potential for cultural misunderstandings in the classroom and be prepared to address them constructively. This involves creating a safe space where students feel comfortable discussing cultural differences and where misunderstandings are viewed as learning opportunities rather than failures. Teachers, as cultural mediators, play a critical role in shaping students' attitudes toward cultural diversity, promoting openness, curiosity, and respect.

Given the complexities of intercultural competence, teachers need to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their own intercultural skills. Gay (2018) emphasizes that teachers must continually update their knowledge of intercultural communication theories and practices, as well as their understanding of the cultural contexts in which they teach. Professional development programs focused on intercultural competence can provide teachers with the tools and strategies they need to effectively integrate cultural learning into their language instruction.

Such professional development can take many forms, including workshops, seminars, online courses, and collaborative learning communities. These opportunities allow teachers to reflect on their own cultural biases, learn from the experiences of others, and explore new approaches to teaching intercultural competence. Gay (2018) argues that professional development should also include practical components, such as cultural immersion experiences, where teachers have the chance to interact with people from different cultures and apply their intercultural skills in real-world contexts.

Furthermore, professional development in intercultural competence helps teachers stay informed about the latest research and best practices in the field. As intercultural communication continues to evolve in response to global changes, teachers must be equipped to address new challenges and opportunities in the classroom. By committing to lifelong learning in this area, teachers can ensure they remain effective cultural mediators and advocates for intercultural competence.

Creating a respectful classroom environment is essential for fostering intercultural competence. A respectful classroom is one where all students feel valued, respected, and supported, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Allen (2017) highlights the importance of promoting cultural diversity in the classroom, noting that such an environment not only enhances learning but also helps students develop the attitudes and skills necessary for intercultural competence.

To create a respectful classroom, teachers should implement strategies that recognize cultural diversity. This can include incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum, using teaching materials that reflect the cultural backgrounds of all students,

and encouraging students to share their own cultural experiences. Allen (2017) suggests that teachers should also be mindful of the power dynamics in the classroom, ensuring that all voices are heard and that no single cultural perspective dominates the discourse.

Another key aspect of creating a respectful environment is fostering a sense of belonging among all students. Teachers can achieve this by building strong relationships with their students, showing interest in their cultural backgrounds, and demonstrating respect for their cultural identities. Respectful classrooms are also characterized by a collaborative learning atmosphere, where students are encouraged to work together across cultural lines and to learn from one another's perspectives.

In addition, teachers should address and challenge any instances of cultural bias that may arise in the classroom. This involves setting clear expectations for respectful behavior, intervening when necessary, and facilitating discussions about cultural differences and stereotypes. By actively promoting respect, teachers help create a classroom environment where intercultural competence can thrive.

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering intercultural competence among EFL/ESL learners. As cultural mediators, they bridge cultural gaps and help students navigate the complexities of intercultural communication. Ongoing professional development is essential for teachers to refine their intercultural skills and stay informed about best practices. Finally, by creating a respectful classroom environment that celebrates cultural diversity and promotes respect, teachers lay the foundation for students to develop the intercultural competence needed for success in a globalized world.

The development of intercultural competence offers profound long-term benefits for both learners and educators. For learners, it enhances language proficiency, fosters personal growth, and equips them with the skills necessary to succeed in a multicultural and interconnected world. As they become more inter-culturally competent, learners are better prepared to engage in meaningful and respectful communication, navigate cultural differences with empathy, and contribute positively to diverse communities. For educators, fostering intercultural competence in their students not only enriches the learning experience but also promotes a more respectful and dynamic classroom environment. As teachers continue to develop their own intercultural skills through professional development, they become more effective cultural mediators, capable of guiding their students toward greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Ultimately, the commitment to developing intercultural competence in EFL/ESL education is an investment in a more harmonious and interconnected global future.

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