

## DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSONS

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**Annotation.** In the globalized world of today, mutual understanding and intercultural competencies are crucial because they help us overcome prejudice, discrimination, and misunderstandings between people from various cultural backgrounds. The development of intercultural communicative competencies (ICC) in English language education enables students to comprehend and interact effectively with speakers of the target language cultures. Learning ICC is a challenging process that calls for a fresh approach not found in conventional language instruction. Also, it might be challenging for teachers to relate to and use intercultural features of the target language. Although the development of ICC for students is stressed in all curriculum texts, the guidelines are frequently simply broad and do not offer teachers any concrete advice.

**Keywords:** intercultural communicative competencies; teaching English as a foreign language; techniques for teaching culture.

**Introduction.** The majority of academics agree that culture is integral to learning a foreign language. Yet, there is a propensity to regard language and culture separately. Teaching culture must be integrated into the instruction of speaking, listening, reading, and writing rather than being viewed as a separate ability. It is challenging to persuade language teachers that teaching about culture is not a secondary goal, according to Dunnett, Dubin, and Lezberg, who assert that the majority of teaching time is committed to the development of four language skills.

Politzer argues that teaching a language devoid of cultural context is analogous to giving kids meaningless symbols to which they later assign incorrect interpretations. According to Kramsch, speakers frequently misinterpret because they interpret events based on their own cultures and expectations that are founded on their own experiences. Therefore, it is crucial to teach the target culture in contrast to and comparison to one's own. Robinson adds that because cultures are dynamic and ever-evolving, it can be particularly challenging for foreign language teachers to keep up with changes. Cultural aspects of learning a foreign language now receive much more attention

because of the Council of Europe's establishment of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.<sup>[1]</sup>

The goal was to give students the tools they need to effectively communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers in a multicultural and multilingual Europe. Although the CEFR emphasizes the value of ICC development, it only provides broad training. It lacks detailed instructions for teachers and does not cover every facet of cultural teaching. Based on the CEFR, national curriculum guidelines typically offer even less direction for the development of ICC. As a result, teachers may get perplexed and unsure of what materials, strategies, or tactics to employ in order to foster intercultural communication skills. The primary goal of this essay is to describe the methods for creating ICC, but it also includes a brief discussion of the subjects covered by cultural instruction. The CEFR excerpts and summaries below are based on the philosophy of culture and intercultural communication. Everyday life, living conditions, interpersonal relationships, history, values, beliefs, taboos, social conventions, and ritual behavior are examples of socio-cultural knowledge.<sup>[2]</sup> Other socio-cultural knowledge includes sociolinguistic competencies, pragmatic competencies (advice, persuasion, urging, socializing, interaction patterns), and non-verbal communication (body language, gestures, eye contact, proxemics, etc.).

For all age groups, it is crucial to start the study of a foreign language with cultural activities. The objective is to improve the learners' attitudes, knowledge, and abilities not just about the target culture but also about their own culture and other cultures. This paper introduces several methods for teaching cultural concepts, but it also offers examples of activities that teachers can use as a source of inspiration. According to Byram, learning ICC is a complicated process that involves more than just conventional language instruction. Brooks contends that ICC is best acquired by practical experience, much as how students learn phonological accuracy, syntax, or morphology. Daily chores that show identity, similarities, and diversity in analogous patterns of culture should be the subjects of regular dialogue. According to research, teachers tend to focus more on teaching sociocultural concepts (factual knowledge, holidays, traditions, food, housing, etc.) and less on sociolinguistic, pragmatic competencies, and nonverbal communication.<sup>[3]</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brooks, N. (2001). Culture in the Classroom. In: Valdes, M. (ed.) Bridging the Cultural Gap in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> A Common European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Council of Europe. (2001). [online]. [cit.19.7.2014]. Available on the internet: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf). 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Clevedon, Philadelphia : Multilingual Matters.

Most of the time, only positive parts of the target culture are discussed, which gives learners an inaccurate impression of the culture. Information that is factual, current, accurate, and realistic should be given to the students. One of the most popular methods for teaching about cultures is the comparative approach. This method focuses on comparing and contrasting the native and target cultures. As cultures never remain static, they are always changing, and various generations interpret things differently, it is important to compare not only the characteristics of other cultures but also those within a single culture. The activity that follows can be used to improve sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and non-verbal abilities as well as sociocultural understanding. With the aid of the cultural assimilation strategy, learners are exposed to a crucial occasion that they are likely to misinterpret. Students are presented with a range of options from which they select the one they believe to be the best. Unexpected greetings are among the most typical instances of miscommunication. The custom of welcoming one another by kissing each other on the cheek is widespread.

Yet, depending on the culture, cheek kissing might range from one to four kisses. The next exercise teaches nonverbal communication. A teacher can give someone one kiss, two kisses, three kisses, and four kiss demonstration of various cheek kiss welcomes. Students should choose the appropriate kiss greeting. The cultural capsule technique illustrates, for instance, how a custom differs across two cultures. It can be complemented by a set of discussion questions and graphic aids to highlight the differences. The action that follows puts sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge to use. One topic that might be covered is the topic of the daily major meal. For instance, in Slovakia, a hot lunch of soup and a main course is the main meal of the day, whereas, in the UK, the main meal of the day is typically the evening meal, which includes a main course and a dessert. Images of several everyday meals may be shown. Students should debate the advantages and disadvantages of each culture's eating customs.<sup>[4]</sup>

A treasure hunt entails looking for predetermined items, such as individuals, dates, and events in a news or magazine article. A strong learning tool that blends learning and interests is research. Students are required to conduct any relevant study into the target culture that piques their interest, present their studies, and design and present posters. Drama is a strategy where students portray brief scenes of misunderstanding and clarification of an event between two cultures that results from misinterpreting the target culture. Using one's notebooks, diaries, and portfolio is a successful method for developing a multicultural viewpoint.

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<sup>4</sup> Cullen, B. (2000). Practical Techniques for Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom. In: The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. 6, No. 12. (2000). [online]. [cit. 20. 8. 2014]. Available on the internet: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Cullen-Culture.html>.

**Conclusion.** Students should record their grasp of international concepts, explain interactions with others in the other language, record their travel experiences, etc. They can assess the evolution of their ICC in the past. Also, the majority of the common EFL activities (games, outings, songs, etc.) could be modified to teach about a particular culture. This essay aimed to explain various cultural teaching methods, motivate teachers of foreign languages to do the same, and help students' ICCs grow.

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