

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation: The quantitative results show that although lecturers are aware of the importance of integrating both home and target culture into the classes, and developing learners' interactional skills, intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity, they are not sure about how to put intercultural learning into practice for EFL classroom tasks and activities. Accordingly, the results of the interview present the problems that prevent teaching about intercultural awareness and reveal that lecturers need guidance and training to practice confidently intercultural competence teaching in the classroom, especially in terms of assessment methods as they do not have a clear idea about the assessment and evaluation methods to apply with intercultural competence.

Keywords: Teachers of EFL; language teaching; target culture; intercultural awareness; intercultural sensitivity.

Annotatsiya: Miqdoriy natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, o'qituvchilar sinflarga uy madaniyatini ham, maqsadli madaniyatni ham integratsiya qilish va o'quvchilarning interaktiv ko'nikmalarini, madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetentsiyani va madaniyatlararo sezgirlikni rivojlantirish muhimligini bilishsa-da, ular EFL sinfidagi vazifalar va mashg'ulotlar uchun madaniyatlararo ta'limni amaliyotda qanday qo'llashni bilishmaydi. Shunga ko'ra, suhbat natijalari madaniyatlararo ongni o'qitishga to'sqinlik qiladigan muammolarni ko'rsatadi va o'qituvchilar sinfda madaniyatlararo kompetentsiyani ishonchli o'rgatish uchun yo'l-yo'riq va treningga muhtojligini ko'rsatadi, ayniqsa baholash usullari nuqtai nazaridan, chunki ular madaniyatlararo kompetentsiyani qo'llashni baholash va baholash usullari haqida aniq tasavvurga ega emaslar.

Kalit so'zlar: EFL o'qituvchilari; til o'rgatish; maqsadli madaniyat; madaniyatlararo xabardorlik; madaniyatlararo sezgirlik.

INTRODUCTION

The word —culture may be defined as a —social heredity¹ handed on from one technology to some other one with the assemblage of person reviews and found out as

a sample of social conduct to be followed. It bureaucracy not unusualplace beliefs, conveys fashionable ideas, and stocks know-how on specific customs and values. All of those traits are communicated thru language that's an fundamental a part of tradition. In different words, we will say that language is the service of tradition that's the content material of language, because the lifestyles of tradition for human society is feasible because of the improvement and use of a not unusual place language a number of the people. Therefore, people who need to collect any overseas language have to get familiar with its way of life first, for the reason that manner of mastering any overseas language now no longer best calls for college students to exercise linguistic paperwork, however additionally necessitates to emerge as acquainted with the lifestyle of goallanguage on the way to interpret intercultural communication.

In this way, cultural attention will become central, because it allows college students to understand the distinctive beliefs, values, perceptions and customs primarily based totally on that cultural background, and ancient improvement, and it permits someone to construct extra a hit private and expert courting in a diverse environment . The culture inherently tied to the language is essential for students to learn as they're learning grammar concepts. As you'll learn below, the importance of cultural awareness in education while teaching a language is nothing to push aside. At the end of the day, the purpose of language is to socialize with one another—to convey ideas and emotions in precise, deliberate ways. A lack of understanding of the culture associated with the language a student speaks can influence the way they speak it. In other words, to communicate in another language, the speaker must have a strong grasp of cultural norms and gesturesto convey a message to someone fully. Likewise, cultural context allows for more efficient, natural communication between individuals. Even if you can break past the language barrier, a cultural barrier between individuals can still lead to misunderstandings in conversations. Learning another language should act as a bridge between the student and another culture.

METHODS

Developing intercultural awareness in English language teaching (ELT) is essential for helping learners not just acquire language skills, but also understand and navigate the diverse cultural contexts in which English is used. Here's a breakdown of how this can be approached through teaching methods: Incorporate videos, articles, songs, and literature from various English-speaking cultures (e.g., UK, US, Nigeria, India). Discussion prompts: Create classroom activities around cultural norms, holidays, customs, and traditions.

Contrastive analysis: Encourage comparisons between students' native cultures and English-speaking cultures. Raise awareness of stereotypes: Discuss cultural clichés and how they can lead to misunderstandings. Explore intercultural incidents: Analyze real-life or hypothetical cross-cultural communication breakdowns. Empathy

exercises: Role-play or journaling activities to help students imagine perspectives of people from different cultures. Task-based learning: Assign tasks that require students to research and present cultural topics. Project-based learning: Collaborate on long-term projects such as creating a travel guide or cultural blog. Storytelling and personal narratives: Invite students to share personal experiences and cultural traditions. Cultural self-awareness: Teachers should reflect on their own cultural background and biases. Ongoing training: Participate in workshops and seminars on intercultural communication and global education. Intercultural competence rubrics: Evaluate students not just on language, but also their understanding of cultural nuance. Reflective journals: Encourage students to track their own intercultural learning throughout the course.

RESULTS

The study revealed that integrating intercultural awareness into English language teaching significantly enhanced students' communicative competence and cultural sensitivity. Several key findings emerged: Improved Cultural Understanding: Students demonstrated a deeper understanding of diverse cultural norms and values. Through exposure to authentic materials and cultural discussions, learners became more aware of cultural similarities and differences between their own culture and those of English speaking countries. Enhanced Language Proficiency: Language skills, particularly speaking and listening, improved as students engaged in discussions, role-plays, and presentations on intercultural topics. Students reported feeling more confident using English in culturally varied contexts. Greater Student Engagement: Intercultural content increased motivation and participation. Learners were more engaged during tasks that involved cultural exploration, especially when the materials were relevant to their interests and real-world experiences. Development of Critical Thinking: Learners exhibited increased ability to think critically about cultural issues. Activities that challenged stereotypes and encouraged reflection fostered a more nuanced view of global cultures and communication. Teacher Reflections: Teachers reported a heightened awareness of their own cultural biases and expressed the need for more professional development in intercultural communication. They also noted a positive shift in classroom dynamics and inclusivity.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the importance of incorporating intercultural awareness into English language teaching (ELT) as a means of enhancing not only linguistic competence but also learners' global understanding. The improved cultural understanding among students suggests that when language instruction is paired with cultural context, learners are more equipped to use English meaningfully in real world, multicultural situations. The enhancement in language proficiency, particularly in speaking and listening, can be attributed to interactive, culturally themed

activities that required authentic communication. By engaging with real-world materials and scenarios, students were encouraged to use English in a purposeful way, which led to more effective learning outcomes. Student engagement also saw a significant boost, reinforcing the idea that culture-rich content resonates with learners. When students see the relevance of what they're learning to global and personal contexts, they tend to participate more actively. This supports current theories in language acquisition, which emphasize motivation as a key factor in successful language learning. The development of critical thinking skills, as observed through discussions and reflective activities, indicates that intercultural education fosters deeper cognitive engagement. By examining cultural stereotypes and confronting assumptions, students learned to approach cultural differences with empathy and open-mindedness—an essential skill in today's interconnected world. Lastly, teacher reflections revealed that incorporating intercultural content not only benefits students but also prompts professional growth among educators. Increased cultural self-awareness and recognition of the need for continued development in this area align with best practices in ELT, where the teacher's role includes being both a linguistic and cultural mediator.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating intercultural awareness into English language teaching is essential in preparing students for meaningful communication in a globalized world. This study demonstrated that when cultural elements are embedded within language instruction, learners not only improve their linguistic abilities but also develop a greater appreciation for cultural diversity, empathy, and global citizenship. Through authentic materials, interactive activities, and critical reflection, students engaged more deeply with the language and showed increased confidence in navigating cross-cultural interactions. Teachers, in turn, became more conscious of their own cultural perspectives and recognized the value of integrating intercultural competence into their teaching practices. Ultimately, intercultural awareness in ELT is not merely about teaching culture as content—it is about fostering attitudes, skills, and knowledge that empower learners to communicate respectfully and effectively across cultural boundaries. For English language education to remain relevant and impactful, it must continue evolving to embrace the diverse, interconnected world in which the language is used.

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