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The Place Of Intercultural Communicative Competence In Teaching Foreign Languages

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Abstract: *The article deals with the issues related to analyzing the role of intercultural competence in teaching foreign languages. When language skills and intercultural competency become linked in a language classroom, students become optimally prepared for participation in a global world. This article reviews and summarizes the views on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in order to better understand how these notions can impact the cultural component of a foreign language curriculum. Issues on intercultural competence underline the significance of preparing students to engage and collaborate in a global society by discovering appropriate ways to interact with people from other cultures.*

Key words: *intercultural communication, communication, culture, knowledge, intercultural competence, country.*

Today, intercultural communication is one of the contemporary issues of cultural knowledge, since globalization, spreading in all spheres of life, is becoming increasingly important. As a result of the globalization process, representatives of different countries received the possibility of intercultural communication, which generated interest in intercultural communication and the need for its study. In modern conditions, the pace of globalization and the integration of all life processes and phenomena is rather increasing, which leads to the desire to isolate national cultures, but at the same time, the problem of tolerant relationships between representatives of various cultural communities is of particular importance.

The problem of intercultural communication and intercultural competence is the subject of numerous studies by both foreign and Russian scientists. The study of issues of organization, content, forms, methods and technologies of intercultural

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learning is reflected in the works of I.I. Khaleeva, S.G. Ter-Minasova, N.M. Thundering, N.D. Galskoy, N.F. Koryakovtseva, Yu. Roth and G. Kopteltseva, G.V. Yatskovsky, G.I. Voronina, V.P. Furmanova, R.D. Lewis, Hofstede, Geert, in A. A. Leontiev, I.A. Winter, I.L. Bim, Passova E.I., R.P. Milruda, E.S. Polat, T.Yu. Tambovkina, V.V. Safonova. V.V. Oschenkova, A.A. Mirolyubov, and others.

Despite the active attention that is being paid to the formation of intercultural competence of students, the problem of the process of becoming an individual competent in intercultural communication has not been studied enough. Also, many educators and methodologists speak primarily about the formation of intercultural competence during their studies in higher educational institutions, although today children get acquainted and imbued with foreign culture often before graduation. From this it should be concluded that intercultural competence must be actively developed back in school.

For successful intercultural interaction, it is necessary to develop a double vision, adequately accept another culture, without losing its own cultural identity, thereby developing intercultural competence. In this regard, the role of intercultural competence is being developed and described in the works of such scientists as N.D. Galskova, N.I. Gez, G.V. Elizarova et al.

Communication between people can be a means of correcting the antisocial behavior of an individual or group. Being a social process, communication serves the formation of society as a whole, fulfilling a connecting function.

Communication consists of communicative, or speech, acts in which communicators participate, generating utterances and interpreting their initial and final stages by means of the national language.

Human activity is both universal and nationally specific. These properties determine the peculiarity of the linguistic picture of the world. The naive picture of

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the world of everyday consciousness, in which the objective way of perception prevails, has an interpretive character.

The purpose of learning a foreign language is to learn to communicate in the target language, to learn the customs and traditions of the speech community, and to promote one's study and work. The communicative competence is acquired through the socialization of the speaker. A person, from an ignorant individual to a social member, must learn the knowledge, skill and conversation so as to adjust himself to the society and qualify himself as a social member. This process is known as the socialization of a man and it goes throughout a man's life. This holds true not only to one's native language but also to his learning a foreign language in that language, as a social product, fully embodies the culture of its speech community and is closely related to the culture of the speck community.

Intercultural communicating means communicating among people come from many and various cultures face to face. For foreign language educators, to develop the learner's intercultural competence is to know how to teach foreign culture. Culture teaching in foreign language teaching is a question countered by language teachers throughout all universities and colleges in the world. The relationship between language and culture is dynamic. Firstly, language is an important part of culture. It is the primary vehicle by which a culture transmits its beliefs, values and norms. Secondly, language is influenced by culture.

Language is one of the most important carriers of culture and reflects the latter. If there is no language, culture would not be known. On the one hand, culture is the basis and one of the most important attributes of language and exerts great influence on the latter. If there is no culture, language will be like water without a source or a tree without roots.

In foreign language learning, linguistic transfer refers to the effect of one language, usually the native language on the learning of another usually the target language. This is also a common strategy employed by foreign language learners.

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They often use native language patterns or rules in learning target language, which results in errors or inappropriate forms in the target language. This is called negative transfer, also known as interference. Language is inextricably bound up with culture. Cultural values are both reflected by and carried through language. Accordingly, it is inevitable that the way of thinking and expressing influenced by the native culture will be unconsciously transferred to the target language during the intercultural communication. That is the cultural transfer. As a matter of fact, the most difficult thing for the language learners to deal with in their study of the foreign language is not the linguistic forms or grammar, but the cultural difference. In the process of cognition of the world, people always store the schemata into their brain, schemata can be compared to an immerse system of files in one's brain, where you can classify and store you brain and individual knowledge and experience.

In order to get a comprehensive picture of the target culture from many angles, teachers need to present their students with different kinds of information by accumulating a great deal of courseware. The list below shows some possible sources of information which can be used as materials for teaching culture. By using a combination of visual, audio and tactile materials, teachers are also likely to succeed in addressing the different learning styles of their students.

Table 1

Types of information sources in teaching culture

Extracts from literary	**Information sources**	Multimedia software
Internet		Dvd & cds
Films & TV		Illustrations
Encyclopedias		Video
Literature		Newspapers, magazines
Background information		Interviews
Anecdotes		Photographs

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Fieldwork		Plays & songs

The changing status of English in the world has resulted in the shift of its position from a foreign or second language to a medium for international communication. And English language teaching has been very popular from primary schools to colleges and universities of our country. No doubt, the objective of English language teaching as an international language has much in common with intercultural communication. Thus, English language teaching should be oriented towards the promotion of intercultural competency education through English. Meanwhile, intercultural competence should be highlighted as an important and inseparable part of English language teaching, because English language teaching is not only about learning its culture, but also to communicate. Another reason is that "The primary function of language is for interaction and communication"[5]. It reflects function and communicative uses of language. English language learners are required to converse with others in English fluently, whether with other students or, more pertinently, with foreigners. Accordingly, intercultural communication competence has become more and more important in English language teaching.

The famous American linguist Chomsky [2] said: "…implicit language knowledge as linguistics concerned primarily with ideal speaker-listening completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance."

Conversely, Hymes [3] thinks that linguistic competence is a competence that deals with affairs by using language, so he puts forward the concepts of communicative competence is a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community.

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In Hymes's view, a person with communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use regarding:

Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible; Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible by virtue of the means of implementation available; 3) Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; 4) Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what it's doing entails. [3]

In this sense, the notion of communicative competence, like the other aspects of culture and communication, is a diverse concept, which varies across cultures as a result of different levels of expected participation, different beliefs, different social situations, different types of knowledge, and different values and standards.

With the above said, intercultural competence entails not only communicative competence in linguistic and pragmatic terms of the language used in the intercultural encounter, more importantly it demands awareness of different sets of cultural scripts and the ability to mediate between different cultural identities.

Intercultural communication competence can be thus defined as a person's ability to engage in productive intercultural dialogues of meanings and relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds. To make the intercultural interaction productive, one needs to have the ability to construct meaning and rapport with people from different cultural backgrounds through appropriate and effective use of verbal and nonverbal language.

At the present, the contact and communication with people from different cultures is an important way to learn more about other people and their way of life, including their values, history, habits, and even the substance of their personality. As humans we all have the same basic desires and needs, we just have different ways of achieving them. As we learn this, we can develop a tolerance for difference. This can be accomplished only when we initiate relationships with

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people who are different from ourselves. Therefore, the goal of English language teaching should increase the students' communicative competency skills, which would include not only linguistic competencies but also intercultural competence which has usually been set on trying to promote and facilitate communication across cultures. It is also quite clear that knowledge of intercultural communication can help to solve communication problems before they arise.

From the above analysis of relationship between linguistic competence and intercultural competence, we may easily know that English language teaching itself is the practice of not only improving learners' linguistic competence but also intercultural communication competence as the teaching of English language unavoidably involves the teaching of the cultures from English spoken countries. Moreover, English language teaching has a unique role to play in developing students' linguistic competence and to help students broaden their mind, to absorb in foreign cultural essence and to finally improve learners' intercultural competence.

English language teaching has a crucial role in cultivating English language learner' intercultural communication awareness, because face-to-face contact among people of different cultural backgrounds has increased in recent years, the world has become a shrinking interdependent one. This is the reason why Sitaram and Cogdell proclaimed that "all the people of the world should study intercultural communication".

At the same time, English language has become an international language. English language is always used by different people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to express their ideas and opinions. When English language teaching is used by diverse people from diverse cultural backgrounds, the diverse values, beliefs, world views, ways of thinking, and patterns of life inserted in the linguistic forms and the manner by which the selected linguistic forms are put into speech or text can also be brought to the intercultural communication awareness

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of the students.

At first of all, English language teaching can provide the students opportunities to come into contact other cultures and people in the classrooms without going abroad, because the cultures in English-spoken countries are brought to the knowledge of the students through various English language teaching materials, class activities and personal interaction with foreign teachers and students from English –spoken countries.

Needless to say, in the intercultural interaction through various types of English language teaching and English language learning, alternative ways of intercultural communication and ways of living (with their foreign language teachers) are unfolded and thus the ideology of cultural relativity will be gradually built up in the students with the enhancement of not only their intercultural communication awareness, but also their intercultural communication competence.

To some extent, the process of English language teaching and learning is a process of intercultural communication between the students' first lingua culture and the students' second lingua cultures. Throughout the process, English language teachers and students are engaged in negotiation of definitions establishment or reestablishment of cultural identities of their own lingua culture and that of others. English language teaching offers unique and important chances for the students' intercultural experience and also makes the students' necessary experience of their personal growth into an intercultural person.

To sum up, English language teaching is one of the most effective means of developing students' intercultural competence. Especially, English language has become an international language and been most widely used for intercultural communication all over the world. Moreover, the students who learn and use English language will obtain the fundamental knowledge and skills for effective intercultural communication and successful career in an intercultural

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