

NEED FOR TEACHING CULTURAL COMPETENCE.

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Abstract

This article discusses need for teaching cultural competence to language learner students. Each nation has its own culture the way of living and thinking. Foreign language learners often face with the issue of word choice in that language. Language and culture interconnected to each other that is why culture impact on the language. For ESL learners teaching intercultural competence is easier than those who are learning English as a Foreign Language. All these reasons should be taken into consideration in the process of teaching language.

Key words: communication, teaching aids, competence, intercultural competence, socio-lingual competence, pragmatic competence.

At the centre of attention of intercultural competence is the preparation of individuals to interact appropriately and effectively with those from other cultural backgrounds. How and why we need to teach cultural competence to language learner students? Or how can we build intercultural competence in the classroom? These and such questions arose in the process of teaching. So first of all we have to define language and culture interconnected to each other or they do not relate? For this I observed language classes offline and online, besides EFL and ESL students language usage during the class and in real life situations. ESL students learn English in class and use English outside the class also. But for EFL students they use English only in classes but, outside the classes during the communication they use mother tongue. This interferes second language acquisition and being intercultural competent. Observations show that some teachers try to use target language during their language classes, others prefer to interfere mother tongue.

In the first situation teacher tries to build natural language atmosphere using target language or authentic real life situations. So the situations are differ from culture to culture that's is the need for teachers building classroom environment accordingly. When language skills and intercultural competency become linked in a language classroom, students become optimally prepared for participation in a global world.

Various models of intercultural competence attend to different types of self-awareness and internal transformation as necessary initial components in the process of becoming interculturally competent. Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) charts the internal evolution from "ethnocentrism" to "ethnorelativism" within the context of intercultural interactions. In order to successfully navigate intercultural situations, Bennett (2004) posits that a person's worldview must shift from avoiding cultural difference to seeking cultural difference. Gudykunst's (1993) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Model explains that those hoping to adjust to new cultural situations must learn to "successfully manage their anxiety in new cultural environments" (Gudykunst, 1998, p. 232). Gudykunst (1993) makes clear that when anxiety about interacting in intercultural situations is too high, sojourners are less likely to accurately interpret the hosts' responses. furthermore, when anxiety is in a low degree, visitors to other countries engage in conversation believing that they totally understand everything about the foreign culture, and therefore do not remain open to belief changes as a result of what is learned during cross-cultural interactions.

According to the standards found in the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), Byram. (2002) emphasize the fact that since culture is an ever-changing force, foreign language teachers must got ready to create an atmosphere of interest and inquiry in order to guide learners toward intercultural competence. The authors recommend creating an open environment in the classroom and

suggest an example that allows learners to differentiate travel guides between the native culture and the target culture.

Thus one of the most crucial components of preparing students for intercultural competence is assessing and involving this learning process. Since all students enter the classroom with differing perspectives and viewpoints, it becomes almost impossible to simply expect students to grow interculturally at the same rate. At the end, many researchers of intercultural competence describe the classroom experience as a process of integrating. As mentioned above individuals have different backgrounds and these often interfere the process, because of usage of utterances, habits, the way of thinking, living etc. In teaching process we also take into consideration the components of intercultural competence. Several researches show that the intercultural competence can be broken into some components, they are considered as attitudes, knowledge and understanding, skills and actions.

The attitudes include:

- valuing cultural diversity and pluralism of views and practices;
- respecting people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own;
- being open to, curious about and willing to learn from and about people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own; etc

The knowledge and understanding include:

- understanding the internal diversity and heterogeneity of all cultural groups;
- awareness and understanding of one's own and other people's assumptions, preconceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and overt and covert discrimination;
- comprehending the influence of one's own language and cultural affiliations on one's experience of the world and of others;

Actions include:

- finding opportunities to engage with people who have different cultural orientations and perspectives from one's own;
- interacting and communicating appropriate way, effectively and respectfully with people who have different cultural affiliations from one's own;
- co-operating with individuals who have different cultural orientations on shared activities and ventures, discussing differences in views and perspectives, and constructing common views and perspectives;
- challenging attitudes and behaviours (including speech and writing) which contravene human rights, and taking action to defend and protect the dignity and human rights of people regardless of their cultural affiliations.

In short, teaching foreign languages and cultural competence is closely tied to each other or we can mention that they are undividable. If we want or not while teaching process we came across the culture of studying language.

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