

INTERCULTURAL PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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COMPETENȚA PROFESIONALĂ INTERCULTURALĂ ÎN PREDAREA LIMBILOR STRĂINE STUDENTILOR DIN INSTITUȚIILE DE ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR

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Rezumat. Comunicarea este o parte consistentă în viața noastră de zi cu zi. Termenul este foarte larg. Este folosit într-o varietate de moduri, pentru orice fel de influență exercitată de un sistem asupra altei sau a oricărui tip de acțiune care vizează exprimarea deschisă a gândurilor, sentimentelor sau schimbul de informații. Comunicarea înseamnă influențarea altor persoane prin folosirea semnelor (în sens mai larg) pentru ai face pe ei să înțeleagă mesajul. Comunicarea, astfel, în general necesită doi participanți: un expeditor, adresator, comunicator care transmite (direct sau indirect) și un destinatar, un translator care primește informațiile. Rolurile acestora participanți se alternează în timpul procesului de comunicare.

Dobândirea cunoștințelor culturale comune poate fi promovată prin dezvoltarea conștientizării interculturale. Limba însăși este întotdeauna formată dintr-o cultură. A fi competent într-o limbă, presupune înțelegerea culturii care a definit-o. Învățarea unei limbi străine sugerează o conștientizare a culturii și a modului în care cultura vizează propria cultură.

Profesorii care încearcă să crească gradul de conștientizare culturală studenților săi, din păcate de cele mai multe ori, trebuie să facă față problemelor cum ar fi lipsa cunoștințelor sistematice ale studenților fie a culturii lor native, fie a culturii țintă, pentru a fi în stare să interpreteze, să analizeze și să tragă concluzii din partea fenomenelor culturale prezentate lor ulterior. Un profesor poate preda până la limită, adică explică, discută și face studenții să înțeleagă diferențele. Cu toate acestea, nu putem rezolva aceste probleme.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunicare, student, limbi străine, profesor.

Actuality

Communication is an ongoing aspect of our daily lives. The term is extremely broad. It can refer to any type of influence exerted by one system on another, as well as any action aimed at the open expression of thoughts, feelings, or the exchange of information. Communication entails persuading others to understand a message by using signs (in the broadest sense). Thus, communication requires two participants: a sender, addressee, communicator who transmits (directly or indirectly) and a receiver, a translator who receives the information. During the communication process, these participants' roles alternate.

The development of intercultural awareness can aid in the acquisition of common cultural knowledge. Language is always shaped by culture. To be fluent in a language, one must first understand the culture that created it. Learning a foreign language implies an understanding of culture and how culture affects one's own culture.

Unfortunately, teachers attempting to raise cultural awareness in their students frequently face issues such as students' lack of systematic knowledge of either their native culture or the target culture in order to interpret, analyse, and draw conclusions from cultural phenomena subsequently presented to them. A teacher can go to great lengths to explain, discuss, and help students understand the differences [5].

Each person filters his or her perception of the world based on his or her prior knowledge, skills, and experience. All human communications rely on a shared understanding of the world (academic knowledge, empirical knowledge of the common values and beliefs of social groups, knowledge of non-verbal elements in communication). This knowledge could be culture specific. This fact makes communication among members of the same cultural community predictable and understandable. Foreign speakers, on the other hand, face greater difficulties because they lack common knowledge with native speakers. The development of intercultural awareness can aid in the acquisition of common cultural knowledge. Learning a foreign language implies an understanding of culture and how culture affects one's own culture. A student who is culturally competent must [5]:

1. To be aware of how other cultures perceive his culture from the outside.
2. To comprehend or perceive the target culture from his own point of view.
3. To be aware of his own perceptions of the target culture.

Grammatical competence, or the ability to formulate correct linguistic statements, sociolinguistic competence, or attention to the social context and norms of the given culture, discourse competence, or the use of language in context, and strategic competence, or the ability to deal with authentic communication situations, are all components of communicative competence.

In addition to the foregoing, competences, attitudes, and know-how construct the environment of intercultural communication competence, and thus the desired objectives of learning culture in an intercultural approach are in particular:

- Cultural sensitivity is defined by the ability to observe, identify, and recognise.
- Using various methods to communicate with members of other cultures.
- Compare and contrast, as well as the possibility of bringing home and foreign cultures together. This should occur without passing judgement or labelling one of them as better or worse.
- Breaking free from stereotypical relationships.
- Meanings are negotiated.
- Dealing with or tolerating ambiguity.
- Message interpretation that is accurate.
- Reducing the possibility of misunderstandings.
- Effectively dealing with misunderstandings and intercultural conflict.
- The ability to act as a culture, mediating between one's own and a foreign culture.
- Defending one's position while acknowledging the legitimacy of others.
- An openness to new experiences, people, cultures, and ideas in general.

Foreign culture knowledge is typically relational, that is, knowledge gained through socialisation with one's own social groups and frequently presented in contrast to those significant characteristics of one's own national group and identity. It is frequently characterised

by stereotypes and prejudices. However, when it comes to teaching intercultural communication, students must be aware of where these preconceptions come from and how their perceptions of others are filtered through their social identity. As a result, from the standpoint of intercultural communication, cultural knowledge is a relational knowledge of institutions in everyday life, social distinctions and differences, and knowledge of international relations and national identities, in addition to knowledge of social interactions. It is relational in the sense that it includes these people's experiences [6].

According to C. Kramersch [4], traditional foreign language learning has limited the teaching of culture to conveying information about the people of the target country and their general attitudes and worldviews. Language is a social practise, and culture is a complex social construct, which has gone unnoticed. C. Kramersch distinguishes two new schools of thought for cultural education that appear to be popular today:

A. Establishing an intercultural sphere

Because communication in a foreign language is also communication between cultures, an intercultural approach incorporates reflection on both the target and native cultures. In this sense, effective language teaching must incorporate both viewpoints.

B. Teaching culture as a social process

Meaning is constructed through social interaction if language is viewed as a social action. As a result, rather than teaching fixed, normative cultural facts, we should teach a process of communication and suggest appropriate and useful strategies for understanding otherness.

Culture, according to T. Callo [3], is the only factor that can sustain and save a „healthy” mentality. Culture reveals reality, opens the door to knowledge, and teaches us how to stay true to our own values, which shape our character.

Material culture includes work tools, production tools, and communication tools. Spiritual communication is part of spiritual culture. Spiritual culture includes education. According to the author T.Callo [3], establishing a culture of education in the educational system entails a series of algorithmic components: **Information**→**Person**→**Action**→**Impact**→**Collaboration**

C. Teaching culture as a distinction.

Students must be aware of cultural heterogeneity: as societies become more multicultural and multiethnic, national cultural characteristics lose even more of their global validity. It's becoming increasingly difficult to say that the Germans or the English do this or that. Cultural identities are made up of a variety of components; additional criteria such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, social class, education, and so on must always be considered [3].

D. Discipline boundary crossing

Teachers are encouraged to broaden their knowledge by reading literature, studies by social scientists, ethnographers, and sociolinguists to present information beyond the domain of linguistics and challenge, perhaps even motivate, their students, and present the attractiveness of the target society to them.

Intercultural communicative competence, according to C. Kramersch [4], can be attained or at least approached by sensitising students to the achievement, recognition, and tolerance of difference, meeting people from other cultures and social backgrounds, and making them aware of the relativity of their judgement. Thus, cultural content in language teaching must be determined in such a way that the difference is presented appropriately.

Cultural knowledge about a target country is a vast subject that does not fall within the purview of foreign language education. An unsystematic approach to information provision would leave students befuddled, with an unstructured information task but no real knowledge,

understanding of the reality of the foreign culture, and thus no intercultural understanding. Making a choice is difficult, and it raises the issue of the native speaker as a model in language teaching once more. Knowledge ranges from the most common greetings to general politeness conversational rules to nonverbal behaviour or phraseology.

A. Habiák examines the significance of phraseology in language. Language users frequently use simple, metaphorical, concise, and often humorous expressions of our ancestors' experiences to formulate their own ideas in communication. They improve their speech by using these [6].

According to M. Byram's research, the general nature of the language and culture course should enable students to:

- actively engage with alternative interpretations of phenomena in the foreign culture and compare them to their own;
- access and analyse more complex manifestations of the values and meanings of national cultures and the cultures existing within its boundaries, as presented in cultural objects and cultural institutions, including museums [1].

M. Byram and C. Morgan present a list of minimum content proposals that can be integrated into language study or presented independently in separate learning units. These are as follows: social identity and social groups, social interaction, belief and behaviour, socio-political institutions, socialisation and the life cycle, national history, geography, cultural heritage, stereotypes, and national identity. Furthermore, Gerhard Neuer's categories of elementary existential experience (Elementare Daseinerfahrungen) intended for language teaching should not be overlooked as basic categories shared by individuals regardless of culture. These are themes about bridging the gap between one's own world and that of another. Birth and death, personal identity, family structures, interpersonal relationships, and gender roles, the political system, education, work, art, the environment, and subjective dimensions such as memories, imagination, and memory are all examples of these. The specific application of these broad categories is determined by the nature of the course, the structure of the class, the needs of the students, and, most importantly, the target country's foreign language and society as represented in the teaching materials [7].

The teacher's role has traditionally been based on the assumption that he or she has primary authority in all aspects of the language class. However, teaching intercultural competence does not always necessitate an omniscient teacher, and given the extremely broad scope of culture, teachers would be unable to meet this requirement. Teachers should serve as motivators, challengers in discourse, eye-openers, and guides in foreign societies, rather than as cultural mediators [2].

Unfortunately, teachers attempting to raise cultural awareness in their students frequently face issues such as students' lack of systematic knowledge of either their native culture or the target culture in order to interpret, analyse, and draw conclusions from cultural phenomena subsequently presented to them. A teacher can go to great lengths to explain, discuss, and help students understand the differences. However, we are unable to resolve these issues.

The goal is not to find the correct solution or to bridge a gap, but to explore the limit and oneself in the process, which is conditioned by a willingness to engage in self-removal from one's native culture. According to C. Kramsch [4], the culture that emerges from such an intercultural dialogue differs from both the native and target cultures. It does not provide any facts or solutions to these issues. The final picture, the understanding, often emerges after many reflections, possibly many years later. **As a result**, students should learn how to develop critical thinking skills, learn independently, collect and analyse information, and deal with various types of linguistic and cultural input.

Understanding the core of intercultural communication, determining the relationship between language and behaviour (in one's own culture and in the target language), developing skills in acquiring and processing cultural information, and selecting appropriate culture teaching techniques should all be goals of teacher training.

Personal knowledge of the target language culture should be required. Students are encouraged to apply to study and travel programmes such as Erasmus+ [5].

The modern world is constantly changing, and it is the role of teachers to respond to these changes. The teaching process should reflect modern society's needs while also developing students' critical thinking and skills. Students will be well prepared and able to understand both the context and cultural factors when confronted with media-mediated communication and messages if they have a basic understanding of the target culture.

The achievement of the aforementioned objectives is critical for successful communication in any social context [7].

In conclusion, according to the cultural model, languages are associated with cultures, communities, and societies that use them for communication, and students should be encouraged to become proficient speakers of a foreign language. To that end, English language teachers are to guide them in developing various skills, contributing to the development of their knowledge, and assisting them in reflecting on their own culture. As a result, English language teachers must be familiar with the new skills and strategies that their students must develop for intercultural understanding.

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