



COMPETENCE AND COMPETENCE PROBLEMS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS

Kenjabaeva Dilafro'z Abdisalimovna

Doctor of philosophy on pedagogical sciences, PhD, Termez state university, Uzbekistan

ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: Intercultural competence, foreign language teaching, teacher training, intercultural awareness in higher education, intercultural communication.

Received: 17.03.2024

Accepted: 22.03.2024

Published: 27.03.2024

Abstract: In the field of foreign language teaching in higher education, the scope goes beyond mere language acquisition to include the cultivation of intercultural competence in both teachers and learners. The importance of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching lies in its ability to equip learners with the necessary skills to navigate successfully in diverse cultural environments, especially for students who intend to study abroad or in a multicultural context. The development of such a competence therefore enables them not only to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, but also to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and of the cultural nuances embedded in the target language. However, developing this competence is by no means a simple matter; it requires specialised training and continuous professional development for teachers. Teachers are expected to have extensive experience, sensitivity and some knowledge of the cultural implications associated with the language being taught, which presents its own set of challenges.

INTRODUCTION

First, it seems important to clarify the distinction between 'cultural' and 'intercultural' awareness, which may seem confusing. Cultural awareness involves recognising and understanding different cultural values, beliefs, norms, behaviours and practices, acknowledging the existence of cultural differences and being aware of one's own cultural background (Winkelman, 2005).

By cultivating this awareness, it is possible to develop a genuine appreciation of 'otherness', to avoid relying on stereotypes and to foster an open-minded attitude towards other cultures. In addition, actively seeking knowledge about different cultures, including their history, traditions and social dynamics, can be part of cultural awareness. Intercultural competence builds on cultural awareness. This means that cultural awareness provides the basis for acquiring the necessary knowledge and sensitivity to recognise and respect these differences, while intercultural competence takes this awareness a step further and puts it into practice to enable one to adapt and make meaningful connections with people from different cultures. Christian Puren (2021d), a French language and culture specialist, explains that intercultural competence is the result of collaboration between language and culture educators. According to him, this collaboration integrated the communicative and cultural elements of intercultural approaches, leading to the development of the intercultural component. This integration led to the development of intercultural competence as a key skill, especially in contexts where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact.

1.1 Defining intercultural competence

Defining intercultural competence can be somewhat tricky in the sense that the meaning of intercultural competence can vary from one field of study to another, leading to different definitions that are only applicable in specific contexts. This diversity of interpretation may partly explain the lack of a universal definition (Deardorff, 2006; Dervin and Jacobsson, 2021; Fantini, 2000, 2009). In general terms, intercultural competence refers to the ability to understand, communicate and engage effectively with people from different cultures, demonstrating awareness, understanding and adaptability. Intercultural competence can also refer to openness to different ways of thinking, especially in approaches to evaluation and the design of learning programmes, and to privileging multiple perspectives in the choice of content, reading materials and learning activities (Deardorff, 2011). For the purposes of this paper, which focuses on foreign language teaching in the higher education sector, the definition provided will be specific to that perspective. The paper proposes a definition first put forward by Fantini (2000) in his use of the term 'intercultural communicative competence'. This definition was later adopted as 'intercultural teaching competence' by Nanda Dimitrov et al.(2014). According to their definition, intercultural teaching competence is the ability of teachers to interact with learners in a way that facilitates the learning process for students who are linguistically and culturally different from both the teacher and their fellow learners. To them, this interaction should be effective and contextually appropriate.

1.2 Importance of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching and learning

In Europe, the Council of Europe's 'Common European Framework of Reference' emphasises the importance of 'intercultural awareness' and 'cultural competence' for both teachers and learners; in other words, the framework introduces the notion of the 'intercultural dimension' in language learning objectives (Byram et al., 2002). However, the intercultural dimension is not a new concept in Europe, as it was already addressed in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which stressed "the value of intercultural understanding and plurilingualism" (Abdallah-Preteille, 1999, p. 88). France, for example, has recognised this dimension since the mid-1970s by including the teaching of regional languages and cultures in primary schools (ibid.) and now in higher education. According to the Council of Europe, people with this competence are able to understand and interpret the cultural perspectives of others and relate them to their own. In this way, they are able to enrich their knowledge and reflection of their own cultural beliefs and practices. Through this comparison, they also have a better understanding of their own cultural position. This means that intercultural competence not only increases understanding of others, but also of oneself (Barrett et al., 2014). In higher education, the increasing international mobility of students

has created a multicultural environment. As a result, teachers find themselves in constant interaction with diverse groups, particularly foreign language teachers who often attract a large cohort of foreign students who wish to improve their language skills, either in the target language or in the language of the host country. In such cases, the role of teachers goes beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar. They are also expected to promote an understanding of the cultural aspects associated with the language they teach, as Byram (1997) points out. This understanding enables learners to engage and communicate effectively in the target language while understanding the cultural context in which it is used. However, the concept of culture can seem ambiguous as it is open to different interpretations. When I refer to students' culture, I am referring to their customs and behaviours that stem from their upbringing, beliefs and values influenced by their geographical origins. By cultivating intercultural competence, both teachers and students can reduce potential misunderstandings arising from cultural differences and improve their ability to communicate in different situations. It is also essential for them to understand, appreciate and respect other cultures, as this is a fundamental aspect of global citizenship (Abdallah-Preteille, 1986). Such an ability enables both teachers and students to see the world from different perspectives and to develop empathy and sensitivity towards individuals from different backgrounds (Byram et al., op. cit). In order to foster this particular skill, it is imperative that teachers have the ability to create an inclusive classroom environment that recognises and values the linguistic and cultural differences among their students. In addition, they should use teaching methods that take into account the wide range of diversity within groups of students they teach, incorporating an intercultural approach to enhance language learning and communication (Achieng, 2021). Questions that might be asked are: How can teachers effectively integrate the intercultural approach into their teaching? How can they develop this intercultural competence for themselves and their students? 1.3 An example of a teacher's development of intercultural competence in an EFL classroom. Let's take the example of a department teaching English Language to non-English speaking students from different cultural backgrounds. The teacher (me) recognises the importance of intercultural competence and aims to create a classroom environment that promotes cultural understanding and respect while developing students' ability to communicate effectively in English. When preparing the curriculum, I would design it to include not only vocabulary and grammar lessons, but also cultural components. I would ask students to choose authentic materials such as newspaper, blog or magazine articles, videos produced by themselves, individually or in groups, and/or music that showcase different English-speaking cultures and compare and contrast them with their own, ensuring representation from different countries and regions. This would be a good opportunity for them to practise their oral skills.

REFERENCES

1. Kenjabayeva D. The use of information and communication tools and electronic educational resources in teaching english //Результаты научных исследований в условиях пандемии (COVID-19). – 2020. – Т. 1. – №. 04. – С. 31-34.
2. Kenjabayev J. The role of information communication technology teaching English language skills among the learners in teacher education //Результаты научных исследований в условиях пандемии (COVID-19). – 2020. – Т. 1. – №. 04. – С. 26-31.
3. Kenjaboeva D. TA'LIM BERISH JARAYONIDA O 'QITUVCHI DEONTOLOGISI VA KOMPETENTLIGI VA UNING KO 'RSATKICHLARI //Interpretation and researches. – 2023. – Т. 1. – №. 19.

4. KENJABOEVA D. USE OF DEONTOLOGY AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS //European International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Management Studies. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 10. – С. 99-103.
5. Кенжабаева Д. OLIY O'QUV YURTI SHAROITIDA ZAMONAVIY O'QITUVCHINI TAYYORLASHNING DEONTOLOGIK KOMPONENTI //Ижтимоий-гуманитар фанларнинг долзарб муаммолари/Актуальные проблемы социально-гуманитарных наук/Actual Problems of Humanities and Social Sciences. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 11.
6. Алаудинова Д. Written translation of texts related to different spheres //Зарубежная лингвистика и лингводидактика. – 2024. – Т. 2. – №. 1. – С. 13-18.
7. ALAUDINOVA D. FRAZEOLOGIK BIRIKMALAR VA ULARNI TARJIMA QILISH USULLARI //XALQ TA'LIMI. – С. 57.
8. Алаудинова Д. Связь стилистики и когнитивной лингвистики на уроках языка //Традиции и инновации в исследовании и преподавании языков. – 2023. – Т. 1. – №. 1. – С. 95-99.
9. Ходжакулова Ш. А. ИЗУЧЕНИЕ НАИМЕНОВАНИЯ РОДСТВА В МИРОВОМ ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИИ ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ «ТЕРМИН» В ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ //Science and innovation. – 2022. – Т. 1. – №. В3. – С. 871-875.
10. Ходжакулова Ш. А. ЗНАЧЕНИЕ «ОТЕЦ» И ЕГО ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНО СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ МИКРОСИСТЕМЫ В РУССКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ //Oriental Art and Culture. – 2022. – Т. 3. – №. 3. – С. 7-11.