

## The Role of Intercultural Communication in Fostering Cross-Cultural Competence

**Masharipova Leninza Axmedjanovna**

PhD, Urgench, Khorezm

leninza86@mail.ru

**Abstract:** Effective educators integrate a variety of engaging activities into their lessons through interactive methodologies, thereby enhancing student engagement by employing innovative pedagogical technologies. Task-based games serve as a significant source of intrinsic motivation for learners. In particular, incorporating culturally diverse games or interactive activities has been shown to elevate students' emotional engagement and foster a deeper interest in the subject matter. Participation in such intercultural tasks enhances students' sense of responsibility, promotes active involvement, and improves cognitive flexibility. Moreover, these activities contribute to the development of critical thinking and leadership competencies. When conducted in small groups or pairs, these interactive exercises tend to yield more effective educational outcomes, positively influencing both the intellectual and socio-emotional development of students.

**Keywords:** method, pedagogue, culture, communication, group, assignment, interest, attitude.



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**INTRODUCTION.** The ongoing processes of economic globalization, the successful development of international cooperation, and the increasing convergence and mutual understanding among cultures signify the necessity of fostering intercultural dialogue and humanistic connections among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds inhabiting the shared global environment. In this context, the acquisition of a foreign language becomes a crucial socio-cultural imperative, serving as a primary medium for interpersonal communication and the exchange of ideas. Language learning thus plays a fundamental role in facilitating cross-cultural interaction and promoting global social cohesion.

By the beginning of our century, as a result of new changes in the teaching methodology, attention has increased to acquire a foreign language by teaching/learning information about the culture of the country where the language is being studied. In Germany it is called sprachbezogen Landeskunde, that is, language-oriented country studies, in France it is called language at civilization, and in America it is called cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication. [1,10]

Although the terms “cross-cultural” and “intercultural” are used interchangeably, “cross-cultural communication” usually studies the communication laws of two or more cultures, while

“intercultural communication” is the interaction between people of different cultural backgrounds. “Cross-cultural communication” usually compares and contrasts the national discourse and communication styles of different cultures. For example, politeness norms or conflict negotiation strategies in Japanese management meetings can be compared to Irish management meetings. Another example is comparing the behavior of economics students in Saudi Arabia when debating an important issue with the behavior of the students in Malaysia on the same issue.

In contrast, intercultural communication studies interpersonal relationships between individuals (or groups) of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This can be face-to-face or written discourse communication. As technology advances, many researchers are focusing more on online “intercultural communication” (e.g, Skype calls, chat groups, email, intercultural exchange in non-native English online classes). Intercultural communication studies the verbal and nonverbal communication, attitudes, and worldviews of people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicating with each other. Naturally, the talking people are the people with different mother tongues, so they choose a language that is understandable for everyone, for example, they can choose English, which is an international language. Mother tongues of one person or several persons may be selected from the participants to establish a strong relationship with each other.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS.** D.T. Maltseva writes about the friendly and peaceful living of representatives of different cultures in one country: “Preparing students for intercultural cooperation in educational conditions, teaching them intercultural communication is carried out, firstly, by improving the skills and competences related to speech activity in order to master the codes of a foreign language, and secondly, when meeting with communicators from different cultures, they are closely acquainted with the culture of the interlocutor in order to understand their culture. Studying a foreign language and foreign culture serves to broaden students' worldview and increase their language wealth”.

The emergence of this new direction in the USA was caused by the necessity of American politicians, diplomats and businessmen to solve various problems with partners belonging to a foreign language and culture.

Today, learning a foreign language, i.e. mastering grammatical categories and communicating with a representative of the country whose language is being studied, is no longer enough. In order to increase the effectiveness of foreign language classes, it began to require the wide use of materials related to country studies in classes. In this regard, a lot of work is being done in Uzbekistan. Every year scientific conferences are organized on the topic of intercultural communication, scientific articles and books are published.

In addition, “Developing Intercultural Communication in teaching a foreign language” has been taught to students of the foreign philology faculty in Uzbek universities as the main subject. Issues of intercultural communication are also reflected in proverbs and hadiths, which are considered priceless masterpieces of the Uzbek people. They advise to be kind, to greet strangers, and to help those in need.

**RESULTS.** An individual’s understanding of the history, traditions, and core values of their native culture significantly enhances their ability to engage effectively with individuals from other cultural backgrounds. A person who respects and values their own cultural heritage is more likely to exhibit appreciation and respect for other cultures, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings or conflicts during intercultural interactions.

There are several compelling factors necessitating a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and the central role of language within it. The accelerating dynamics of globalization, international mobility, technological advancement, shifting demographic patterns, and the prevalence of intercultural tensions have made ethical and effective intercultural

communication more vital than ever before. In response to these changes, individuals must develop the ability to adapt to diverse cultural settings and engage constructively within them. Engaging in dialogue with individuals from different linguistic and cultural contexts not only enhances intercultural competence but also fosters self-awareness and reveals effective strategies for building and sustaining meaningful intercultural relationships.

When we encounter people who have different opinions about what is right and wrong, we sometimes question our own beliefs, values, and actions. Of course, this may seem like an uncomfortable and even threatening situation, but it can also be a great opportunity to learn about intercultural communication. As we become aware of different moral standards and ways of being, we learn more about our faith, identity, and place in society. Learning more about oneself is an important and necessary part of becoming an ethical intercultural communicator.

Learning a language and intercultural communication offers great opportunities for personal growth and development. In our personal, educational or professional life, when we encounter language and cultural differences abroad, we have the opportunity to learn more about ourselves and the people we socialize with in other environments. By being exposed to different beliefs and practices and truly open to the possibility of thinking critically about our own intercultural attitudes and behaviors, we can gradually reach higher levels of intercultural competence.

Improving our understanding and skills in intercultural communication certainly means increasing our awareness of ourselves, as well as learning more about individuals from other nations with different values and customs. As Rothman [6, 15-16] says:

A commitment to intercultural competence is not only a commitment to learning more about other cultures, but also to developing culturally appropriate communication skills. It also involves personal awareness, personal growth, understanding and (as far as possible) letting go of any prejudices, stereotypes or wrong learning. It is a constant goal, though difficult, to completely eliminate any prejudices we may have.

Acquiring intercultural knowledge and skills (for example) along with critical reflection on “real-world” intercultural interactions (e.g., face-to-face and online) can ultimately lead to expanded self-awareness and more satisfying intercultural relationships. A number of cultural studies scholars (e.g., Chen and Starosta 1998; Hall 2005; Kale 1991) have proposed guidelines and principles for universal ethical intercultural communication. That is, they mentioned behaviors we can adopt in intercultural interactions to make the world a better, more just a place.

**CONCLUSION.** Although the formal academic study of intercultural communication is relatively recent, the field is inherently complex due to its interdisciplinary nature and the diverse academic approaches employed across different global contexts. Researchers in this area may operate within or beyond the boundaries of their primary disciplines—some engaging in cross-disciplinary collaboration, while others may work in isolation and remain less informed about developments in adjacent fields. Consequently, an individual’s understanding of intercultural communication is largely influenced by the extent of their academic exposure, research engagement, and practical experience within both intercultural communication and related scientific domains.

In an increasingly globalized world, intercultural communication has emerged as a critical area of inquiry and application across various disciplines, including but not limited to management, marketing, healthcare, education, tourism, translation studies, and legal practice. Reflecting this growing importance, institutions in Uzbekistan—as well as in many other countries—have incorporated intercultural communication into the curricula of diverse academic departments, including those offering General Education programs.

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