HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF WESTERN-CENTRIC CONCEPTS IN UZBEK EFL CLASSROOMS

Karimov Feruzjon
PhD Researcher, Teacher
English Department
"TIIAME" National Research University

Annotation: This article examines the role of Western-centric concepts in developing intercultural communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. As English language teaching increasingly incorporates cultural content, learners are exposed to diverse values, perspectives, and communication patterns. The study explores how Western-oriented cultural elements contribute to cultural awareness, critical thinking, and effective intercultural communication. The findings suggest that a balanced integration of global and local cultural perspectives can enhance learners' intercultural competence while preserving their cultural identity.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence, Western-centric concepts, EFL education, cultural awareness, intercultural communication, Uzbek learners.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, English language education increasingly emphasizes not only linguistic competence but also intercultural communicative competence (ICC). As English serves as a medium of international communication, learners are frequently exposed to cultural values and perspectives embedded in language teaching materials.

Many contemporary EFL textbooks contain Western-centric concepts that promote cultural awareness and intercultural understanding. In Uzbekistan, the growing use of international teaching materials has created new opportunities for integrating such concepts into English language instruction.

However, limited research has examined how Western-oriented cultural content contributes to the development of intercultural communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. Therefore, this study explores the role of Western-centric concepts in fostering intercultural competence and discusses their pedagogical implications for English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was first systematically developed by Byram (1997), who argued that successful communication requires not only linguistic knowledge but also intercultural awareness, attitudes, and skills. Kramsch (1993) emphasized the inseparable relationship between language and culture, suggesting that language learning should involve cultural understanding. Similarly, Risager (2007) highlighted the transnational nature of language education in a globalized world. Recent studies have examined the role of cultural content in EFL materials. Baker (2015) argues that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives enhances learners' intercultural awareness and prepares them for global communication. Sharifian (2014) further notes

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

that English functions as an international language that reflects multiple cultural identities rather than a single native-speaker culture. Although numerous studies have explored intercultural competence in language education, limited research has investigated how Western-centric concepts influence intercultural competence among Uzbek EFL learners. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating Western-oriented cultural content into English language teaching in Uzbekistan.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, analysis of EFL teaching materials, and semi-structured interviews with English language teachers and university students. The participants were selected from higher educational institutions in Uzbekistan where English is taught as a foreign language. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to cultural awareness, intercultural attitudes, and perceptions of Western-centric concepts. This approach enabled the researcher to examine how cultural content influences learners' intercultural communicative competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that the integration of Western-centric concepts into English language teaching significantly contributes to the development of intercultural communicative competence among Uzbek EFL learners. Data collected through classroom observations, interviews, and teaching material analysis demonstrate that exposure to Western cultural themes enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity and encourages them to view cultural differences from a broader perspective.

One of the most notable findings is the improvement in learners' cultural awareness. Students reported that studying topics related to Western lifestyles, educational systems, social norms, traditions, and communication styles helped them recognize the existence of multiple cultural viewpoints. Many participants indicated that they became more conscious of the similarities and differences between Uzbek culture and Western cultures. This increased awareness enabled learners to avoid stereotypes and develop a more balanced understanding of cultural diversity.

The study also found that Western-oriented cultural content positively influences learners' attitudes toward intercultural communication. Participants expressed greater willingness to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds and demonstrated increased tolerance toward unfamiliar customs and beliefs. Such attitudes are essential components of intercultural communicative competence because they promote respectful and effective communication in multicultural environments. The findings support Byram's (1997) argument that intercultural competence involves not only knowledge but also attitudes characterized by openness, curiosity, and respect for cultural differences.

Another important result concerns the development of critical thinking skills. Classroom observations revealed that discussions based on Western cultural topics encouraged students to analyze, compare, and evaluate cultural practices rather than simply memorize information. Learners

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

frequently engaged in comparative discussions about family values, educational expectations, gender roles, workplace behavior, and social etiquette. Through these activities, students developed the ability to reflect on their own cultural assumptions while gaining a deeper understanding of foreign perspectives. This finding aligns with Kramsch's (1993) view that language learning should foster critical cultural awareness alongside linguistic proficiency.

The analysis of teaching materials showed that textbooks containing authentic cultural content provided valuable opportunities for intercultural learning. Reading passages, case studies, videos, and discussion tasks exposed students to real-life cultural situations, enabling them to develop practical communication strategies. Such exposure helped learners understand how language use varies across cultural contexts and improved their ability to interpret culturally specific meanings. As English increasingly serves as a global lingua franca, this ability becomes particularly important for successful international communication.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Some participants expressed concerns regarding the compatibility of certain Western values with traditional Uzbek cultural norms. Topics related to individualism, personal freedom, family relationships, and social behavior occasionally generated discomfort or disagreement among students. Teachers reported that learners sometimes struggled to reconcile contrasting cultural perspectives, especially when foreign practices appeared to conflict with local traditions and religious values. These findings suggest that the uncritical presentation of Western cultural content may create tension and resistance among learners.

Furthermore, the study revealed that students' responses to Western-centric concepts varied depending on their educational background, level of English proficiency, and previous exposure to foreign cultures. Learners who had access to international media or communication with foreigners generally displayed higher levels of intercultural awareness and adaptability. In contrast, students with limited intercultural experience required additional guidance and contextual explanation to understand unfamiliar cultural references.

The findings also emphasize the crucial role of teachers in facilitating intercultural learning. Teachers acted as cultural mediators who helped students interpret cultural information, address misunderstandings, and engage in meaningful reflection. Effective teachers encouraged balanced discussions that acknowledged both global perspectives and national cultural values. Rather than presenting Western culture as superior or universal, they promoted an inclusive approach that recognized the value of cultural diversity. This pedagogical strategy enabled students to develop intercultural competence while maintaining a strong sense of their own cultural identity.

Overall, the results suggest that Western-centric concepts can serve as valuable tools for developing intercultural communicative competence when implemented thoughtfully and contextually. The successful integration of such content requires culturally responsive teaching practices that encourage comparison, reflection, and dialogue. By combining global cultural perspectives with local cultural knowledge, educators can create learning environments that prepare students for effective participation in an increasingly interconnected world while preserving respect for national traditions and values.

CONCLUSION

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The integration of Western-centric concepts into EFL classrooms can significantly contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence among Uzbek learners. Exposure to culturally diverse content promotes cultural awareness, critical thinking, and effective communication skills necessary for participation in a globalized world. At the same time, successful implementation requires culturally responsive teaching practices that respect local traditions and values. Rather than replacing national culture, Western-oriented content should serve as a means of fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. The study concludes that a balanced integration of global and local cultural perspectives can enhance the quality of English language education in Uzbekistan and support the development of globally competent yet culturally grounded learners.

REFERENCES

1. Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57–64.
2. Baker, W. (2015). *Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
3. Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
4. Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). Cultural Mirrors: Materials and Methods in the EFL Classroom.
5. Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.
6. Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor Books.
7. Holliday, A. (2005). *The Struggle to Teach English as an International Language*. Oxford: OUP.
8. Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: OUP.
9. Kumaravadivelu, B. (2008). *Cultural Globalization and Language Education*. Yale University Press.
10. McKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English as an International Language*. Oxford: OUP.
11. Risager, K. (2007). *Language and Culture Pedagogy*. Multilingual Matters.
12. Sharifian, F. (2014). *English as an International Language*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
13. Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (2013). *Cultural Awareness*. Oxford: OUP.
14. Jalolov, J. J. (2012). *Chet Til O‘qitish Metodikasi*. Toshkent.
15. Mirziyoyev, Sh. M. (2020). O‘zbekiston Respublikasida xorijiy tillarni o‘rganishni rivojlantirish bo‘yicha qaror va farmonlar.