

An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching

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Academic acceleration is an introduction to educating the gifted in the age of artificial intelligence

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Abstract: Gifted people are a group of people whom God has bestowed with abilities, skills, and preparations that are superior to other peers. Talent grows and flourishes when it is cared for and nurtured. Despite the West's interest in talent and gifted people, they can participate effectively in community service and environmental development. Hence, this study aims to present the concept of academic acceleration as an important entry point for gifted education in the era of artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Academic Acceleration, Giftedness, Talented people, Artificial Intelligence

An Intercultural Approach to English Language Teaching

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Abstract: The teaching of English as a global language, therefore, becomes more than linguistic competence; it also involves comprehension and interaction with a plurality of cultural contexts through which English is used. This would mean that the approach to ELT is intercultural or integrates language learning into cultural awareness, making efforts to foster both linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive communication. The paper is to be explored regarding how an intercultural approach to ELT will serve to bolster the students' understanding of global communication. It considers the impact of cultural knowledge on language use, the part played by the teacher in fostering intercultural competence, and the practical tactics involved in introducing cultural elements into a classroom-based English language programme. This is finally concluded with challenges and opportunities arising through this approach in modern teaching.

Keywords: The Concept of Intercultural Competence, Pedagogical Strategies for Intercultural ELT & the Global Context of Intercultural ELT

Introduction

Communicating across cultures has been carried to the fore by a growing globalization of the world. The global lingua franca English plays an important role in such cross-cultural exchanges. While ELT has over the years focused on developing linguistic competence, which means developing aspects like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and reading skills, the significance of cultural understanding in communication has only been fully acknowledged in recent years.

An intercultural approach of ELT surpasses linguistically correct by ruling out the possibility of the separation of language and culture. It holds that language reflects the cultural identities and values of its speakers rather than a tool of communication. That encourages the inclusion of features of culture to the language learning process by teachers to help the students handle actual, real-life transactions in English, and then know how to speak but also why language is used in specific ways in various contexts.

This argues for the need of an intercultural approach in ELT. It identifies some of these areas, such as the relationship between language and culture, challenges in teaching cultural sensitivity, and strategies which can be implemented in classrooms leading towards intercultural competence. Moreover, it portrays insight into how this approach can be applied in different educational settings, taking into account that students belong to quite diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The Concept of Intercultural Competence

Definition: Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to communicate successfully and appropriately with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves knowledge of one's own culture as well as being aware of how others live, value, and behave in their respective cultures. Intercultural competence in language learning would mean knowing how to speak the language and also how to use that speech appropriately so that it doesn't offend sensibilities as those are associated directly with the cultural context of the speaker. (Corbett, 2003).

For instance, the difference between "How are you?" and "How do you do?" is introduced as familiarity with English formality levels, which begins to have elements

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of understanding social norms in addition to pure form or sequence. Also part of this mix is the appreciation of cultural variations between your culture and the other culture in the non-verbal face of communication, including gestures, eye contact, and body language. Therefore, teaching English means no longer being restricted to teaching grammar and vocabulary but also the culture itself which goes to influence communication.

The Role of Culture in Language Learning

Language is fundamentally linked to culture, as through language, cultural identities are constructed and negotiated. Culture is usually handled as an appendage in traditional ELT methods, only within the teaching of nations whose native tongue is English, that is, the UK, US, or Australia. This narrow perception, however, does not include an enormous extent of English-speaking countries and communities with other diverse practices. (Romanowski, 2017).

An intercultural approach to ELT concerns the teaching of various cultures of the English-speaking world. In this, students are provided with the knowledge of various forms of speaking English throughout the global world, such as British, American, Australian, and Indian English, among many others. This will allow the learner to understand how a language is implemented due to cultural backgrounds.

Further, the intercultural approach encourages the students to reflect on their own cultural assumptions and prejudices. To that extent, by comparing their own culture with the ones of the others, they achieve more reflected knowledge on both their own cultural identities and the languages.

Pedagogical Strategies for Intercultural ELT

The intercultural approach to teaching English requires a shift in pedagogical strategies. Teachers must stop the routine exercise in the usage of grammar and vocabulary to add cultural learning, critical thinking, and others. Here are some ideas on how to structure culture into ELT.

Cultural Texts and Media: Use a range of authentic materials such as literature, movies, news articles, and advertisements from different English-speaking countries to involve your students in the use of various cultural perspectives to explore these differences. These can be used to illustrate cultural variations in humour, social norms, traditions, and values in order to enable students to understand language in context. (Suarez, 2023).

Critical thinking can be facilitated through case studies and group discussions on cultural dilemmas, like the misunderstanding one caused by the difference in communication styles across cultures. Some examples include case study-based discussions relating to misunderstandings that occurred due to differences in nonverbal communication or in the use of formal and informal language.

Role-Playing and Simulations

Role plays that focus on the students being the same people who belong to different cultures can be used in order to enable the learners to use the language in a range of social settings. During such role plays, students should be allowed to try out various registers by giving lessons on when and how to change their language use according to the culture. (Interculturality and the English language classroom, 2021)

Cultural Immersion Experiences If feasible, then expose the students to cultural immersion experiences, like traveling, exchanges, or virtual exchanges with students from other English-speaking countries, in order to give them authentic exposure to subtle differences in cultural usage. Virtual exchanges could connect diverse cultural backgrounds that can actually help students practice intercultural communication in the English language.

Intercultural sensitivity: Language teachers should make the culture aware of the need to respect and openness towards the others' culture. Taboos, misunderstandings, etiquette in different cultures may make students realize own biases and assumptions, developing the ability to face various cultural environments with increased sensitivity.

Challenges of an Intercultural Approach

Although there are many benefits of the intercultural approach, there are also drawbacks. One of the major drawbacks is the unavailability of resources and training for teachers. Many teachers are not trained to teach culture besides language, may not feel confident about integrating cultural materials in the lessons to be taught, and may often not know where to start. This may particularly prove challenging in regions where global media and authentic materials are scarce.

The other challenge is cultural homogeneity in many classrooms. For instance, in areas where culture is homogeneous, intercultural content might appear absolutely irrelevant and alien to the students initially. In order for intercultural learning to be relevant and meaningful, teachers must find ways of making it relevant and reasonable, perhaps by requesting students to discover themselves in cultures and how they can link their own experiences with others.

In addition, a strong focus on intercultural communication may sometime overshadow an emphasis on mastering basic language skills for effective communication. Linguistic skills should be balanced with the cultural awareness that the teachers can bring into the classroom for both adequacies to be effectively learnt in class. (Practices in intercultural language teaching and learning, 2018).

The Global Context of Intercultural ELT

Interconnectivity within the modern world demands an understanding of intercultural communication for international business, diplomacy, personal relationships, and social engagement. More people now talk across borders, which means that communication across different borders will more than ever require good intercultural communication. Among the media through which much intercultural exchange happens, it is obvious that the global lingua franca, English, provides such an opportunity. Hence, a teacher in a language course should put his students in a position of being in contact not only with the natives but also with other individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. (Porto & Byram, 2016)

In the ESL classroom, there are students from countries in which the dominant language is not the same as English, and with them some cultural perspectives. The intercultural approach to teaching in an ESL classroom makes the learners feel more included and appreciated, since such an approach demands the learners engage more with the sharing of cultural experiences and integration of their knowledge of languages and cultures into learning.

Conclusion

The increasing demand for intercultural communication in the modern world calls for an intercultural approach to English Language Teaching. Language and culture can never be separated, as fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity builds communicative competence in students. Sensitizing instruction to the use of the English language by teachers allows pupils to communicate effectively in a number of global contexts so that they become more competent and empathetic communicators.

An intercultural approach, besides granting students the linguistic tools for communication across cultures, helps them acquire a better understanding of the different world that they live in. With all problems tied to teacher training and availability of resources, this approach certainly offers more advantages than disadvantages. While globalization continues to define how people relate to others in this world, intercultural competence will be an essential tool for learners of English worldwide. Cultural sensitivity in the English language class does not only spice up the learning of the language but also enriches life in the global community, which is a more responsible and tolerant place to live in.

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