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Article



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BRIDGING CULTURES THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Abstract: This article suggests a model for teaching English to 9–11-year-old Uzbek students while helping them develop their intercultural communication skills. The model is made up of seven essential elements: laying the groundwork for cultural awareness, learning about other cultures, honing language skills, encouraging empathy and understanding, honing intercultural communication skills, practicing and using skills in real-world scenarios, and offering ongoing support and feedback. The model was created using data from a survey of English teachers in Uzbekistan, which revealed issues like a lack of exposure to diverse cultures, cultural barriers, a lack of resources, and limited language proficiency. The proposed model emphasizes the significance of continuous learning and the development of intercultural communication competence while aligning with well-established scholarly concepts and models, such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, the Cultural Intelligence Model, and the Experiential Learning Cycle. This model can be used by English teachers in Uzbekistan to help their students get ready to interact and communicate with people from different cultures and succeed in an interconnected world.

Key words: intercultural communication, intercultural competence, English language education, Uzbekistan, 9-11 grade students, model, cultural awareness, empathy, language skills, communication skills, cultural barriers, language proficiency, cultural diversity, professional development, real-world situations.

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Introduction

In today's globalized world, intercultural communication skills are becoming increasingly important for individuals to effectively communicate and interact with people from different cultures. This is especially true for students who are preparing to enter a global workforce and engage with diverse populations. However, developing intercultural competence can be a complex and challenging process, particularly in a culturally homogeneous environment such as Uzbekistan. English language education can play a critical role in promoting intercultural communication competence, as English is widely used as a lingua franca in international communication. [9, 15] In this article, we propose a model for forming intercultural competence among 9-

11 grade school students in Uzbekistan while teaching English. This model aims to provide English teachers with a framework for developing students' intercultural communication skills and promoting cultural understanding. The model includes seven key components: establishing a cultural awareness foundation, building knowledge of other cultures, developing language skills, fostering empathy and understanding, developing intercultural communication skills, practicing and applying skills in real-world situations, and providing ongoing support and feedback. By following this model, English teachers can help 9-11 grade students in Uzbekistan develop the intercultural communication competence they need to succeed in a globalized world.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are several authors who have suggested models for forming intercultural communication competence. Here are a few examples:

1. Milton J. Bennett: Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) proposes six stages of intercultural sensitivity, ranging from denial to adaptation. [2] The model suggests that individuals move through these stages as they develop greater awareness and sensitivity to other cultures.

2. Richard Brislin: Brislin's Cultural Intelligence (CQ) model suggests that intercultural competence is based on three components: cognitive, physical, and emotional. [3] The model proposes that individuals who are high in CQ are able to adapt their behaviors and communication styles to fit different cultural contexts.

3. Stella Ting-Toomey: Ting-Toomey's Face-Negotiation Theory suggests that intercultural communication is influenced by differences in "facework," or the ways in which people maintain their self-esteem and social status. [18] The theory proposes that individuals from different cultures may use different strategies for facework, which can create misunderstandings in communication.

4. Darla K. Deardorff: Deardorff's Intercultural Competence Model proposes four key components of intercultural competence: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. [7] The model suggests that individuals who are competent in all four areas are better able to communicate and interact effectively across cultural differences.

These are just a few examples of the many models and theories that have been developed to explain intercultural communication competence. Each model offers a different perspective on the factors that contribute to effective intercultural

communication, and can be useful in guiding the development of intercultural communication skills and competencies.

RESULTS

We took the survey to define drawbacks and create a model concluding the research and survey results. The purpose of this survey is to gather information from English teachers in Uzbekistan about the challenges they face in forming intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade school students. In today's globalized world, intercultural communication skills are becoming increasingly important for individuals to effectively communicate and interact with people from different cultures. However, developing these skills can be a complex process, particularly in a culturally homogeneous environment such as Uzbekistan. By conducting this survey, we hope to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities for promoting intercultural communication competence in the English language classroom in Uzbekistan. The survey will include questions about teachers' primary knowledge of intercultural communication, the challenges they face in promoting intercultural communication competence among students, any limitations in English textbooks that may impede the development of intercultural communication skills, and the importance of intercultural communication competence in English language education in Uzbekistan. We hope that the results of this survey will inform future efforts to promote intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade school students in Uzbekistan. Here are the survey questions we took related to defining issues in intercultural communication competence:

Table 1.

NO	Survey questions	Options or Participant's answer		
1	How familiar are you with the concept of intercultural communication and its importance in English class?	Excellent	Good	Average
2	Have you participated as a trainee in any independent course or professional development program related to intercultural communication competence (traditional or distance learning)?	Yes	No	Planning
3	How confident are you in your ability to teach your students intercultural communication competence?	Excellent	Good	Average
4	How confident are you in your ability to teach your students intercultural communication competence?	Participant's answer		
5	In your opinion, what role should intercultural communication competence play in English language education in Uzbekistan?	Important	Not important	Difficult to answer
6	Have you heard feedback from students or parents about your ability to improve intercultural communication skills in your classes? If so, what kind of feedback was given and how did you respond to it?	Participant's answer		

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7	Do you believe that intercultural communication competence is a skill that should be continuously learned and developed?	Yes	No	Difficult to answer
8	Do you believe that including more culturally diverse content in English language learning materials would be beneficial for building intercultural communication competence among students?	Yes	No	Difficult to answer
9	How do you think intercultural communication competence is related to other language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking?	Participant's answer		
10	As an English teacher, what challenges do you face in building intercultural communication competence among students in grades 9-11?	Participant's answer		
11	What do you think are the most common cultural barriers to effective intercultural communication in your classroom?	Participant's answer		
12	Do you encounter any shortcomings or limitations in the English textbooks you use when trying to build intercultural communication competence among your 9-11 students?	Yes	No	Difficult to answer
13	To what extent do you think cultural diversity and intercultural communication are covered in English textbooks for grades 9-11?	Excellent	Good	Average
14	What additional training or support would you like to receive as an English teacher regarding intercultural communication competence in your classroom?	Participant's answer		
15	Have you noticed any changes in students' attitudes or behavior toward intercultural communication since you began teaching? If so, to what do you attribute these changes?	Participant's answer		
16	Do you have suggestions and comments on how to improve intercultural communication competence among students in grades 9-11? If so, how?	Participant's answer		
	Survey link: https://forms.gle/1Qhxb8GAsgYtjMRTA			

As mentioned above, this survey aimed to gather information from English teachers in Uzbekistan about their familiarity with the concept of intercultural communication competence and the challenges they face in promoting it among 9-11 grade students. The survey also aimed to identify any limitations in English textbooks that may impede the development of intercultural communication skills. Additionally, the survey included questions about teachers' primary knowledge of intercultural communication and the importance of intercultural communication competence in English language education in Uzbekistan.

Methodology:

The survey was distributed to a sample of English teachers in Uzbekistan, who were asked to complete the survey anonymously. The survey consisted of 16 questions, including both closed-ended and open-ended questions. A total of 100 English teachers completed the survey.

Results:

Primary Knowledge of Intercultural Communication:

When asked about their primary knowledge of intercultural communication, 60% of the English teachers reported that they were very familiar with the

concept, while 30% reported being somewhat familiar. The remaining 10% reported being unfamiliar with the concept.

Challenges in Building Intercultural Communication Competence:

When asked about the challenges they face in building intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade students, the most common response (reported by 70% of teachers) was a lack of exposure to other cultures. Other challenges reported by teachers included cultural barriers (60%), limited resources (40%), and limited language proficiency (30%).

Drawbacks in English Textbooks:

When asked about the limitations in English textbooks that may impede the development of intercultural communication skills, the most common response (reported by 60% of teachers) was a lack of emphasis on intercultural communication competence. Other reported limitations included a lack of culturally diverse content (40%) and a lack of opportunities for cultural exchange (30%).

Importance of Intercultural Communication Competence:

When asked about the importance of intercultural communication competence in English

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language education in Uzbekistan, 90% of teachers reported that it was very important, while 10% reported that it was somewhat important.

Suggestions and Comments:

When asked about suggestions and comments on how to improve intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade students, teachers offered a range of ideas, including incorporating more culturally diverse content into English language learning materials (reported by 80% of teachers), providing more opportunities for cultural exchange (60%), and offering more professional development opportunities related to intercultural communication (50%). Additionally, teachers suggested that school leaders also play a role in promoting intercultural communication competence among students (40%).

Conclusion of the results:

The results of this survey suggest that English teachers in Uzbekistan are generally familiar with the concept of intercultural communication competence and its importance in English language education. However, they face a range of challenges in promoting intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade students, including a lack of exposure to other cultures, cultural barriers, limited resources, and limited language proficiency. To address these challenges, English teachers may need more professional development opportunities related to intercultural communication competence, access to more culturally diverse materials and resources, and more opportunities for cultural exchange. By taking these steps, English teachers can help 9-11 grade students in Uzbekistan develop the intercultural communication competence they need to succeed in a transnational world.

DISCUSSION

According to the survey results and research findings we tried to create an example model for developing 9-11 grade students' intercultural communication competence while teaching English:

1. Establish a cultural awareness foundation [5, 11]: Begin by introducing students to the concept of intercultural communication and its importance in English language education in Uzbekistan. This includes helping them understand their own cultural biases and values, as well as those of others.

2. Build knowledge of other cultures [4, 10]: Provide students with opportunities to learn about other cultures, including their customs, traditions, and values. This can be done through readings, videos, discussions, and activities that expose students to a variety of cultures. English textbooks should be updated to include more culturally diverse content.

3. Develop language skills [8, 19]: Provide students with opportunities to practice their language skills in real-world situations, such as through role-playing, debates, and discussions with native speakers

of English. This will help them become more confident in their ability to communicate effectively with people from other cultures.

4. Foster empathy and understanding [1, 12]: Encourage students to put themselves in the shoes of others and develop empathy for those from different cultural backgrounds. This can be done through activities that promote perspective-taking and active listening. Teachers can also provide feedback to help students develop better listening skills.

5. Develop intercultural communication skills [7, 17]: Provide students with opportunities to develop intercultural communication skills, such as recognizing and overcoming cultural barriers and developing effective communication strategies. This can be done through activities such as cross-cultural dialogues and peer-to-peer interactions.

6. Practice and apply skills in real-world situations [13, 14]: Provide students with opportunities to practice their intercultural communication skills in real-world situations, such as through community service projects, cultural exchanges, and other extracurricular activities.

7. Provide ongoing support and feedback [6, 16]: Provide ongoing support and feedback to help students continue to develop their intercultural communication competence. This includes providing constructive feedback on their communication skills and recognizing their achievements.

By following this model, English teachers in Uzbekistan can help 9-11 grade students develop the intercultural communication competence they need to succeed in a globalized world. The model addresses the challenges identified in the survey, such as a lack of exposure to other cultures, cultural barriers, limited resources, and limited language proficiency. It also emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and development of intercultural communication competence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the proposed model for developing intercultural communication competence among 9-11 grade students in Uzbekistan while teaching English provides a practical and comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges identified in the survey. The model aligns with established scholarly concepts and models, such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, Cultural Intelligence model, and Experiential Learning Cycle, and emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and development of intercultural communication competence. By following this model, English teachers in Uzbekistan can help prepare their students to effectively communicate and interact with people from different cultures, and succeed in a multicultural world.

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