

Building Intercultural Competence in English Language Learners: Practices and Materials of Cultural-Based Language Teaching

Authors : Randa Alahmadi

Abstract : Because the world has become a global village, English is not only used by native speakers, but also by non-native speakers from culturally diverse backgrounds. Even though learning a second/foreign language requires development of the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, there is also an intertwined relationship between language and culture, making it difficult to teach language without knowing the cultural context in which it is to be used. In the past decade, the number of international students enrolled in universities around the world has increased significantly. Having the urge to communicate effectively would serve as a motivation for both international and domestic students. The teaching of culture is important because linguistic competence is not enough for successful communication with speakers of other languages. Therefore, whether teaching natives or non-natives, students need to improve their cross-cultural communication skills and become culturally prepared to communicate successfully with people from other cultures. Teachers can equip their students for this environment by giving them appropriate knowledge and skills for effective intercultural communication. This paper will focus on the importance of intercultural communicative competence and its role in developing students' understanding of diverse cultures as part of learning foreign/second languages. It will also explain how teachers can decide which culture should be taught: the target culture, the learners' culture, or both. Moreover, practical and effective techniques that can be used in cultural-based language teaching will be shared.

Keywords : cultural-based language teaching, English as a lingua franca, English language learners, intercultural communicative competence

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