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Named after Vadym Hetman

HOW TO BOOST CRITICAL THINKING IN INTECULTURAL COMMUNICATION COURSE

The unexamined life is not worth living, because they realize that many unexamined lives together result in an uncritical, unjust, dangerous world.

The Socratic principle

Summary. *The article addresses the issue of developing students' critical thinking skills as an effective way of dealing with stereotypes arising in intercultural communication. These skills constitute an integral component of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which is the result of merging communicative and intercultural competences and recognized as a key goal in foreign language teaching. The article gives an overview of critical thinking skills, describes their standards and finds that these skills are instrumental in overcoming cultural stereotypes. Based on our teaching experience, we suggest some activities for developing critical thinking skills in the Intercultural communication course. The activities are aimed at reducing and preventing stereotypes, or overgeneralizations, which often lead to misunderstanding and distorted perceptions of other cultures as well as students' own culture.*

Key words: *intercultural communicative competence, critical thinking skills, stereotypes.*

Introduction. In today's globalized world, most people have encounters with members of other cultures, and for many people, this is on a regular basis. These encounters happen in social, political, and commercial contexts. It is therefore important for people, in all areas of their lives, to be able to interact successfully with people who are from cultures that are different from theirs. This ability is called **intercultural competence**. Intercultural competence is needed for people from different cultures – with their different values, practices, and ways of communicating – to avoid conflict and misunderstanding. Intercultural competence requires people to be flexible in their thinking and to recognize that people are complex.

Intercultural competence is a key competence that every individual should work on for the development and maintenance of sustainable democratic societies. People's intercultural competence will be more or less effective depending on their familiarity with the particular culture they are encountering and the particular stereotypes that they may believe. No one can be completely prepared for all the intercultural experiences they will have in the future, and so intercultural competence requires flexibility. It requires the ability to think critically about differences. Critical thinking is also necessary to negotiate differences and use strategies to minimize conflict and misunderstandings.

Problem Statement

A considerable number of exercises in modern textbooks activate only lower-order learning and thinking, focus more on recall than reasoning and do not engage students in genuine intellectual work. They seem to be very superficial, and kill students' curiosity and the desire to question deeply; if we want to generate curiosity, the exercises must evolve into disciplined inquiry and reflection. In other words, every answer should generate more questions. Therefore, before designing an approach to developing students' critical thinking skills to overcome cultural stereotypes in intercultural communication, let us consider: what intercultural communicative competence is; what the core skills of critical thinking are; why it is important to cope with stereotypes.

To see people in ways that are simple and not complex is to **stereotype** people. There are some things that we can learn through memorization, but there are many things that require deep thinking and reflection to learn. The development of intercultural competence is in this second category. In order to develop intercultural competence, we need to think and reflect deeply on our lived experiences with cultures and intercultural encounters. The activities are needed to help students gain awareness towards the importance of this skill in terms of recognizing different perspectives and solving problems by analyzing assumptions carefully, avoiding bias, telling facts from opinions, and experimenting on alternatives.

Before starting delivering the Intercultural Communication Course we should be thinking about specific culture and critical thinking learning objectives that we want to teach our students.

- What lessons about culture do we want to teach our students?
- What critical thinking skills would our students most benefit from practicing in class?
- How can we define our learning objectives and communicate these to our students?

What kind of student outcomes would show us that the lessons are successful? Thus, we can consider an example of objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

- recognize texts/audios containing references to cultural misunderstandings;
- identify the universal values of critical thinking;
- see the value and necessity of empathizing and looking through multiple perspectives;
- reflect on their own experiences in terms of cultural differences and critical thinking.

As English as foreign language (EFL) teachers, we are preparing our students for future intercultural encounters. In order to understand differences, the first step is to understand «Different from what». A necessary step in developing intercultural competence is to have a very clear understanding of oneself as a *cultural being*. That is, we need to understand what our own culture is and how it affects us in a daily life.

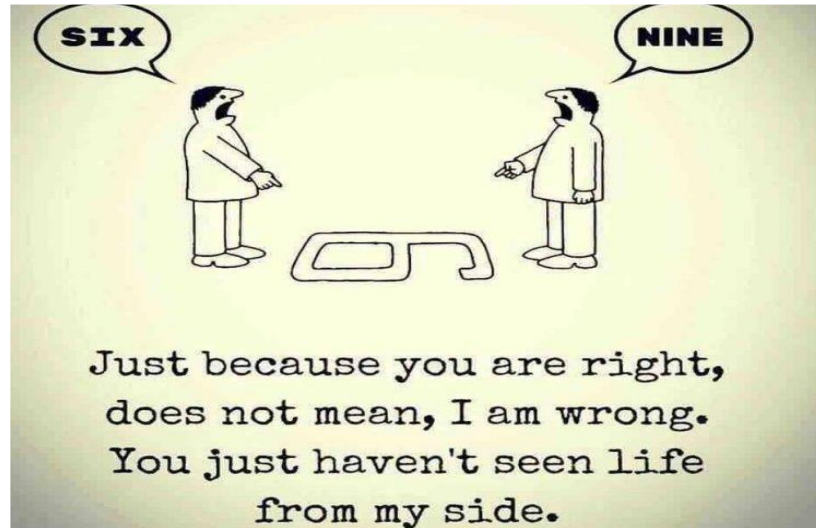
Fostering critical thinking activities

1. Self-exploration. A tool *What shows that I am interculturally competent?* [2] is supposed to contribute to an exciting and rewarding learning experience. By completing the survey students receive support on their way to a fuller understanding of themselves in the context of diversity. To our mind this survey serves like a springboard to developing critical thinking. People who think critically consistently attempt to live rationally, reasonably and empathically. They are keenly aware of the inherently flawed nature of human thinking when left unchecked.

To make this activity more efficient the teacher can encourage students to consider and focus on *the intellectual standards of critical thinking* [4]:

<i>Clarity</i>	being easy to understand and free from confusion or ambiguity
<i>Accuracy</i>	being free from errors, mistakes, or distortions
<i>Precision</i>	being accurate, definite and exact
<i>Relevance</i>	bearing upon or relating to the matter at hand
<i>Depth</i>	dealing with the complexities of the issue
<i>Breadth</i>	recognizing insights in more than one side of a question
<i>Logic</i>	reasoning correctly with a system of principles, concepts and assumptions that underline a discipline, activity or practice
<i>Significance</i>	having relative importance
<i>Fairness</i>	treating all sides alike without reference to one's own feelings or interests

2. Discussions. This activity is based on the discussion of the caricature. It aims to introduce some of the intellectual values of critical thinking, which are clarity, accuracy, consistency, perspective, and depth/breadth.



The teacher asks students to look at the caricature and discuss in pairs the reasons for the conflict / misunderstanding in the picture. Then the students share their ideas with the whole class. As a moderator teacher supports the discussion by focusing on the questions:

- What is the conflict in the picture?
- Why do you think these two people cannot agree?
- Do you think one of them is right and the other is wrong? Why?

3. Critical incidents are useful in probing the cultural assumptions people make in interactions with foreigners and allow for providing alternative interpretations. Not only do they sensitize learners to cultural differences and develop their Intercultural communication sensitivity and competence, but they also contribute to fostering critical thinking. Critical incidents (situation judgments) present students with a real-life ambiguous conflict provoked by differences in cultural values and behaviors, and encourage them to use critical thinking skills to analyze the situation, reflect on it, form hypotheses, find cause and effect, clarify meanings, explain the reasons for miscommunication, and, by deducing the consequences (reaching conclusions by resorting to inductive and deductive reasoning), make appropriate decisions that would settle the conflict.

By providing access to meaningful content, such real-life scenarios can help students understand abstract concepts better and enable them to embrace multiple perspectives. The video THINK FOR YOURSELF [3] can be used as a critical incident. The purpose of this activity is to teach students to see multiple perspectives and to identify possible auto stereotypes, or overgeneralized perceptions of themselves. To discuss the critical incident in this video the use of the Ting-Toomey's O-D-I-S model [5] will be helpful: «*The mindful O-D-I-S method refers to mindful observation, description, interpretations, and suspending ethnocentric evaluations. Rather than engaging in hasty, negative evaluations, O-*

D-I-S analysis is a slowing-down process that involves learning to observe with one-pointed watchfulness and wakefulness—observing the verbal and nonverbal signals and the underlying meanings that are being constructed in the communication process. Skipping the mindful observation process when confronted with different patterns of behavior often leads to unconscious incompetent behavior».

Conclusion. In this paper the value of critical thinking skills for overcoming cultural stereotypes in intercultural communication has been overviewed. The concept of intercultural communicative competence was clarified. It was proved that critical thinking skills are indispensable part of intercultural communicative competence and are crucial for overcoming cultural stereotypes. Thus, students in the Intercultural Communication Course which aims at developing their intercultural communication competence should be engaged in using critical thinking skills on a regular basis. Competent critical thinkers' approach intercultural communication encounters well equipped to reduce bias, partiality and prejudices which impede such contacts, and, thus, their chances for successful cross-cultural interactions are high. If learners are to produce situationally appropriate utterances, they have to be able to determine what can be said, to whom, and where, when and how. Such practice in the Intercultural Communication course classroom is extremely important since how we do it in our native language is a powerful influence working against the appropriate use of a foreign language. Besides discussions students can make presentations, write essays and critical reviews, prepare posters, participate in debates, etc. When doing these projects, students will use their critical thinking skills to examine not only their view of the foreign culture but also that of their own culture.

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Старший викладач кафедри іноземних мов і міжкультурної комунікації
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ВПЛИВ ГЛОБАЛІЗАЦІЇ НА РОЗВИТОК АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Анотація. У статті представлений короткий аналіз лексичних змін, що відбуваються в сучасній англійській мові, погляди сучасних британських лінгвістів, що досліджують мову як сутність, що динамічно розвивається. Нові технології, сучасні способи спілкування, сленг, всесвітні проблеми, глобальна культура, інші іноземні мови призводять до лексико-семантичних змін словникового складу англійської мови та її поповнення, про що свідчать численні приклади ЗМІ, наведені у статті. Процес навчання англійської мови як іноземної має бути переглянутий та оптимізований з урахуванням тенденцій розвитку міжкультурної комунікації в умовах полікультурного світу.

Ключові слова: глобалізація, «Глобальна англійська», лексичні зміни, стандартна англійська мова, молодіжний сленг.

Summary. The article presents the analysis of British linguists' views on lexical changes in modern English, the outlook on language as a dynamically developing structure. New technologies, slang, world's problems, Globish culture, other foreign languages, cultural evolution, military and political events of global concern bring about lexical-semantic changes in the English language word stock and vocabulary update which is substantiated by an array of sentences derived from Mass media. The process of learning English as a foreign language should be reviewed and optimized considering the development trends in intercultural communication in a multicultural world.

Key words: globalization, «Globish English», lexical changes, the standard English language, youth slang.

Глобалізація як процес всесвітньої економічної, політичної, культурної та релігійної інтеграції та уніфікації багатогранно впливає на зміни, що відбуваються в англійській мові в даний час. Англійська мова являє собою один із найкращих прикладів зміни та розвитку. Незважаючи на зміни в окремих сферах, загалом англійська мова змінюється не дуже швидко, і залишиться у звичному вигляді на досить довгий час. Виникає закономірне питання: як ставитися до всіх змін, що відбуваються в мові? На думку Майкла Свона, викладачам англійської мови навряд чи варто турбуватися. [4]