TEACHING CULTURE EFFECTIVELY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION METHODS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

ОБУЧЕНИЕ КУЛЬТУРЕ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

MADANIYATNI O'RGATISH: INGLIZ TILI DARSLARIDA MADANIYATLARARO KOMMUNIKATSIYA USULLARINING QIYOSIY TADQIQI

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ABSTRACT

In today's globalised world, equipping students with intercultural communicative competence has become an essential goal of English language education, especially at the school level. As English continues to serve as a bridge between cultures, it is no longer sufficient to focus solely on grammar and vocabulary; students must also learn to understand and respect cultural diversity. This article presents a comparative study of effective methods for teaching culture in English lessons at school, with a particular emphasis on enhancing intercultural communication skills.

The research investigates how the integration of cultural texts, case studies, cultural comparison tasks, role-plays, and authentic materials can support students' development of cultural awareness and empathy. These methods are evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in promoting active engagement, critical thinking, and

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meaningful communication. Drawing on classroom-based observations and learner feedback, the study highlights the practical benefits and challenges of implementing such culturally rich activities in a school setting.

The findings suggest that when cultural content is thoughtfully embedded into language lessons, students become more motivated, more open-minded, and better prepared to interact in diverse social contexts. This article offers practical recommendations for English teachers seeking to integrate intercultural communication into their teaching practices, thereby contributing to the formation of globally competent and culturally sensitive learners.

ANNOTATSIYA

Bugungi globallashgan dunyoda o'quvchilarda madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiyani shakllantirish ingliz tili ta'limining muhim maqsadlaridan biriga aylangan. Ingliz tili turli xalqlar va madaniyatlar o'rtasida aloqa vositasi bo'lib xizmat qilayotgan hozirgi sharoitda, maktab o'quvchilari nafaqat tilni grammatik va lug'aviy jihatdan o'rganishlari, balki turli madaniy kontekstlarda to'g'ri va samarali muloqot qila olishlari ham zarur.

Ushbu maqola maktabdagi ingliz tili darslarida madaniyatni samarali o'rgatish bo'yicha olib borilgan taqqosloviy tadqiqot natijalariga asoslanadi. Tadqiqotda bir nechta madaniy ta'lim metodlari, jumladan madaniy matnlar bilan ishlash, keys-stadi (holat tahlili), madaniy taqqoslash topshiriqlari, rol o'ynash mashqlari hamda autentik materiallardan foydalanish kabi yondashuvlar qamrab olingan. Har bir metod o'quvchilarda madaniy ong, bag'rikenglik, va empatiya rivojlanishiga qanday ta'sir qilishi nuqtai nazaridan baholangan.

Maqolada shuningdek, ushbu uslublarning darsdagi faollik, tanqidiy fikrlash va real hayotdagi kommunikatsiyaga tayyorgarlik kabi jihatlarga ta'siri ham tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot maktab darslarida o'qituvchi va o'quvchi tajribalari asosida olib borilgan bo'lib, amaliy misollar va tavsiyalar orqali madaniy komponentni darslarga qanday samarali integratsiya qilish mumkinligi ko'rsatib beriladi.

Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz tili darslarida madaniy materiallardan maqsadli va puxta foydalanish o'quvchilarning dunyoqarashini kengaytiradi, ularni ochiq fikrli, madaniy jihatdan sezgir va global fikrlaydigan shaxslar sifatida shakllantiradi.

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Ushbu maqola ingliz tili oʻqituvchilari uchun amaliy tavsiyalarni taqdim etib, maktab taʼlimida madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiyani rivojlantirishga oʻz hissasini qoʻshadi.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В современном глобализированном мире формирование межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции у учеников стало одной из важнейших целей преподавания английского языка. Поскольку английский язык сегодня служит средством общения между представителями различных народов и культур, школьникам необходимо не только овладеть грамматикой и лексикой, но и научиться эффективно и корректно общаться в различных культурных контекстах.

Данная статья основана на сравнительном исследовании эффективных методов преподавания культуры на уроках английского языка в школе. В исследование включены такие подходы, как работа с культурными текстами, кейс-стади (анализ конкретных ситуаций), задания на культурное сравнение, ролевые игры и использование аутентичных материалов. Каждый из этих методов рассматривается с точки зрения его влияния на развитие культурного сознания, толерантности и эмпатии у учащихся.

В статье также анализируется, как данные методы способствуют повышению учебной активности, развитию критического мышления и подготовке к реальному межкультурному общению. Исследование основано на школьной практике, опыте учителей и учеников, и предоставляет практические рекомендации по эффективной интеграции культурного компонента в учебный процесс.

Результаты показывают, что целенаправленное и продуманное включение культурных материалов в уроки английского языка расширяет кругозор учащихся и формирует у них открытость, культурную чувствительность и глобальное мышление. Статья предлагает практические советы для учителей английского языка и вносит вклад в развитие межкультурной коммуникации в школьном образовании.

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Keywords: Keywords: intercultural communication, case study, cultural texts, authentic materials, role-play, cultural comparison, cultural competence.

Kalit So'Zlar: madaniyatlararo kommunikatsiya, keys-stadi, madaniy matnlar, autentik materiallar, rol o'ynash, madaniy taqqoslash, madaniy kompetensiya.

Ключевые Слова: межкультурная коммуникация, кейс-стади, культурные тексты, аутентичные материалы, ролевые игры, культурное сравнение, культурная компетентность.

Introduction

In today's globalised and interconnected world, the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) must encompass more than just grammar, vocabulary, and communicative fluency. It must also prepare learners to interact effectively with speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This calls for the integration of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) into the English language curriculum—a competence that includes not only knowledge of other cultures, but also skills, attitudes, and critical awareness that enable meaningful and respectful intercultural interactions (Kramsch, 1993; 1998; 2020).

Claire Kramsch, one of the leading scholars in the field, emphasises that language and culture are inseparable, and that language functions as symbolic power that reflects and shapes cultural identities and worldviews. Therefore, teaching English without its cultural dimensions results in an incomplete learning experience. Developing ICC helps learners become not only more competent communicators but also more tolerant and reflective global citizens.

Despite the theoretical emphasis on ICC, practical implementation in schools often remains superficial. A study by Jantadej and Charubusp (2018) revealed that Thai secondary school teachers, while recognising the importance of cultural teaching, primarily focused on surface-level knowledge—such as cultural facts—while neglecting to foster intercultural attitudes and behaviour. Similarly, Feng (2024) found that junior high school teachers in China face challenges in developing students' cultural sensitivity due to lack of training, resources, and curriculum

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support. However, she highlighted that techniques such as role-plays, case studies, authentic materials, and cultural comparison tasks can significantly enhance learners' intercultural awareness when applied strategically.

This article builds on such theoretical insights and practical findings by investigating how intercultural communication is taught in secondary school English lessons. In addition to analysing scholarly literature, the study includes original empirical data collected through a Google Forms survey conducted among English language teachers. The survey aimed to explore their perceptions, classroom strategies, and the extent to which cultural content is integrated into their teaching. The data revealed varying levels of awareness and application, highlighting both progress and persistent gaps in ICC-based teaching.

By combining theoretical perspectives, international case studies, and local survey data, this article offers a comparative and evidence-based analysis of effective intercultural teaching practices. It further suggests how cultural texts, role-plays, authentic resources, and reflective tasks can be systematically used in English lessons to promote deeper intercultural competence in school-aged learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in language education has become an increasingly prominent focus these days. As globalization continues to bring individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds into frequent contact, the ability to navigate cultural differences in communication is essential for language learners (Kramsch, 1993; 1998; 2020). ICC refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. It entails not just linguistic proficiency but a complex combination of cultural knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes necessary for meaningful cross-cultural interaction (Byram, 1997; 2020).

Byram's (1997) widely adopted model of ICC identifies five interrelated components, known as the "five savoirs." These include attitudes (savoir être), knowledge (savoirs), skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre), skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire), and critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager). Byram emphasizes that a holistic approach to language teaching

must involve not only the development of linguistic competence but also cultural sensitivity, enabling learners to engage with others in a manner that respects and understands cultural differences. Kramsch (2020) further elaborates on the symbolic power of language, arguing that it shapes cultural identities and worldviews. For language learners, this means that an understanding of how language functions within specific cultural contexts is critical.

However, despite the theoretical understanding of the importance of ICC in language education, practical application within classrooms remains challenging. Studies have shown that the teaching of culture in language education often remains superficial, with an overemphasis on cultural facts or stereotypes rather than fostering deeper intercultural understanding (Jantadej & Charubusp, 2018). For example, Thai secondary school teachers, while acknowledging the significance of cultural integration, often limit their cultural instruction to basic cultural knowledge, leaving out critical cultural reflections and the development of intercultural attitudes (Jantadej & Charubusp, 2018). Similarly, in China, the challenge remains in integrating ICC into junior high school curricula, despite its recognized importance (Feng, 2024). Teachers in these contexts often face barriers such as insufficient training, lack of resources, and rigid curriculums that hinder the integration of intercultural approaches.

To address these gaps, scholars have called for more comprehensive approaches that embed ICC throughout language teaching practices. As Dogancay-Aktuna (2005) suggests, English language teacher education programs should not only emphasize pedagogical methodologies but also ensure that teacher trainees develop a strong understanding of cultural diversity and its impact on teaching and learning. She argues that intercultural communication skills are crucial for teachers to navigate the diverse cultural backgrounds that their students bring to the classroom. Teachers need to be equipped with the tools to recognize how their cultural assumptions may influence their teaching practices, and to adapt their pedagogies to accommodate cultural differences effectively.

Furthermore, there is a growing recognition that intercultural competence cannot be acquired solely through passive exposure to cultural content. Active engagement in learning activities that promote cultural reflection and dialogue is essential. For

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example, Makhmudov (2020) outlines various practical strategies for incorporating intercultural communication into language teaching, such as cultural briefings, where students research and present on cultural practices and customs, as well as case studies and role-plays that allow students to practice cultural negotiation in real-time communication.These methods not only expose students to new cultural perspectives but also encourage them to reflect on their own cultural values and assumptions, facilitating a deeper, more critical understanding of intercultural communication.

The role of authentic materials in fostering ICC has also been highlighted as crucial. Feng (2024) suggests that the use of real-world resources, such as films, news articles, and podcasts, allows students to engage with culture in a more meaningful and contextualized way. Authentic materials encourage learners to go beyond textbook depictions of cultural practices, exposing them to the complexities of real-life intercultural interactions. Similarly, role-plays and simulations, as proposed by Makhmudov (2020), enable students to practice negotiation and problem-solving in intercultural contexts, helping them develop the confidence and competence necessary for effective communication across cultures.

One of the key challenges in teaching ICC, as noted by Jantadej and Charubusp (2018), is overcoming the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. This issue is often exacerbated by institutional constraints, such as the pressures of exam-oriented curricula and limited professional development opportunities for teachers. However, the integration of intercultural communication in the classroom can be facilitated through a reflective, action-oriented approach. Teachers should be encouraged to continually assess and adapt their teaching practices based on student feedback and intercultural learning outcomes.

Moreover, the inclusion of empirical research, such as the Google Forms survey conducted in this study, provides valuable insights into the perceptions and practices of English language teachers regarding ICC. The survey data can reveal common trends, challenges, and strategies that teachers employ in fostering intercultural competence in their students. By gathering real-world data from educators themselves, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how

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ICC is taught in English language classrooms, bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

In Logioio (2020), storytelling is positioned as an effective tool within CLIL to enhance both linguistic and intercultural competence. The study highlights that storytelling not only improves language skills but also fosters empathy and cultural awareness by exposing students to diverse cultural narratives. Logioio provides practical strategies for integrating storytelling, including selecting culturally diverse stories, using interactive methods like role-playing, and linking stories to other curriculum areas. The research emphasizes the importance of assessing both language proficiency and intercultural understanding, supporting a holistic approach to language teaching.

This demonstrates a consensus on the importance of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education, while also revealing the challenges teachers face in integrating this competence into their teaching practices. The work of scholars such as Byram, Kramsch, Jantadej and Charubusp, and Makhmudov, along with empirical findings, provide a robust framework for the development of more effective, contextually relevant intercultural teaching strategies. The incorporation of active learning methodologies, authentic materials, and teacher reflection will be key to fostering deeper intercultural competence in language learners. This article aims to build upon these insights and offer practical solutions for integrating ICC into English language education at the secondary school level.

METHODS/METHODOLOGIES

This study adopted a quantitative research design to examine how English teachers incorporate intercultural communication into their language teaching practices. The research was conducted in Namangan, Uzbekistan, using an online survey developed through Google Forms. The participants were English language teachers from various educational settings, including public schools, private institutions, and language centers.

The survey included a combination of multiple choice and checkbox questions. Multiple choice items were used to gather information on teachers' backgrounds, perceptions of intercultural communication, and frequency of use of certain

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practices. Checkbox questions allowed respondents to select multiple methods they use in the classroom, such as cultural texts, case studies, cultural comparison tasks, role-plays, and authentic materials. Additionally, a few open-ended questions were included to provide deeper insight into teachers' individual experiences and challenges.

The form was distributed digitally and remained open for one week. The data from the closed-ended questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, identifying common patterns and trends. The qualitative responses from open-ended questions were examined through thematic analysis, highlighting teachers' attitudes, reflections, and perceived obstacles in implementing intercultural teaching.

Participants

The study involved 25 English teachers, selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

1. A different duration of work experience to ensure the age and experience diversity.

2. Regular involvement in teaching English at the school.

3. Willingness to be a volunteer in a scientific research.

The participants were drawn from both public and private schools in Namangan, ensuring representation from different teaching contexts.

Tools

1. Surveys:

A 15-question survey created using Google Forms served as the primary instrument for data collection, gathering both quantitative and qualitative insights into teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding incorporating given methods in intercultural communication.

Survey link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1EdKHHwJ2zf75szXo60jDbg9Eh47m_5r9U6Dc
ZMs1lfI/viewform

2. Data Analysis Software:

Quantitative data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, generating visual representations such as bar graphs and pie charts. Qualitative data were coded

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thematically to identify key patterns and insights related to the role of the given methods in intercultural communication.

Analyzing data

Teachers' responses were analyzed, and the findings were presented in bar graphs and pie charts to illustrate key trends and observations.

RESULTS

We have collected an analytical survey from local teachers, who have at least three years to more than 8 years of work-experience in teaching English as a foreign language, and analysed outcomes of the questions, in detail.
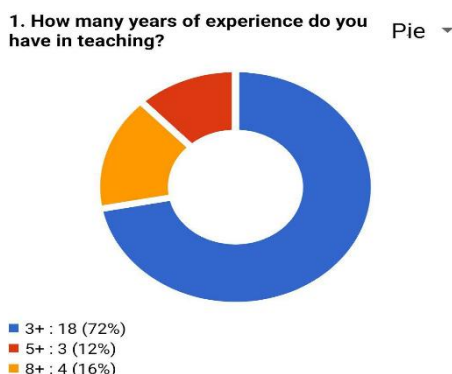
Picture 1. The participants' teaching experience

This pie chart aims to find out the teachers' years of teaching experience. 18 teachers have at least three years of experience, while 3 – 5+ years. And 4 teachers have more than 8 years of teaching experience.
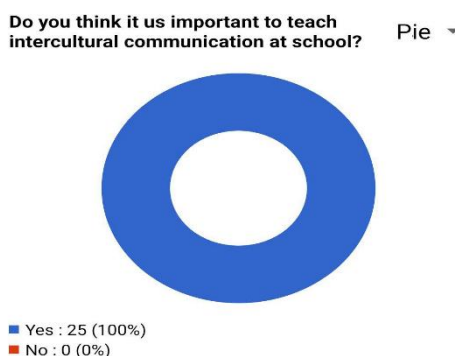

Picture 2. The importance of ICC at school

This pie chart shows that 100% of the teachers acknowledge the value of teaching ICC at schools.

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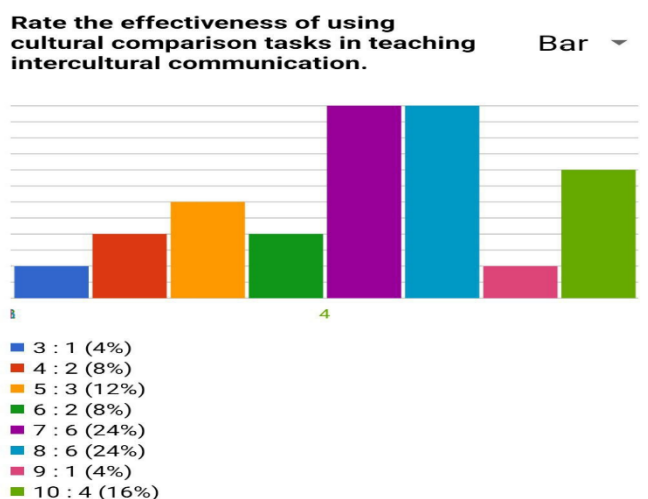Website: econfseries.com   16th May, 2025
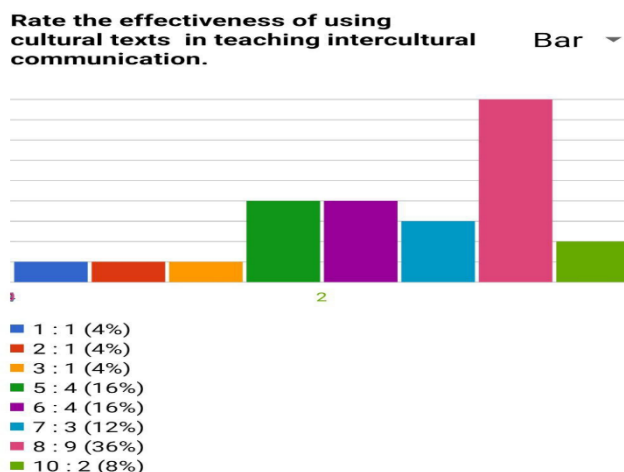
Picture 3. The effectiveness of cultural texts

The image shows that most teachers (36%) rated the effectiveness of using cultural texts in teaching intercultural communication as 8 out of 10. Only a few rated it below 5, indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents.
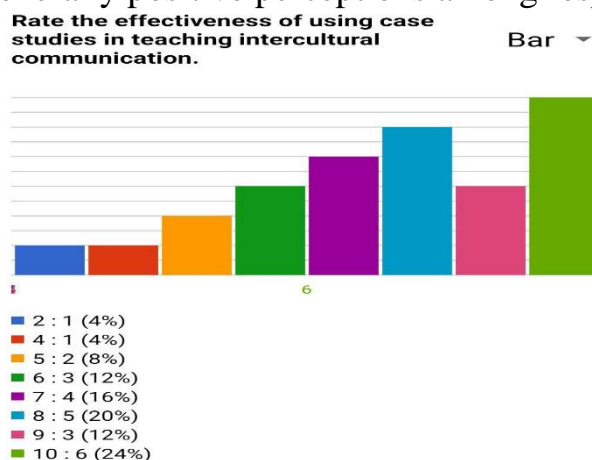

Picture 4. The effectiveness of case studies

The pie chart shows that 6 respondents (24%) rated the effectiveness of using case studies as 10 out of 10, followed by 5 respondents (20%) who rated it 8. In contrast, only 2 respondents (8%) gave a score below 5, indicating that most participants found this method effective.

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Picture 5. The effectiveness of cultural comparison tasks

The bar chart reveals that a significant majority of participants rated the effectiveness of cultural comparison tasks in teaching intercultural communication highly, with 24% giving a score of 7 and another 24% giving a score of 8. Specifically, out of the total responses, 68% of participants scored the effectiveness at 6 or higher, indicating a generally positive perception of this teaching method.
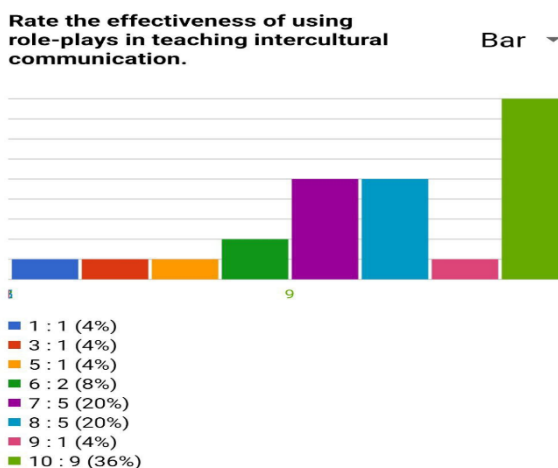
Picture 6. The effectiveness of role-plays

This bar chart illustrates the effectiveness ratings of using role-plays in teaching intercultural communication, with the highest response rate of 36% corresponding to a score of 10. Notably, a total of 40% of participants rated the effectiveness as 7
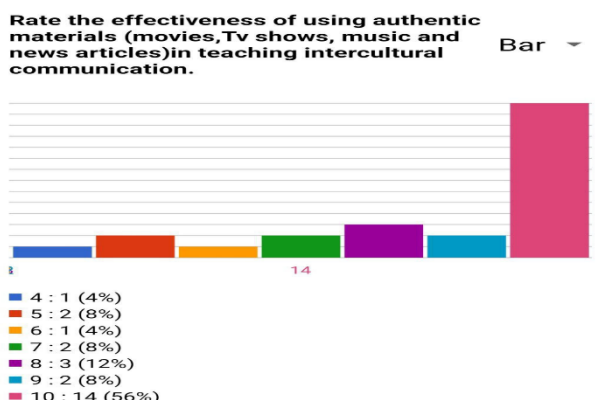
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or 8, suggesting a strong positive perception of role-plays as a teaching tool for intercultural communication.
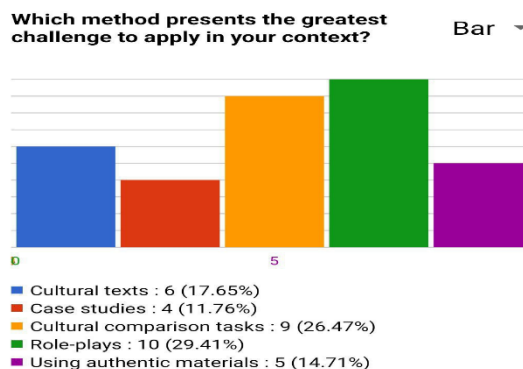

Picture 7. The effectiveness of authentic materials

The bar chart indicates that the majority of participants, 56%, rated the effectiveness of using authentic materials (movies, TV shows, music, and news articles) in teaching intercultural communication with a perfect score of 10. Furthermore, a combined 20% of respondents gave ratings of 8 or 9, highlighting a strong positive perception of authentic materials as a valuable pedagogical resource.
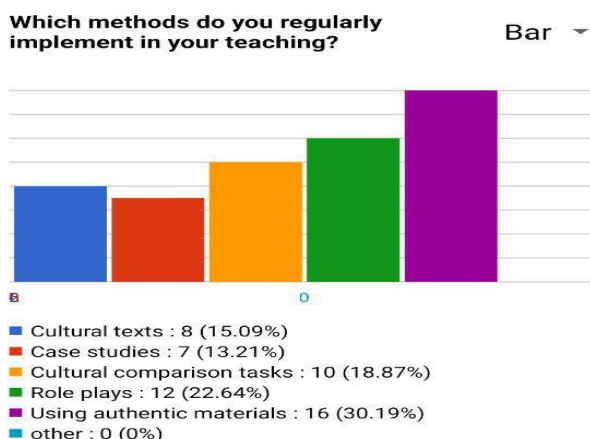

Picture 8. Mostly applied methods

The bar chart shows the frequency of implementation of different teaching methods, with "Using authentic materials" being the most regularly implemented at 30.19%. Following this, "Role plays" are implemented by 22.64% of respondents, while "Cultural comparison tasks" and "Case studies" are used by 18.87% and 13.21% respectively.

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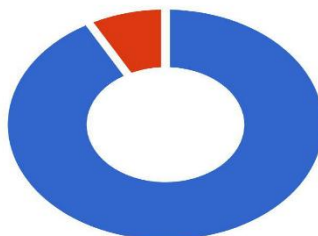
Picture 9. Challenging method

The bar chart illustrates the perceived challenges of applying different teaching methods, with "Role-plays" identified as the greatest challenge by 29.41% of respondents. Following this, "Cultural comparison tasks" present the next highest challenge at 26.47%, while "Case studies" are seen as the least challenging among the listed methods, at 11.76%.
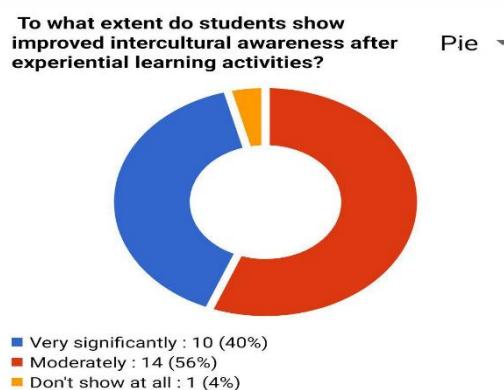
Picture 10. The changes in students' intercultural awareness

The pie chart indicates that a large majority of respondents believe students show improved intercultural awareness after experiential learning activities, with 56% reporting a moderate improvement and 40% observing a very significant improvement. Only a small fraction, 4%, reported that students do not show improved intercultural awareness.

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Picture 11. The combination of methods

The pie chart reveals that a vast majority of respondents, 92%, combine multiple teaching methods such as projects and stories in their teaching practice. In contrast, only a small minority, 8%, do not combine multiple methods.
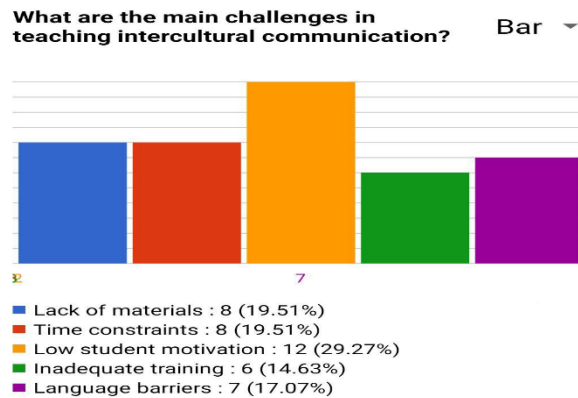

Picture 12. Teachers' practice in adapting methods

The pie chart shows the frequency with which educators adapt their teaching methods to students' cultural backgrounds, with the largest portion, 44%, indicating they do so "Often." Another significant portion, 36%, adapt "Sometimes," while 16% report adapting "Always." A small percentage adapt "Rarely" (4%), and none of the respondents reported "Never" adapting their methods.

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Picture 13. Main challenges in teaching ICC

The bar chart highlights the main challenges in teaching intercultural communication, with Low student motivation being cited most frequently by 29.27% of respondents. Lack of materials and Time constraints were equally identified as challenges by 19.51% of participants each, followed by Language barriers at 17.07% and Inadequate training at 14.63%.
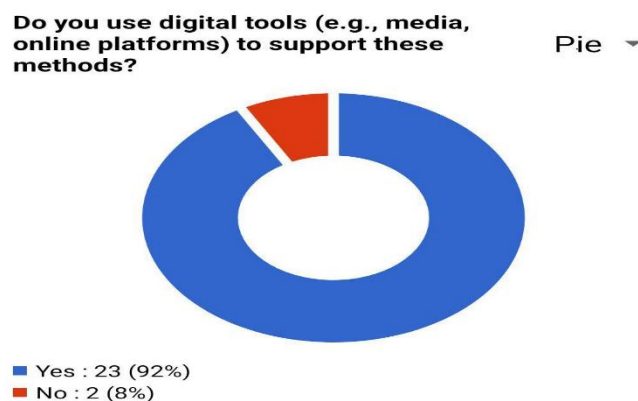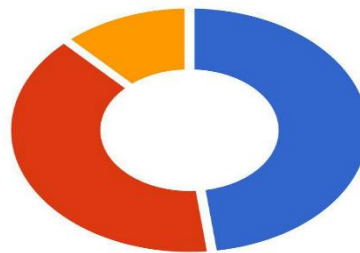

Picture 14. The usage of digital tools

The survey reveals that a large majority of participants, 92%, utilize digital tools like media and online platforms in their methods. Conversely, only a small fraction, 8%, reported not using such digital support.

Picture 15. Opinion about professional development programs

Based on the survey, less than half of the respondents (48%) fully believe that professional development programs adequately prepare teachers to teach intercultural communication. A significant portion (40%) believe they do so somewhat, while 12% find the preparation insufficient.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this survey offer valuable insights into teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the teaching of intercultural communication. The generally positive ratings for the effectiveness of various teaching methods, including cultural texts, case studies, cultural comparison tasks, role-plays, and authentic materials, suggest that educators recognize the potential of these approaches in fostering intercultural competence among students. Notably, authentic materials received the highest effectiveness rating and were also the most frequently implemented method, underscoring their perceived value and practicality in the classroom. Role-plays also garnered strong positive ratings, although they were identified as the most challenging method to apply.

The high frequency of combining multiple teaching methods, as reported by the vast majority of respondents, indicates a pedagogical approach that leverages the strengths of different techniques to cater to the complexities of intercultural communication. Furthermore, the prevalent adaptation of teaching methods to students' cultural backgrounds highlights a sensitivity among educators to the

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diverse needs of their learners. The overwhelmingly positive perception of experiential learning activities in improving students' intercultural awareness further supports the incorporation of active and engaging methodologies in intercultural communication education.

Despite the generally positive outlook on the effectiveness of various methods, the survey also reveals significant challenges. Low student motivation emerges as the primary obstacle, followed by a lack of suitable materials and time constraints. Language barriers and inadequate training also pose considerable challenges for educators in this field. These findings suggest a need for strategies and resources that can enhance student engagement, provide readily available and relevant materials, and address the time demands associated with implementing effective intercultural communication teaching practices. Moreover, the finding that less than half of the respondents fully believe in the adequacy of professional development programs highlights a potential area for improvement in teacher training and support.

The widespread use of digital tools in teaching intercultural communication reflects the increasing integration of technology in education. This suggests that educators are leveraging the affordances of media and online platforms to enhance their teaching practices in this domain.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this survey offers a comprehensive snapshot of educators' perspectives and practices in the realm of intercultural communication education. The findings highlight a prevailing optimism regarding the effectiveness of diverse teaching methodologies, with a notable emphasis on the value of authentic materials and experiential learning in cultivating students' intercultural awareness. The widespread adoption of blended teaching approaches and the conscious adaptation of methods to accommodate students' cultural backgrounds underscore a commitment to inclusive and responsive pedagogy. Moreover, the significant integration of digital tools indicates a willingness among educators to leverage technology to enhance their teaching practices.

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Despite these positive indicators, the study also reveals persistent challenges that warrant focused attention. The recurring themes of low student motivation, the scarcity of appropriate teaching resources (both material and time), and the presence of language barriers present tangible obstacles to effective implementation. Furthermore, the substantial proportion of educators who express reservations about the adequacy of their professional development in this specialized area signals a clear need for enhanced and more targeted training opportunities.

While the survey paints a picture of dedicated educators actively employing a variety of techniques, addressing the identified limitations is paramount to maximizing the efficacy of their efforts. Future initiatives should prioritize the development of strategies aimed at boosting student engagement, the creation and dissemination of readily accessible and culturally relevant teaching materials, and the provision of robust and practical professional development programs specifically designed to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of intercultural communication in the classroom. Ultimately, a concerted and collaborative approach to tackling these challenges will be instrumental in fostering more impactful and meaningful intercultural learning experiences for students.

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