

THE USE OF MEDIA TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS IN DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF B1 LEVEL STUDENTS

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In today's increasingly globalized world, intercultural competence has become an essential component of language education. It refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds. Conventional language instruction has historically prioritized linguistic competence, often overlooking the cultural elements that are indispensable for effective communication [3; 682]. Consequently, teaching English as a foreign language should not only focus on linguistic proficiency but also on fostering students' cultural awareness and understanding. In this regard, the use of media texts in English lessons has proven to be a powerful tool, especially for learners at the B1 level [6: 72-82]. Not only do such texts enrich vocabulary and improve comprehension skills, but they also expose students to diverse cultural perspectives. Therefore, this article explores how media texts contribute to the development of intercultural competence in B1-level students during English language instruction.

First and foremost, intercultural competence is vital in building mutual respect and avoiding misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. Language learners who are culturally competent are better equipped to understand the values, beliefs, and practices of people from different parts of the world. Moreover, they are more likely to develop empathy, tolerance, and a global mindset. For B1-level learners, who already possess an intermediate command of English, integrating intercultural elements into language instruction is both timely and beneficial. At this stage, students are generally capable of discussing familiar topics and expressing personal views, which makes them more receptive to culturally enriched content [2: 104-116].

Media texts—such as news articles, short films, advertisements, podcasts, and social media posts—are authentic materials that reflect real-world language and culture. Unlike traditional textbooks, which may present language in an idealized or simplified form, media texts provide learners with up-to-date and realistic insights into how English is used in various cultural contexts. Furthermore, media texts often address contemporary issues such as climate change, gender equality, or migration, which encourage students to think critically and engage in meaningful discussions. Additionally, because media texts often come with visual or auditory elements, they cater to different learning styles and help maintain students' interest and motivation. In this sense, they not only enhance language skills but also provide a natural context for comparing cultural norms and values. For example, a B1 student watching a short video about family traditions in the UK may be inspired to reflect on similarities and differences with their own culture, thereby strengthening their intercultural competence [1: 23-42].

In order to develop intercultural competence through media texts, teachers must be strategic in their selection and use of materials. Ideally, the chosen media should be accessible in terms of language difficulty while also offering rich cultural content. To illustrate, a simple article about holiday customs in Australia can be used to introduce new vocabulary while sparking a discussion about similar traditions in the students' home countries. Moreover, teachers can employ pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing activities to maximize comprehension and cultural learning. Before engaging with the text, students can be asked to predict its content based on the title or images. During the viewing or reading, guiding questions can help focus attention on key ideas. Afterward, group discussions or reflection tasks can allow students to compare cultures and express their opinions.[9] It is also important to encourage students to share their own cultural experiences. In doing so, lessons become a two-way exchange of information rather than a one-sided delivery of content. As a result, students begin to view language learning as a bridge between cultures, rather than just a skill to be mastered.

There are numerous benefits to using media texts for intercultural education at the B1 level. For one, students develop a greater sense of curiosity and openness toward other cultures. They also gain confidence in discussing global issues using appropriate vocabulary and expressions.

Furthermore, their listening and reading skills are enhanced by exposure to various accents, dialects, and registers. However, some challenges must also be acknowledged. Not all students may be equally prepared to engage with certain cultural topics, particularly those that are sensitive or controversial. Additionally, time constraints and curriculum requirements may limit the extent to which teachers can incorporate media-based intercultural lessons. Therefore, it is essential for educators to strike a balance between language objectives and intercultural goals.[8]

To sum up, the development of intercultural competence is a crucial aim of modern English language education, particularly at the intermediate B1 level. Media texts serve as valuable resources for achieving this goal, offering authentic insights into different cultures and encouraging learners to reflect on their own. Although challenges exist, with careful planning and thoughtful implementation, media texts can transform English lessons into vibrant platforms for intercultural dialogue. Ultimately, by fostering both linguistic and cultural awareness, educators prepare students not only to succeed in language exams but also to thrive in a multicultural world.

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