

INTEGRATION OF CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SPEECH ETIQUETTE IN THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS

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The article examines the integration of cultural awareness and speech etiquette in the professional preparation of future English teachers. It argues that teacher training programs must develop not only linguistic skills but also the ability to communicate appropriately in culturally diverse contexts. The paper defines the concepts of cultural awareness and speech etiquette, highlighting their interdependence in the development of intercultural communicative competence. Practical approaches for implementing these components in teacher education are proposed. The findings suggest that improving cultural awareness and etiquette skills enhances the professional readiness of future English teachers and supports effective and respectful communication in educational environments.

Introduction

In the era of globalization, the role of English as an international language continues to expand, connecting people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As communication increasingly takes place across cultures, the ability to interact respectfully and appropriately becomes just as important as linguistic accuracy. For this reason, modern teacher education programs must prepare future English teachers not only to teach grammar

and vocabulary, but also to foster the skills required for effective and culturally sensitive communication.

One of the essential components of intercultural communication is speech etiquette — a set of polite language norms and pragmatic strategies that reflect cultural values and ensure mutual respect during interaction. When these norms are not considered, communication may lead to misunderstandings or unintended offense, even when the language is grammatically correct. Therefore, developing cultural awareness becomes a necessary factor in learning and teaching English, especially for those who will later guide the communicative development of students.

This article examines the integration of cultural awareness and speech etiquette into the professional preparation of future English teachers. It discusses theoretical foundations of these concepts, explores their mutual influence in forming intercultural communicative competence, and presents practical approaches to implementing them in teacher training. The paper highlights the importance and effectiveness of including these components in educational programs, demonstrating how they enhance professional readiness and promote a culture of respectful communication in educational settings.

The formation of future English teachers' professional competence requires not only linguistic and methodological knowledge but also a deep understanding of the cultural and communicative aspects of language use. Among these, cultural awareness and speech etiquette occupy a central place, as they determine the appropriateness, politeness, and effectiveness of communication across diverse cultural contexts.

Cultural awareness refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and respect cultural differences that influence people's communication and behavior. It involves awareness of one's own cultural norms, values, and communication styles, as well as sensitivity to those of others⁶⁰. This awareness develops gradually through exposure, reflection, and comparison of cultural norms, helping individuals become more flexible and tolerant communicators. The concept of cultural awareness is closely related to the theory of intercultural competence, which combines knowledge, skills, and attitudes that allow effective and

⁶⁰ Byram, M. Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence; Multilingual Matters; 1997y.

appropriate interaction with people from other cultures⁶¹. From the perspective of teacher education, cultural awareness is an essential component of professional development, as teachers act as cultural mediators who guide students toward understanding not only a foreign language but also the worldview and communicative traditions it embodies. Speech etiquette, on the other hand, refers to a system of culturally conditioned norms and rules that regulate verbal interaction in society. It includes forms of address, greetings, expressions of gratitude, apologies, and other polite formulas that maintain respect and social harmony in communication⁶². Leech emphasizes that speech etiquette is a linguistic manifestation of politeness principles, reflecting both universal tendencies and culturally specific patterns of speech behavior. Thus, speech etiquette functions as a social tool that ensures mutual understanding and prevents communicative conflict.⁶³ Integrating these theoretical perspectives demonstrates that speech etiquette is not an isolated linguistic phenomenon but a reflection of deeper cultural values and social structures. Therefore, the development of cultural awareness and understanding of speech etiquette should be viewed as interdependent processes in the professional preparation of future English teachers. Only by mastering both can teachers ensure effective intercultural communication and model appropriate speech behavior for their students in multicultural educational settings. It also allows teachers to anticipate potential misunderstandings that may arise due to cultural differences and to prevent them through explanation and context-based clarification.

To prepare future English teachers for real intercultural communication, both cultural awareness and speech etiquette must be developed purposefully through specific training activities and teaching methods. The integration of these skills should begin in the early stages of teacher education and continue through coursework, teaching practice, and reflection. Curriculum integration plays a vital role in fostering this competence. Courses on “Intercultural Communication,” “Pragmatics,” and “Sociolinguistics” should be included as part of teacher training programs. Within these courses, students can analyze

⁶¹ Deardorff, D. K. Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization; *Journal of Studies in International Education*;10(3), 241–266;2006y.

⁶² Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*;Cambridge University Press;1997y

⁶³ Leech, G. *The pragmatics of politeness*; Oxford University Press;2014y.

speech acts such as greetings, apologies, or refusals across cultures and explore how sociocultural variables—such as age, gender, or social status—influence communication styles. In addition, reflective components such as self-assessment, peer feedback, and intercultural diaries allow student teachers to monitor their progress and develop self-awareness in communication⁶⁴.

The pedagogical conditions necessary for the integration of cultural awareness and speech etiquette include:

1. Creating a culturally rich learning environment through authentic materials—films, interviews, news reports, and online intercultural projects—that expose learners to real communication patterns.

2. Encouraging reflection and comparison, where students critically analyze similarities and differences between their native and target cultures.

Promoting intercultural interaction through collaboration with foreign peers via virtual exchange programs or international projects.

Embedding etiquette-focused micro-teaching sessions, where students model classroom communication that demonstrates politeness, respect, and empathy toward learners of different backgrounds.

The integration of cultural awareness and speech etiquette into the professional preparation of future English teachers represents a crucial step toward forming competent, empathetic, and culturally responsive educators. Understanding the interconnection between language, culture, and communication enables teachers to guide their students not only in linguistic accuracy but also in the appropriate and respectful use of English across diverse contexts. Through the inclusion of intercultural and pragmatic training in teacher education, future specialists develop the ability to interpret meaning beyond words, anticipate cultural differences, and foster mutual understanding in the classroom. As a result, they become effective mediators between languages and cultures—professionals who model politeness, tolerance, and sensitivity, and who prepare their learners to engage successfully in global communication.

⁶⁴ Byram, M. Assessing intercultural competence in language teaching; Sprogforum, 18(6), 8–13;2000y.

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