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## **THE METHOD OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSONS**

**Annotation:** This article explores the importance and application of the cross-cultural comparison method in foreign language lessons. Through this method, learners not only study the language but also gain a deeper understanding of other cultures. The paper highlights advantages such as fostering tolerance, increasing motivation, and developing intercultural communication skills. It also discusses challenges including lack of resources, teacher preparedness, and time limitations. The study concludes that this method has significant practical value in the process of foreign language teaching.

**Key words:** foreign language, culture, comparison, method, communication, tolerance, motivation, teaching

**Introduction:** In recent decades, the field of foreign language teaching has undergone significant transformation, shifting from traditional grammar–translation approaches toward more communicative, learner-centered, and culturally oriented methodologies. Contemporary applied linguistics recognizes that language is not only a cognitive system consisting of vocabulary and grammar rules, but also a means through which cultural meanings, social norms, and collective identities are expressed. Therefore, language and culture are inherently inseparable concepts, and learning a foreign language necessarily involves engaging with the cultural contexts that influence its pragmatic use in real communication.

Within this paradigm, the cross-cultural comparison method has gained considerable relevance. This approach encourages learners to analyze and reflect on the similarities and differences between their native culture and the target language culture. Through comparative tasks, students are able to identify cultural values, belief systems, behavioral patterns, communication styles, and etiquette that shape linguistic interaction. Such a reflective learning process contributes to the development of intercultural communicative competence—a key pedagogical goal highlighted by Byram, Kramsch, and other leading scholars.

Furthermore, this method plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes toward cultural diversity. By critically examining their own cultural assumptions while exploring another cultural reality, learners strengthen empathy, tolerance, and respect for different worldviews. This shift from ethnocentric perceptions to intercultural openness fosters a broader and more flexible cognitive perspective, which is essential for effective communication in the globalized world.

In addition to its sociocultural benefits, the cross-cultural comparison method enhances linguistic proficiency. The comparison of speech acts, idiomatic expressions, non-verbal communication cues, and discourse conventions enables learners to develop deeper pragmatic awareness. This

not only improves communicative accuracy and fluency, but also reduces misunderstandings arising from cultural mismatches.

The aim of this thesis is to substantiate the pedagogical effectiveness of the cross-cultural comparison method in foreign language lessons. More specifically, the research seeks to investigate how systematically integrating comparative cultural activities into classroom instruction contributes to learners' communicative competence, motivation, and intercultural sensitivity. By analyzing theoretical foundations, existing teaching models, and practical classroom implementation, this study will highlight the role of the method in fostering individuals who are capable of functioning successfully within multicultural and multilingual environments.

**Main part:** Intercultural communication refers to interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. As Hall (1976) noted, “culture is communication, and communication is culture.” In language education, intercultural competence involves understanding values, behaviours, and beliefs expressed through language. Scholars such as Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993) emphasize that intercultural competence is a core component of communicative ability, requiring both linguistic and cultural awareness.

Culture determines how language is used and understood. Teaching grammar or vocabulary without cultural context limits students' ability to communicate naturally. According to Byram (1997), integrating cultural components into language teaching develops intercultural awareness and helps learners interpret and relate cultural phenomena effectively.

The comparative method is described in pedagogical research as a bridge between language and culture. Kramsch (1993) argues that comparison helps learners become mediators between cultures, while Byram (1997) identifies it as a means to develop critical cultural awareness. Other researchers (Corbett, 2003; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993) highlight its role in fostering empathy, tolerance, and reflection.

Recent studies show that project-based and comparative cultural tasks effectively enhance intercultural competence in EFL contexts. Zhang and Wu (2023) found that when Chinese students created short projects comparing English and local cultural traditions, they demonstrated higher motivation and deeper cultural awareness. Similarly, Nguyen (2021) introduced project-based assessments—such as cultural role plays and online exchanges—that improved students' communication and critical thinking skills.

Research with pre-service English teachers also confirms the benefits of this method. Zhang et al. (2024) observed that reflective projects about students' home culture in English increased both linguistic accuracy and intercultural sensitivity. However, challenges remain: many teachers report limited materials and time for cultural comparison (Nguyen, 2021). Overall, findings suggest that integrating cultural projects and comparisons enriches language learning and promotes empathy and tolerance across cultures.

In practical classroom settings, the cross-cultural comparison method can be applied through activities such as:

Customs and traditions: comparing English and Uzbek weddings, or holidays such as Christmas and Navruz.

Idioms: analyzing cultural expressions, for example, “Love thy neighbor” in English and the Uzbek equivalent “Qo‘shni haqqi — Tangri haqqi.”

Forms of greeting: examining how “How are you?” in English differs in tone and meaning from “Yaxshimisiz?” in Uzbek.

Festivals: exploring national celebrations to deepen cultural understanding and thematic vocabulary.

The cross-cultural comparison method offers several advantages for foreign language teaching. It promotes integrated learning, as students study both linguistic and cultural aspects simultaneously, which helps them understand how language functions in real-life contexts. This method also fosters tolerance and empathy, encouraging learners to appreciate cultural diversity and develop intercultural competence (Byram, 1997). Moreover, cultural content increases motivation and engagement by making lessons more dynamic and personally meaningful (Zhang & Wu, 2023). However, its implementation faces challenges such as limited access to culturally rich materials, insufficient teacher preparation, and time constraints within the curriculum (Nguyen, 2021). These issues can be addressed by gradually introducing comparison-based tasks, using authentic resources, and providing training that enhances teachers’ intercultural and methodological skills.

**Conclusion:** The findings of the research confirm that the cross-cultural comparison method represents one of the most effective pedagogical approaches in contemporary foreign language education. By integrating linguistic knowledge with cultural awareness, this method enables learners to interpret language not merely as a system of grammar and vocabulary, but as a dynamic social phenomenon shaped by history, values, and worldview. Such an approach develops learners’ intercultural communicative competence, strengthens sociolinguistic sensitivity, and fosters the ability to interact appropriately in culturally diverse environments.

Moreover, the cross-cultural comparison method has been shown to significantly increase learners’ intrinsic motivation. When students explore similarities and differences between their native culture and the target language culture, they become more engaged, curious, and open-minded. This engagement helps to cultivate empathy and respect toward cultural “otherness,” which is an essential quality in the context of globalization and international cooperation.

Despite these benefits, the implementation of the method may face challenges such as limited instructional time, insufficient teacher training, and lack of authentic teaching resources. Therefore, successful application requires well-prepared educators who possess strong intercultural competence, as well as mechanisms for continuous methodological support. Educational institutions are encouraged to develop digital resources, media-based comparative tasks, and collaborative learning formats that enhance cultural exploration.

Future research directions should aim at designing structured curricula and evidence-based teaching materials that systematically incorporate cross-cultural comparative strategies across various proficiency levels. Longitudinal studies are also needed to assess the method’s long-term impact on learners’ communicative effectiveness, identity formation, and intercultural adaptability.

In conclusion, the cross-cultural comparison method transforms traditional language instruction into an interactive, reflective, and socially meaningful process. It prepares learners to become competent participants in multicultural communication, thereby aligning language education with broader global citizenship goals.

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