PREPARING STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND ICC

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Abstract. This article comprehensively investigates the impact of digital immersive technologies on English language education, with a specific focus on their potential to foster critical thinking, self-directed learning, and sustainability in education through intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The study evaluates how immersive digital experiences—such as collaborative platforms, interactive applications, and virtual reality simulations—enhance learning outcomes and promote learner autonomy. Additionally, it explores the collaborative dimensions of immersive technologies, emphasizing their role in facilitating authentic intercultural exchanges and preparing students for global communication.

Keywords *Intercultural communicative competence, digital immersive technologies, interactive learning, virtual exchange, cultural sensitivity, global education*

Аннотация. В данной статье всесторонне исследуется влияние цифровых иммерсионных технологий на преподавание английского языка, с особым акцентом на их потенциал в развитии критического мышления, самостоятельного обучения и устойчивого развития в образовании посредством межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции (МКК). В исследовании оценивается, как иммерсионные цифровые возможности — такие как платформы для совместной работы, интерактивные приложения и симуляции виртуальной реальности — улучшают результаты обучения и способствуют развитию автономии учащихся. Кроме того, рассматриваются аспекты сотрудничества в рамках иммерсионных технологий, подчеркивается их роль в содействии подлинному межкультурному обмену и подготовке студентов к глобальной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: *Межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, цифровые иммерсионные технологии, интерактивное обучение, виртуальный обмен, культурная чувствительность, глобальное образование*

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola raqamli immersiv texnologiyalarning ingliz tili ta’limiga ta’sirini har tomonlama o‘rganadi, xususan, ularning madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiya (ICC) orqali tanqidiy fikrlash, mustaqil o‘rganish va ta’limda barqarorlikni rivojlantirish potentsialiga e’tibor qaratadi. Tadqiqotda hamkorlik platformalari, interaktiv ilovalar va virtual haqiqat simulyatsiyalari kabi immersiv raqamli tajribalar o‘quv natijalarini qanday oshirishi va talabalarning mustaqilligini oshirishi baholanadi. Bundan tashqari, u immersiv texnologiyalarning hamkorlikdagi o‘lchamlarini o‘rganadi, ularning haqiqiy madaniyatlararo almashinuvlarni osonlashtirish va talabalarni global muloqotga tayyorlashdagi rolini rivojlantiradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: *Madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiya, raqamli immersiv texnologiyalar, interaktiv o‘rganish, virtual almashinuv, madaniy sezgirlik, global ta’lim*

Introduction. In today’s interconnected world, university students are increasingly required to develop high levels of intercultural competence to succeed in global contexts. Acquiring these competencies enables students to distinguish themselves in competitive markets and become culturally sensitive leaders. Cultural sensitivity, defined as emotional involvement in and effective interaction with other cultures (Bennett, 1993), is a critical

component of ICC. Research highlights that study abroad programs provide additional benefits, including professional connections and broadened worldviews, with female students often reporting greater gains in intercultural development and confidence in diverse teams compared to male students (Petrie-Wyman et al., 2020; Vande Berg et al., 2012). These differences may be attributed to female students’ stronger engagement in language and culture-focused courses (Cordua & Netz, 2022).

English language education plays a pivotal role in cultivating learners’ linguistic proficiency, intercultural sensitivity, and civic responsibility. Traditional pedagogical approaches, such as lectures and rote memorization, are often insufficient for enabling students to apply English effectively in real-world contexts or to address sustainability-related challenges. Consequently, there is growing scholarly interest in exploring how collaborative learning and digital immersive technologies can support this process by fostering critical thinking and self-directed learning within English language instruction.

Intercultural competence is conceptualized as an integral component within the broader framework of digital immersive technology’s impact on English language education. It is examined as a collaborative dimension facilitated through immersive experiences, where students engage in joint projects, simulations, and interactive learning activities. The interplay between teamwork and key variables—critical thinking, learner autonomy, and sustainability—is central to understanding the comprehensive influence of digital immersive technologies on educational outcomes.

Traditional classroom approaches often struggle to provide authentic intercultural experiences. However, digital and interactive technologies—such as collaborative platforms, gamified applications, and virtual exchanges—offer innovative opportunities to foster ICC in higher education. Experiential learning, which emphasizes reflection, observation, and active experimentation (Morris, 2019), is enriched by immersive technologies that provide access to diverse cultural contexts without requiring physical travel. Universities have increasingly adopted immersive learning to sustain international initiatives, offering students unique opportunities to develop cultural competence and global perspectives (Liu & Thomas, 2021).

Methods

A mixed-methods design is employed to examine the role of digital and interactive technologies in enhancing ICC. Participants will be undergraduate students from three universities in different countries. Technologies are required online collaborative platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams), interactive applications (Mentimeter, Padlet), and virtual reality simulations. Procedure is expected Students engaged in weekly intercultural communication tasks, including virtual debates, collaborative projects, and role-playing exercises conducted through digital platforms. Data Collection is recommended surveys, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews were used to assess changes in ICC development.

Findings revealed several positive outcomes:

- *Improved cultural sensitivity:* Students reported heightened awareness of cultural norms and values.

- *Enhanced communication strategies:* Interactive role-plays helped students adapt communication styles to diverse contexts.

- *Authentic intercultural interaction:* Virtual exchanges facilitated meaningful dialogue across cultural boundaries.

- *Increased engagement:* Gamified tools, such as Mentimeter, boosted motivation and participation in intercultural learning activities.

Conclusion. Digital and interactive technologies significantly contribute to the development of students’ intercultural communicative competence. By integrating collaborative platforms, interactive applications, and immersive simulations into curricula, educators can create dynamic learning environments that prepare students for global

citizenship. Future research should investigate long-term impacts and explore scalable models across diverse educational contexts.

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