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EMBRACING MULTILINGUALISM: ENRICHING EFL STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING

Annotation

Community Language Learning (CLL) offers a holistic, learner-centered pedagogy in which the classroom functions as a supportive community, and learning is mediated through collaborative dialogue and reflection. This study examines the effectiveness of integrating multilingual resources and peer support within CLL to enhance English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. Conducted over one academic year with 120 intermediate-level learners in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the mixed-method research design involves quantitative assessments (pre-/post-tests, interaction counts) and qualitative measures (focus groups, reflective journals). Findings indicate that multilingual scaffolding and community dialogues significantly improve learners' communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and learner autonomy. The article concludes with pedagogical recommendations for embedding multilingual practices in CLL frameworks.

Key words: Community Language Learning, multilingualism, EFL, learner autonomy, intercultural competence

ПОДДЕРЖКА МНОГОЯЗЫЧИЯ: ОБОГАЩЕНИЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКА У СТУДЕНТОВ EFL ЧЕРЕЗ МЕТОДИКУ COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING

Аннотация

Обучение языку в сообществе предлагает целостную, ориентированную на учащегося педагогику, в которой классная комната функционирует как поддерживающее сообщество, а обучение осуществляется посредством совместного диалога и рефлексии. В данном исследовании рассматривается эффективность интеграции многоязычных ресурсов и поддержки со стороны сверстников в рамках обучения языку в сообществе с целью улучшения преподавания английского языка как иностранного. Исследование проводилось в течение одного учебного года с участием 120 учащихся среднего уровня в Ташкенте, Узбекистан, и включало в себя смешанный метод исследования с количественной оценкой (предварительные/последующие тесты, подсчет взаимодействий) и качественными показателями (фокус-группы, рефлексивные дневники). Результаты показывают, что многоязычная поддержка и диалоги в сообществе значительно улучшают коммуникативную компетенцию учащихся, межкультурную осведомленность и самостоятельность учащихся. В заключение статьи приводятся педагогические рекомендации по внедрению многоязычных практик в рамки сообщества изучающих язык.

Ключевые слова: сообщество изучающих язык, многоязычие, английский как иностранный язык, самостоятельность учащихся, межкультурная компетентность.

KO'P TILLILIKNI QO'LLAB-QUVVATLASH: EFL TALABALARINING TIL O'RGANISHINI JAMIYAT TILINI O'RGANISH ORQALI BOYITISH

Annotatsiya

Ushbu tadqiqotda ingliz tilini chet til sifatida o'qitishni takomillashtirish maqsadida ko'p tilli resurslar va tengdoshlardan qo'llab-quvvatlashni hamjamiyatda til o'rgatish kontekstiga integratsiya qilishning samaradorligi o'rganildi.

Toshkent shahridagi o'rta darajadagi 120 nafar o'quvchi ishtirokida bitta o'quv yili davomida o'tkazilgan aralash metodli tadqiqotda miqdoriy baholash (oldingi va so'nggi testlar, o'zaro munosabatlar sonini hisoblash) va sifatli ko'rsatkichlar (fokus-guruhlar, reflektiv kundaliklar) qo'llanildi.

Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, ko'p tilli qo'llab-quvvatlash va hamjamiyatdagi dialoglar o'quvchilarning kommunikativ kompetentsiyasini, madaniyatlararo xabardorligini va mustaqilligini sezilarli darajada oshiradi.

Maqola oxirida hamjamiyatda til o'rganuvchilar kontekstida ko'p tillik amaliyotlarni joriy etish bo'yicha pedagogik tavsiyalar keltiriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: hamjamiyatda til o'rgatish, ko'p tillik, ingliz tili chet til sifatida, o'quvchilarning mustaqilligi, madaniyatlararo kompetentsiya.

Introduction. The globalization of communication has highlighted the value of multilingualism for personal, academic, and professional development [2]. Traditional EFL classrooms often prioritize English-only environments, potentially limiting learners' ability to leverage their existing linguistic repertoires as cognitive and affective resources [3]. Community Language Learning (CLL), developed by Charles Curran in the 1970s, reconceptualizes the classroom as a community of learners where first-language (L1) use,

collaborative translation, and peer support foster deeper engagement and lower anxiety [4].

This study investigates how integrating multilingual practices within CLL influences EFL learners' outcomes. The research addresses three questions:

How does multilingual scaffolding within CLL impact learners' communicative fluency and accuracy in English?

In what ways does community-based peer support enhance learner autonomy and intercultural competence?

What challenges and enablers emerge when embedding learners' L1 and additional languages in the CLL environment?

By blending theoretical insights from CLL with contemporary multilingual pedagogies, this research contributes to evolving models of EFL instruction that recognize learners' full linguistic identities. Findings will inform teacher training, curriculum design, and policy frameworks advocating plurilingual education in EFL contexts.

Literature review. CLL is grounded in humanistic psychology and counseling-learning approaches, emphasizing learners' emotional safety and group cohesion [4]. The teacher acts as a "knower," facilitating translation and elicitation, while students begin as a "trusting" community [8].

Cummins's Threshold Hypothesis argues that proficiency in L1 supports second-language acquisition when learners cross a cognitive threshold [3]. More recent scholarship highlights translanguaging—dynamic language practices that integrate multiple languages—as a site of creative meaning-making [6].

Decentralizing teacher authority through CLL promotes learner autonomy [9]. Furthermore, engaging learners' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds fosters intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures [2].

Studies by Lee and Kim demonstrate that learners using L1 for preliminary discussions in CLL tasks scored 20% higher in speaking assessments than monolingual peers [7]. In a European context, Pérez-Vidal found that peer translation activities enhanced metalinguistic awareness and collaborative problem-solving [11].

Results

Quantitative Findings

Measure	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	% Change	t (df=119)	p
Fluency (wpm)	42.5 (7.9)	59.3 (8.7)	+39.5%	23.78	< .001
Accuracy (error rate)%	20.1 (5.4)	13.6 (4.5)	-32.3%	20.45	< .001
Vocabulary (types)	58.7 (8.0)	76.5 (9.2)	+30.3%	21.89	< .001

Frequency of L1 scaffolding positively correlated with post-test fluency gains ($r = .48, p < .01$).

Qualitative Findings

Three themes emerged:

Affective Support: Learners reported reduced anxiety when allowed to clarify in L1, leading to more risk-taking in English production.

Metalinguistic Awareness: Code-switching discussions fostered comparative analysis of grammatical structures, enhancing Learner reflection.

Community Cohesion: Collaborative translation tasks strengthened peer bonds and collective responsibility for learning.

Discussion. Integrating multilingual scaffolding within CLL significantly boosts fluency and accuracy, confirming Lee and Kim's findings. The moderate correlation between L1 use and fluency gains suggests that strategic L1 scaffolding serves as a cognitive support rather than a crutch.

EFL programs should:

Train teachers in managing transitional L1 use, ensuring a scaffolding-to-independence trajectory.

Design tasks that explicitly incorporate comparative language analysis to leverage metalinguistic benefits.

Cultivate classroom communities through group reflection circles and peer-mentoring structures.

Institutional policies enforcing English-only classrooms may inhibit CLL's multilingual benefits. Stakeholders should revise language policies to permit strategic L1 use and provide professional development on plurilingual pedagogies.

Methodology. A convergent mixed-method design combined quantitative and qualitative data to triangulate the impact of multilingual CLL [5].

Participants were 120 intermediate-level EFL learners (aged 18–24) at two universities in Tashkent. Classes of 20 students met twice weekly for 90 minutes during one academic year.

Intervention Procedures

CLL Sessions: Instructors facilitated group dialogues where learners first expressed ideas in English, then in their L1 (Uzbek or Russian) for clarification, before returning to English expression.

Multilingual Scaffolding: Peers served as "language brokers," assisting translation and explanation during communicative tasks.

Reflective Journals: Learners documented moments of code-switching, emotional responses, and intercultural insights weekly.

Instruments and Data Collection

Pre-/Post-tests: Standardized assessments measuring fluency (words per minute), accuracy (error counts), and vocabulary breadth.

Interaction Analysis: Video recordings coded to count instances of L1 use, peer translation, and English negotiation phases.

Qualitative Measures: Focus groups with 24 learners exploring autonomy and intercultural experiences; thematic analysis of 120 journals.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using paired-samples t-tests ($\alpha = .05$) and Pearson correlations to assess relationships between L1 scaffolding frequency and communicative gains. Qualitative data followed thematic coding procedures.

This study focused on intermediate learners; future research could extend to beginner and advanced levels. Longitudinal studies examining retention of multilingual skills and transfer to real-world contexts are also needed.

Conclusion. This research demonstrates that embracing multilingualism within Community Language Learning (CLL) significantly enriches EFL students' language learning experiences. Multilingual scaffolding reduces affective barriers by allowing learners to negotiate meaning in a trusted environment, fostering risk-taking and experimentation in English production. Additionally, code-switching and peer translation activities cultivate metalinguistic awareness, enabling learners to reflect on cross-linguistic similarities and differences, which deepens their understanding of target language structures. By positioning learners as active contributors to classroom knowledge, CLL strengthens community bonds and promotes learner autonomy, as reflected in the collaborative decision-making observed in focus groups and journals.

For sustainable implementation of multilingual CLL, the following components are essential:

Comprehensive Teacher Development: Educators should engage in targeted training on plurilingual pedagogies, learn to balance L1 support with English immersion, and apply reflective practice cycles to refine their facilitation strategies [Larsen-Freeman 2000; Little 1991].

Curriculum and Policy Alignment: Institutional policies must explicitly recognize the pedagogical value of

strategic L1 use. Curriculum frameworks should integrate translanguaging tasks, intercultural projects, and performance-based assessments that capture the multifaceted outcomes of CLL [Byram 1997; Pérez-Vidal 2003].

Resource and Community Engagement: Access to multilingual materials—such as bilingual texts, digital translation tools, and community language speakers—enhances authentic language exposure and underscores the social relevance of learners' home languages.

Assessment Innovation: Incorporating reflective journals, peer assessments, and narrative portfolios allows evaluation of intercultural competence, metalinguistic growth, and community participation, complementing traditional proficiency tests.

Implications for Future Research Future studies should examine:

Long-term retention of multilingual strategies and their transfer to new linguistic contexts, particularly among advanced learners.

The role of technology - such as virtual exchange platforms and mobile-assisted translanguaging tools—in scaling CLL practices beyond the classroom.

Comparative analyses of multilingual CLL impacts across different cultural and linguistic regions to establish best-fit models for diverse EFL contexts.

In conclusion, integrating multilingualism into CLL offers a robust framework for cultivating empowered, reflective, and interculturally competent EFL learners. Embracing learners' entire linguistic repertoires not only aligns with contemporary theories of language acquisition but also paves the way for more inclusive and dynamic language education practices.

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