

## **HOW CULTURAL AWARENESS IMPROVES SPEAKING INTERACTION**

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**Abstract:** This article highlights how, in today’s rapidly changing world, communication among people from different nations and cultures is becoming increasingly strong. In such a context, **cultural awareness**—understanding the values, traditions, speech styles, and communicative behavior of other cultures—is emphasized as an essential component of effective communication. Culturally aware individuals tend to communicate more carefully, respectfully, and appropriately with their interlocutors, which helps prevent misunderstandings. Research shows that people with intercultural competence can successfully engage in communication even if they do not have perfect grammar skills. This includes responding appropriately within a cultural context and paying attention to non-verbal elements such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. Additionally, approaching cultural differences with an open mind helps build trust between individuals and fosters a positive atmosphere. For language learners, taking cultural aspects into account enhances their communicative competence. For example, while **directness** is valued in English-speaking cultures, **indirectness** and polite expression are considered important in Japanese or Korean cultures. Understanding such differences allows learners to adapt their speech to the context and engage in more sincere and effective communication. In conclusion, cultural awareness improves the quality of communication in both language learning and everyday or professional interactions. It accelerates social integration and deepens intercultural understanding.

**Key words:** Cultural awareness, speaking interaction, intercultural communication, communicative competence, non-verbal communication, language learning, cultural differences global communication, respectful dialogue, cross-cultural understanding.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье подчеркивается, что в современном быстро меняющемся мире общение между представителями различных наций и культур становится всё более активным. В этом контексте **культурная осведомлённость** — понимание ценностей, традиций, речевых стилей и коммуникативного поведения других культур — рассматривается как важнейший компонент эффективной коммуникации. Люди, обладающие культурной осведомлённостью, как правило, общаются более внимательно, уважительно и уместно, что помогает избежать недоразумений. Исследования показывают, что люди с межкультурной компетентностью могут успешно взаимодействовать даже при несовершенном знании грамматики. Это включает в себя умение правильно реагировать в культурном контексте, а также внимание к невербальным элементам — языку тела, тону голоса, мимике. Кроме того, открытое отношение к культурным различиям способствует укреплению доверия между людьми и созданию положительной атмосферы. Для изучающих иностранные языки учет культурных аспектов повышает их коммуникативную компетентность. Например, если в англоязычных культурах ценится **прямота**, то в японской или корейской культурах важна **косвенность** и вежливость в выражении мыслей. Понимание таких различий позволяет адаптировать речь к конкретному контексту и вести более искреннее и эффективное общение. В заключение,

культурная осведомлённость улучшает качество общения как при изучении языка, так и в повседневной или профессиональной среде. Она ускоряет социальную интеграцию и углубляет межкультурное понимание.

**Ключевые слова:** Культурная осведомлённость, речевое взаимодействие, межкультурная коммуникация, коммуникативная компетентность, коммуникация, уважительный диалог, межкультурное понимание.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy, tez sur'atlarda o'zgarib borayotgan dunyoda turli millat va madaniyat vakillari o'rtasidagi muloqot tobora faollashib borayotgani ta'kidlangan. Bunday sharoitda **madaniy ong** — boshqa madaniyatlarning qadriyatlarini, an'analari, nutq uslublari va kommunikativ xulq-atvorini tushunish — samarali muloqotning muhim tarkibiy qismi sifatida ko'riladi. Madaniy ongga ega bo'lgan insonlar, odatda, muloqotda ehtiyotkorroq, hurmatliroq va o'rinliroq bo'lishadi, bu esa tushunmovchiliklarning oldini olishga yordam beradi. Tadqiqotlar shuni ko'rsatadiki, **madaniyatlararo kompetensiyaga** ega bo'lgan shaxslar grammatika bilimlari mukammal bo'lmasa ham, muvaffaqiyatli muloqot qila oladi. Bu madaniy kontekstda to'g'ri javob bera olishni, shuningdek, **norverbal elementlarga** — tana tili, ovoz ohangi, yuz ifodasi kabi jihatlarga e'tibor qaratishni o'z ichiga oladi. Bundan tashqari, madaniy farqlarga ochiq yondashuv insonlar o'rtasida ishonchni mustahkamlaydi va ijobiy muhit yaratadi. Chet tillarini o'rganayotganlar uchun madaniy jihatlarni hisobga olish ularning **kommunikativ kompetensiyasini** oshiradi. Masalan, ingliz tilida to'g'ridan-to'g'ri gapirish qadrlansa, yapon yoki koreys madaniyatida bilvosita va muloyim ifodalar muhim hisoblanadi. Bunday farqlarni anglash orqali til o'rganuvchi o'z nutqini tegishli kontekstga moslashtirib, yanada samimiy va samarali muloqot o'rnatishga erishadi.

Xulosa qilib aytganda, **madaniy ongli bo'lish** nafaqat til o'rganish jarayonida, balki kundalik hayotda va professional sohalarda ham muloqot sifatini yaxshilaydi. U ijtimoiy integratsiyani tezlashtiradi va madaniyatlararo tushunishni chuqurlashtiradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Madaniy ong, gaplashishdagi o'zaro ta'sir, madaniyatlararo muloqot, kommunikativ kompetensiya, norverbal muloqot, til o'rganish, madaniy farqlar, global aloqa, hurmatga asoslangan muloqot, madaniyatlararo tushunish.

### Introduction

In today's globalized world, intercultural communication is increasingly becoming an integral part of our daily lives. As communication between individuals from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds occurs more frequently, it demands greater sensitivity and adaptability in spoken interaction. People from various cultural backgrounds interact in educational institutions, workplaces, during travel, or within digital environments, and as a result, the role of cultural awareness is gaining more importance. Cultural awareness refers to the understanding of other cultures' values, beliefs, traditions, and communication styles, as well as the recognition and respect of those differences during interaction. Culturally aware individuals communicate effectively by avoiding assumptions and by accurately interpreting both verbal and non-verbal cues with sincerity and openness. Misunderstandings arising from cultural ignorance—such as inappropriate gestures, misused phrases, or unintentional disrespect—can complicate or even disrupt the communication process. Numerous studies in the field of intercultural communication emphasize that language knowledge alone is not sufficient for effective speaking interaction. Scholars such as Byram (1997)<sup>1</sup> and Kramsch (1998) stress that intercultural competence—the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with individuals from different cultures—is a crucial component of communicative competence.<sup>2</sup> Language learners who develop cultural competence can adapt their speech appropriately to different contexts, allowing for more respectful and meaningful conversations.

<sup>1</sup>Byram, M. (1997). Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. *Multilingual Matters*.

<sup>2</sup>Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

**Non-verbal communication**—such as eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures—differs significantly across cultures and often carries as much meaning as spoken words. Being aware of these differences helps speakers avoid misinterpretation. For example, maintaining eye contact is considered a sign of confidence in Western cultures, but in some East Asian societies, it may be seen as impolite or aggressive.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, understanding cultural norms related to **direct and indirect communication styles** greatly enhances communication quality. In English-speaking cultures, direct and clear speech is often valued, while in Japanese, Korean, or Arab cultures, indirect and context-based polite speech is preferred. Without cultural awareness, a statement that may be perceived as sincere and honest in one culture could be interpreted as rude or offensive in another.<sup>4</sup>

In the field of education, incorporating cultural elements into language teaching can enhance learners' communicative competence and their ability to interact in real-life situations. Including intercultural scenarios in textbooks and curricula enables students to approach various situations with greater confidence. Similarly, in professional and business environments, cultural sensitivity fosters trust, cooperation, and inclusiveness—key values for effective teamwork.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, developing cultural awareness helps make spoken communication more effective, understandable, and meaningful. It prevents misunderstandings, creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, and encourages productive dialogue. In an era where globalization continues to connect people beyond borders, intercultural competence is not only a beneficial skill but also an essential requirement for successful communication in any context.<sup>6</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, cultural awareness serves as a cornerstone of effective spoken interaction in today's diverse and interconnected world. As global communication expands across educational, social, and professional contexts, the ability to understand and respect cultural differences becomes increasingly vital. Being culturally aware not only enhances linguistic exchange but also builds empathy, reduces the risk of miscommunication, and fosters respectful dialogue between individuals from different backgrounds. The development of intercultural competence allows speakers to adapt their language use, both verbal and non-verbal, to suit specific cultural contexts. This results in more meaningful and **appropriate communication. Awareness of communication styles**—such as directness and indirectness—and an understanding of cultural norms help individuals navigate complex social interactions with sensitivity and confidence. Furthermore, incorporating cultural elements into language education empowers learners to become not only fluent speakers but also effective communicators in real-world situations. In professional environments, cultural sensitivity strengthens cooperation, inclusivity, and mutual trust—key components of success in international teams and multicultural societies. Ultimately, cultural awareness is no longer optional; it is an essential communicative skill in the 21st century. By promoting open-mindedness, adaptability, and mutual understanding, it helps bridge gaps between people and contributes to more peaceful and productive human interactions in an increasingly globalized world.

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<sup>3</sup> Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Anchor Books.

<sup>4</sup> Deardorff, D. K. (2006). *Identification and Assessment of Intercultural*

<sup>5</sup> *Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization*. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266.

<sup>6</sup> Giddens, A. (2002). *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping Our Lives*. Routledge.

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