

**THE ROLE OF READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN THE FORMATION OF
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE**

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Abstract: In the context of globalization and international cooperation, intercultural communication competence has become an essential component of modern education and professional development. Reading and writing skills play a significant role in the formation of intercultural communication competence because they enable individuals to understand cultural perspectives, interpret meanings, and communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. This article examines the role of reading and writing skills in developing intercultural communication competence among students and language learners. The study analyzes how reading authentic texts and practicing intercultural writing contribute to cultural awareness, empathy, critical thinking, and effective communication in multicultural environments. Special attention is given to the influence of foreign language education, digital literacy, and academic writing on intercultural interaction. The article also discusses challenges associated with intercultural reading and writing, including linguistic barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and differences in communication conventions.

Keywords: intercultural communication competence, reading skills, writing skills, language education, cultural awareness, intercultural learning, academic writing, globalization, communication skills, multicultural education.

Introduction

The development of globalization and international communication has increased the importance of intercultural competence in education, professional activities, and everyday social interaction. Modern societies are characterized by cultural diversity and constant communication among people representing different linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. In such conditions, effective intercultural communication requires not only knowledge of foreign languages but also understanding of cultural values, communication styles, traditions, and worldviews. Intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with representatives of other cultures. This competence includes linguistic knowledge, sociocultural awareness, empathy, critical thinking, and communication strategies that help individuals adapt to multicultural environments. Researchers emphasize that language learning and intercultural competence are closely interconnected because language reflects cultural identity, social norms, and cultural values. (frontiersin.org) Among the major language skills, reading and writing occupy a particularly important place in the formation of intercultural communication competence. Through reading, learners gain access to cultural knowledge, historical experiences, social traditions, and different perspectives represented in written texts. Literary works, academic articles, media publications, and digital texts expose readers to diverse cultural realities and help develop intercultural understanding. Writing, in turn, enables individuals to express ideas, exchange opinions, and participate in intercultural dialogue. Academic and professional writing require awareness of cultural conventions, communication norms, and audience expectations.

Digital technologies and online communication have further increased the importance of reading and writing in intercultural interaction. Students and professionals frequently communicate through emails, social media, online forums, and virtual learning environments

where written communication dominates. Consequently, individuals need strong intercultural reading and writing skills to communicate successfully in global digital contexts. Despite the growing significance of intercultural communication competence, learners often face difficulties related to cultural misunderstandings, language barriers, and differences in rhetorical traditions. Therefore, educational institutions increasingly focus on integrating intercultural approaches into language teaching and literacy development. The purpose of this article is to examine the role of reading and writing skills in the formation of intercultural communication competence, analyze their contribution to intercultural understanding, and identify challenges and educational strategies associated with intercultural literacy development.

Main Body

Reading and writing skills are fundamental components of language education and intercultural communication competence. These skills enable individuals to access information, interpret cultural meanings, and participate effectively in communication across cultures. In multicultural educational and professional environments, the ability to read and write appropriately in intercultural contexts has become increasingly important. Reading plays a central role in the development of intercultural awareness because it provides access to the cultural experiences and perspectives of other societies. Through reading authentic texts such as literature, newspapers, academic articles, and online publications, learners become familiar with cultural values, traditions, social norms, and communication styles. Reading foreign language texts helps students understand how people from different cultures perceive the world and express their ideas.[1]

Literary texts are especially important for intercultural learning. Novels, stories, poems, and dramas often reflect cultural identity, historical experiences, and social relationships within a society. By analyzing literary works, readers develop empathy and the ability to view situations from multiple cultural perspectives. Researchers argue that intercultural reading promotes critical thinking and reduces stereotypes by encouraging deeper understanding of cultural diversity. (frontiersin.org) Academic reading also contributes significantly to intercultural competence. Students studying in international educational environments must interpret texts produced within different academic traditions and cultural contexts. Academic texts often reflect specific rhetorical styles, argumentation patterns, and communication conventions that vary across cultures. Understanding these differences helps learners participate more effectively in global academic communication.[2]

Writing is equally important in the formation of intercultural communication competence. Through writing, individuals express opinions, exchange cultural knowledge, and establish intercultural relationships. Writing in foreign languages requires not only grammatical accuracy but also awareness of cultural communication norms and audience expectations. Different cultures may prefer different writing styles, levels of formality, organizational structures, and persuasive strategies. For example, English academic writing often emphasizes clarity, direct argumentation, and logical organization, while other cultural traditions may value indirect expression, emotional appeal, or circular organization of ideas. Students participating in intercultural communication must therefore learn to adapt their writing style according to cultural and communicative context.[3]

Digital communication has significantly increased the importance of intercultural writing skills. Emails, social media posts, online discussions, and virtual collaboration platforms require individuals to communicate effectively through written language. In online communication, misunderstandings may occur more easily because nonverbal communication cues such as tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions are absent. Consequently, writers must pay special attention to clarity, politeness, and cultural sensitivity in digital communication. Intercultural

writing activities can help learners develop communication competence. Educational methods such as collaborative writing projects, intercultural correspondence, reflective journals, and online discussions encourage students to engage with people from different cultures and practice intercultural communication skills. Such activities improve linguistic competence while simultaneously developing empathy, openness, and cultural awareness.[5]

Despite these advantages, learners often encounter challenges in intercultural reading and writing. Language barriers remain one of the major difficulties. Limited vocabulary, unfamiliar idiomatic expressions, and differences in cultural references may complicate text comprehension and written communication. Learners may also misinterpret meanings because they rely on their own cultural assumptions when reading foreign texts. Cultural differences in communication conventions may also create difficulties in writing. Students may unintentionally use inappropriate forms of politeness, argumentation styles, or rhetorical structures when communicating with representatives of other cultures. Such misunderstandings can negatively affect academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Teachers and educational institutions play an essential role in helping learners develop intercultural reading and writing skills. Language education should include authentic multicultural materials and activities that encourage cultural reflection and intercultural interaction. Teachers should help students analyze cultural meanings in texts and compare communication styles across cultures.

Writing is equally important because it enables individuals to express ideas, exchange cultural knowledge, and participate actively in intercultural dialogue. Academic and professional writing require awareness of cultural communication conventions, rhetorical traditions, and audience expectations. In digital communication environments, writing skills become especially important because written interaction often replaces face-to-face communication. Effective intercultural writing therefore requires clarity, politeness, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability. The article also highlights several challenges associated with intercultural reading and writing, including language barriers, differences in communication styles, unfamiliar cultural references, and varying rhetorical conventions. These difficulties may lead to misunderstandings and ineffective communication if learners are not adequately prepared for intercultural interaction. Therefore, educational institutions should integrate intercultural approaches into language teaching and literacy development programs. Teachers play a key role in developing students' intercultural communication competence. Language education should include authentic multicultural texts, collaborative writing activities, intercultural discussions, and digital communication projects that encourage cultural reflection and intercultural engagement. Such educational strategies help learners become more confident and effective participants in global communication. Digital technologies further expand opportunities for intercultural literacy development by providing access to international information resources and virtual communication platforms. Online learning environments, digital libraries, and virtual exchange programs enable students to interact with global audiences and practice intercultural communication skills in authentic contexts.

In conclusion, reading and writing skills are essential instruments for the development of intercultural communication competence. They facilitate cultural understanding, language learning, critical thinking, and international cooperation in contemporary society. The ability to interpret and produce written communication across cultures contributes to academic success, professional achievement, and peaceful intercultural relations. As globalization continues to increase intercultural interaction worldwide, the importance of intercultural reading and writing competence will continue to grow in education and social life.

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