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Шлях до миру лежить у соціальних змінах : рухах створення егалітарної спільноти ХХІ століття – космополітичної, за межами держав і рас. Варіанти цього шляху зображуються в художній літературі, кінематографі, філософії, мові, мас-медіа, живописі, освіті. Теоретичні засади цього шляху сформульовані в концепції еко-фемінізму 80-х років ХХ століття на французькому підґрунті (Франсуаза д'Обонн), що загострилися в 10-20 роках ХХІ століття у США, Канаді, Австралії (Керол Гілліган, Маргарет Етвуд, Аріель Салле) під впливом африканських і афро-американських (Тоні Моррісон, Вангарі Маатаї, Еліс Вокер), індійських (Вандана Шива, Арундгаті Рой) та індіанських давніх знань. Спільноті ХХІ століття слід подолати розділення між «природою та культурою», відійти від дуалізму (індивіда та соціуму, підлеглого та начальника, чоловіка та жінки, колонізатора та колонізованого, учителя та учня, старшого та молодшого, людини та тварини), переосмислити кореляції держави та громадянина від дуальності до єдності – здійснити перехід від етики влади до «етики піклування». Відмова від бінарності дозволить відійти від дискримінації та експлуатації та перейти до єдності. Література, мова, кінематограф є матеріалом для розуміння лінгвістів і літературознавців, психологів і соціологів, помилок минулого та орієнтирів для майбутнього. Аналіз ідей, проблематики, художніх образів, героїв – як носіїв або антагоністів екофеміністичної ментальності; увага до відсутності екофеміністичного мислення в дискримінації через конфлікти творів сприяє кращому розумінню ситуацій у реальності. Це допоможе наблизити спільноту до гармонійного спілкування в «етиці піклування» без домінування; сприяє повільній поступовій зміні мислення в творчості, політиці, ідеології, демократії, освіті на рівнях спілкування в мові, літературі, кіно, мистецтві, психології, соціології, педагогіці, методиці навчання мови та літератури.

Для науковців, викладачів, докторантів, аспірантів, студентів гуманітарних закладів вищої освіти та вчителів загальноосвітніх шкіл.

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WORDS THAT CONNECT: CULTIVATING EMPATHY THROUGH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Olena Pavlenko. Words that connect: cultivating empathy through language teaching. This paper delves into the conceptual interrelation of language education and the advancement of empathetic understanding, proving it to be a crucial attribute in our ever-evolving and increasingly globalized society. It postulates that language acquisition transcends the mastery of linguistic structures, encompassing the development of profound emotional and cultural intelligence. Through a multifaceted approach, this study examines the role of discourse analysis in unveiling the cultural underpinnings of communication, the strategic integration of authentic materials to foster exposure to diverse perspectives, and the deliberate cultivation of empathetic listening skills to enhance cross-cultural understanding. Furthermore, it underscores the imperative of facilitating meaningful intercultural dialogues and fostering critical analytical skills to challenge ingrained stereotypes and promote inclusivity on a global scale. By synthesizing the elements mentioned above, the paper elucidates the transformative potential of language education in nurturing a generation of global citizens who are not only linguistically proficient but also deeply empathetic and culturally attuned, thereby contributing to navigating a complex and increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: cross-cultural understanding, language education, empathy, communicative competence, social-emotional learning.

The confluence of rapid global transformations of today and the growing demands of international discourse necessitates a fundamental shift in language education, moving

from conventional teaching paradigms to those that prioritize the development of empathetic communicative competence. Central in this context proves to be a marked divergence from the conventional memorization techniques, advocating for a more holistic understanding of language as “a tool to navigate social contexts in different cultural settings”, thus “<...> fostering empathy and tolerance by enabling individuals to appreciate the value of linguistic and cultural heritage” (Mouboua et al., 2024, p. 20).

Building upon this foundational understanding of language as a channel for empathetic engagement, this paper will now delve into specific pedagogical strategies and theoretical frameworks that facilitate the cultivation of empathy within the language learning classroom. **One of the most effective approaches in this context proves to be *storytelling*, which harnesses the power of narrative strategy to foster sympathy and understanding and provide new possibilities to connect with the human experience.** For instance, teachers can incorporate authentic narratives (storytelling) from diverse cultural backgrounds, such as personal essays, spoken (personal/testimonial) narratives, first-hand accounts, documentary films, etc.

By engaging with the issues mentioned above, students can develop a deeper appreciation for different perspectives and further practices. In this light, Dr Monika Nangia, Director of Student and Academic Services, states that storytelling can “synchronize brain wave patterns between the storyteller and the listener, creating a shared experience” (Nangia, 2025). As a passionate supporter of diverse voices in higher education leadership positions, she considers it imperative for the students from the <...> “global ethnic majority to share their academic and professional journeys, candidly mapping their career aspirations and the obstacles they faced” while <...> “some found the process therapeutic, others warned that these stories might trigger suppressed emotions” (Nangia, 2025).

Exploring the three aspects of storytelling in more detail – ‘the Telling, the Tale and the Talk’ Steve Killick & Maria Boffey claim that the latter “stimulates curiosity interest, inquiry, acceptance, and empathy” (Killick, Boffey, 2012, p. 36). Accordingly, the “Talk” comes to be recognized as the dialogue between the storyteller and the target

audience, where both parties can share their thoughts about the narrative, both when it is still in progress or after it has been over. It mirrors the exchange of opinions following a film, where the viewers reflect on and discuss their responses. These collaborative reflections, facilitated by both the narrator and the audience, integrate the performative act of storytelling with the narrative's inherent content. Such dialogic exchanges should be conducted within an environment characterized by mutual respect, emphasizing validating the speaker's perspective and cultivating empathetic engagement.

Another essential strategy for developing empathy via language teaching is forming *intercultural communicative competence (ICC)*. This involves creating opportunities for students to interact with individuals from diverse cultures through real-life exchanges or simulated scenarios. By learning to navigate cultural differences and communicate effectively across cultures, the learners can develop a greater empathy and understanding. The issue in question was the focus of attention of the *MLA (Modern Language Association) Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages*, further published in the report "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World" (2007). Regarding this, Daniel Yankelovich identified "the need to understand other cultures and languages" as one of five crucial needs to which higher education must respond in the next ten years if it is to remain relevant" (MLA Report, 2007). He appeals to the cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity claiming that <...> "our whole culture must become less ethnocentric, less patronizing, less ignorant of others, <....>, and more at home with the rest of the world" (Yankelovich, 2007). To elaborate, the cultivation of ICC within language learning environments can be achieved through many educational strategies. For instance, students can be engaged in joint research projects, online discussions, virtual exchanges, academic mobility programs (Erasmus+, Fulbright, Jan Monet), as well as group projects that require them to listen to each other's ideas, provide constructive feedback, and work towards a common goal. For instance, students can work together on a project that requires them to research and present information about a social issue, such as poverty or inequality, allowing them to "reflect on the world and themselves

through the lens of another language and culture” (MLA, 2007) and thus, develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by others.

A practical approach to advance empathy in class could also be realized through the integration of *authentic cultural materials* into the curriculum. This can include films, literature, music, and art from various cultures, providing students with insights into different worldviews and perspectives. For example, students can analyze films from different cultural contexts, examining how cultural values and norms are portrayed. This can lead to discussions about cultural differences and similarities, thus promoting empathy and understanding.

Furthermore, *role-playing and simulations* can be utilized to create immersive intercultural experiences. Students can participate in simulations of real-life intercultural encounters, such as business negotiations or social gatherings, allowing them to practice their communication skills and develop cultural sensitivity. For instance, students can role-play a scenario where they negotiate a business deal with a person from a different cultural background, requiring them to consider cultural differences in communication styles and negotiation strategies. **In addition, inviting guest speakers from different cultural backgrounds can provide students with first-hand insights into diverse cultures.** This can involve inviting international students, immigrants, or experts on intercultural communication to share their experiences and perspectives.

Additionally, integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) principles within language pedagogy holds the potential for enhancing empathic understanding. This can involve activities that encourage students to reflect on their own emotions and the emotions of others, as well as activities that stimulate active listening and perspective-taking. The application of SEL strategies within language classrooms can be achieved through a variety of techniques, for example, ***the use of reflective journaling*** (students can be prompted to write about their emotional responses to specific texts, cultural encounters, or language learning challenges, reflect on their emotional reactions and consider how these emotions might differ from those of individuals from different cultural backgrounds), ***the incorporation of role-playing and simulations focusing on emotional***

intelligence. (students can participate in scenarios that require them to navigate complex emotional situations, such as resolving conflicts or providing support to others, e.g., role-playing a scenario to mediate a disagreement between two individuals from different cultural backgrounds, requiring them to consider cultural differences in communication styles and emotional expression). **In addition, integrating mindfulness and meditation practices can help students develop self-regulation and emotional awareness.**

Consequently, it proves to be evident that the cultivation of empathy within language education is not merely an aspirational goal but a pragmatic necessity in our interconnected world. **Therefore, educators can create transformative learning environments by embracing storytelling, fostering intercultural communicative competence, and integrating social-emotional learning principles. Ultimately, through these pedagogical shifts,** language classrooms can become spaces where students not only acquire linguistic proficiency but also develop the critical capacity to understand, appreciate, and empathize with the diverse experiences of others that can genuinely contribute to fostering of a more inclusive and understanding global society.

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