Developing L1 culture-related vocabulary competence in real-world EFL settings

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Abstract

Teaching L1 culture is an important aspect of intercultural learning in EFL context and a prerequisite for the development of intercultural communication competence (Byram, 1997; Kahn, 2014). Teaching L1 culture in EFL also enhances interdisciplinarity and promotes preservation of one's own cultural and national identity (Vickov, 2016). Vickov (2014) informs that EFL teachers and learners in Croatian primary schools demonstrate relatively poor L1 culture-related vocabulary competence in English.

The present study focuses on the results of research into L1 culture-related vocabulary competence, conducted on 50 teacher education students specializing in teaching English to young learners. The study also examines students´ perspective on learning L1 culture-related vocabulary in an out-of-classroom, real-world EFL setting. Following a mixed-methods approach, for the quantitative part the data was collected through a vocabulary test, while a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to collect qualitative data.

The results of the study demonstrate a rather poor level of the students´ L1 culture-related vocabulary competence. The qualitative data analysis shows that intercultural teaching and learning in real-world context has been evaluated as innovative, creative, and highly motivating by all participants.

The findings of this research point to the necessity of developing prospective English teachers´ vocabulary competence related to L1 culture. The study also identifies out-of-classroom EFL settings as a motivating, advantageous environment for intercultural teaching at the academic level.

Key words

EFL; intercultural learning; L1 culture, out-of-classroom EFL settings; vocabulary competence

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