CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITIES

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Annotation. The digitalization of higher education has rendered traditional, form-focused language teaching obsolete, as it fails to address pragmatic and intercultural dimensions of communication. This article argues that contrastive analysis, when reconceptualized as a digitally supported pedagogical strategy, functions as an innovative approach to developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in language universities. In contrast to grammar-translation methods, it reveals ethnocultural norms of communicative behavior and prevents pragmatic failure in real interaction. Integrated with platforms such as Padlet, Edpuzzle, YouTube corpora, and AI scenario modeling, contrastive analysis becomes a scalable and replicable tool that enables students to detect, interpret, and adapt to cross-cultural variation in speech acts and politeness strategies. The paper justifies its relevance for Uzbekistan's university classrooms by presenting contrastive analysis as an

implementable and policy-aligned innovation that meets the demands of contemporary academic and professional mobility.

Keywords: contrastive analysis, intercultural communicative competence, digital pedagogy, pragmatic failure, speech acts, ethnocultural communicative behavior, higher education, innovation.

Intercultural miscommunication in English-medium academic and professional interactions rarely stems from grammatical error; it is overwhelmingly triggered by pragmatic transfer - the unconscious import of native ethnocultural norms into a foreign-language context. A learner may construct a syntactically correct utterance and still fail communicatively because the illocutionary force they intend is decoded differently by interlocutors from other cultures. Such failures are not random deviations but patterned outcomes of culturally encoded communicative behavior. Therefore, any method that claims relevance for 21st-century language education must treat intercultural pragmatics not as an optional add-on but as the core risk domain demanding systematic pedagogical intervention [5, p.242].

Contrastive analysis, reconceived not as a structuralist relic but as a competence-building strategy, directly targets this risk by making cultural scripts analytically visible and behaviorally negotiable. The original contrastive hypothesis framed in the mid-20th century focused on predicting formal interference in syntax and phonology [7, p.33], but the contemporary threat in globalized communication originates not in forms but in pragmatic regimes - refusals, apologies, compliments, offers, greetings - whose cultural realization diverges sharply across ethnolinguistic groups [2, p.114; 3, p.89]. When students perform a refusal in English using direct structures inherited from Russian or Uzbek norms, they commit a pragmatic infelicity even when grammatically flawless [10, p.57; 2, p.114]. Conversely, when they formulate an English apology with Russian brevity or Uzbek ritualization, they risk being perceived as insincere or incomplete despite lexical correctness [3, p.89; 8, p.67].

The claim that contrastive analysis is “not innovative” collapses once innovation is defined functionally rather than chronologically. A method is “innovative” in higher education when it (1) prevents the dominant failure mode; (2) produces operational competence rather than declarative knowledge; and (3) scales under digital conditions. Contrastive analysis in its re-engineered pedagogical form satisfies all three conditions. First, it directly immunizes learners against pragmatic failure by pre-exposing them to intercultural divergence before real-world breakdown occurs. Second, it transforms recognition of difference into strategic behavioral adaptability - the essence of intercultural communicative competence. Third, digital mediation (Padlet maps, Edpuzzle pauses, YouTube corpora, AI interlocutors) converts contrastive analysis from a descriptive narrative into a replicable training architecture at classroom scale [6, p.53; 9, p.41].

Digitalization is not an aesthetic upgrade but a structural enabler: without large samples of authentic intercultural discourse, contrastive analysis would remain abstract and teacher-declared rather than empirically verifiable [6, p.53]. Streaming platforms, political speeches, podcasts, sitcom transcripts, interview archives, and AI chatbots supply living material in which learners can detect contrasts in stance, mitigation, address forms, and ritual formulas without relying on intuition or hearsay. This shift - from teacher-imposed contrast to learner-discovered contrast - is what converts contrastive analysis from a linguistic commentary into a competence technology. Learners cease being passive recipients of cultural facts and become analysts of actionable difference.

To dismiss contrastive analysis as “old” because it appeared in the 1950s is to commit a chronological fallacy. A method’s birth date is irrelevant; its capacity to solve unsolved

present problems is decisive [5, p.242]. In the digital, intercultural, competence-based regime of higher education, contrastive analysis is innovative not by invention but by necessity. It neutralizes the precise failure mechanism (pragmatic misalignment), uses digital affordances unavailable to earlier generations, and produces transferable behavioral outcomes instead of ornamental cultural commentary. No rival method currently satisfies these conditions with equal parsimony or replicability.

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