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FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING UKRAINIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

This article addresses the development of intercultural communication skills in international students learning Ukrainian as a foreign language. The authors define "intercultural communication". This article highlights that intercultural communication, ideally, involves shared meaning and is a key element in the way people and groups from diverse cultures interact. The main aim of this communication is to build unity and mutual understanding between people while still respecting their individual cultural identities. Education is currently evolving to promote multicultural thinking, which includes tolerance. This approach supports productive intercultural communication, creative cultural expression, individual development, and social advancement. The authors specifically address the modernization of education, focusing on its move towards democratization and multiculturalism, a shift that has become highly important both in theory and practice. It is emphasized that the problem of intercultural communication in the educational process and in the everyday life of foreign students is becoming acute and relevant in the conditions of internationalization of education, in particular, an increase in the number of foreign students in universities. The problematic issues of forming intercultural communication in the process of mastering the Ukrainian language as a foreign language by students – foreign citizens are analyzed. The importance of intercultural communication, both in the classroom and daily life, is emphasized, especially with the growing number of international students and the internationalization of education. The text examines challenges in intercultural communication while learning Ukrainian as a foreign language for international students.

Examples of exercises used by teachers at the department of Ukrainian and humanitarian training of Poltava State Medical University are provided, aiding in the academic adjustment of international students. These exercises are designed around principles of intercultural communication. To improve intercultural communication, the article suggests teachers focus on cultivating intercultural competence in students. This competence is the best developed through structured intercultural communication scenarios.

Keywords: intercultural communication, language personality, humanization of higher education, multicultural development.

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ФОРМУВАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ В ІНОЗЕМНИХ СТУДЕНТІВ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

Стаття присвячена проблемі формування міжкультурної комунікації в іноземних студентів у процесі вивчення української мови як іноземної. Авторами розкрито поняття «міжкультурна комунікація». У статті підкреслюється, що міжкультурна комунікація – це сенсовий та ідейно наповнений бік ціннісних взаємин успішного спілкування між особистостями та соціальними групами різних культур. Головна задача комунікації – досягнення згоди, взаєморозуміння представників різних культур ізбереження індивідуальності кожного. Сьогодні цілі освіти зміщуються у бік формування полікультурного мислення, яке передбачає прояв толерантності учасників спілкування. Це забезпечує ефективність міжкультурної комунікації, культуротворення, особистісне зростання та досягнення суспільного успіху. Автори акцентують увагу на проблемі модернізації освіти у напрямі демократизації і полікультурності, що набуває особливої теоретичної та практичної значимості. Наголошується на тому, що проблема міжкультурної комунікації у навчальному процесі та у повсякденному житті студентів-іноземців стає гострою і актуальною в умовах інтернаціоналізації освіти, зокрема збільшення в університетах кількості іноземних студентів. Аналізуються проблемні питання формування міжкультурної комунікації у процесі опанування українською мовою як іноземною студентами – іноземними громадянами.

Наведено приклади вправ, що використовують викладачі кафедри українознавства та гуманітарної підготовки ПДМУ для сприяння швидкій академічній адаптації іноземних студентів. Завдання базуються на ідеях міжкультурної комунікації. Показано, що сучасний університет у просторі міжкультурної комунікації займає особливе місце. Для підвищення ефективності міжкультурної комунікації пропонується зосередити увагу викладачів на формуванні у студентів міжкультурної компетентності. Показано, що таку компетентність доцільно виховувати у спеціально організованих ситуаціях міжкультурної комунікації.

Ключові слова: міжкультурна комунікація, мовна особистість, гуманізація вищої освіти, полікультурний розвиток.

The requirement to investigate university students' intercultural skills using a fresh theoretical and practical approach arises from the changing nature of Ukrainian society and the world. Global influences are fuelling integration, impacting all areas of life and transforming traditional values, understandings, and perspectives on coexistence and intercultural relations.

The emergence of a worldwide communication arena fundamentally reshapes the building blocks of culture, impacting all facets of society and individuals. This unified "super culture" enriches the variety found in local cultures. This then expands and deepens the ways individuals connect, thanks to a solid grasp of accessible, similar, or almost-identical meaning found in foreign languages. Due to these widespread integrative linguistic shifts, national cultures are brought together into a shared communication network, a force encouraging dialogue among its members using fresh principles.

Immersing oneself in modern foreign cultures demands an adjustment in personal values, education, career aspirations, language skills, communication styles, traditions, and societal conventions. The rise in cross-cultural and workplace connections emphasizes the necessity for competitive, flexible, and skilled professionals proficient in a foreign language. This ability isn't just a required component of professional preparation, but also vital for personal growth within a chosen field.

Globalization's powerful forces bring considerable advantages. Nevertheless, they also present new risks of diminishing and standardizing national cultures and customs, including in education. Therefore, a core element for social and educational integration needs to be the idea of mutual growth via the strengths of diverse cultures, while protecting their individuality and wholeness. This principle is the "conceptual structure" for intercultural dialogue, and a willingness to engage in this communication underpins the teaching aim of nurturing students' intercultural competence at the university.

According to the "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" law, international students in Ukraine for higher education must learn Ukrainian. The National Doctrine on Education highlights that the main objective of foreign language instruction (for international students, Ukrainian) is to help students use the language for intercultural communication across all aspects of life. The key educational goal is to meet the current need, which is to effectively use a foreign language for communication and to guarantee the achievement of this. It's also important to understand that intercultural communication helps develop both general and professional cultural awareness, widens students' perspectives, and promotes a personal link to another culture through its learning. It also enhances communication skills, values, sentiments, and a favourable attitude towards the language and the culture of its speakers.

Relevance of the problem. Developing intercultural competence in university students is crucial because of several gaps:

- the desire to improve future professionals' intercultural skills versus the insufficient use of professional education's potential in that area;
- the growing demand in pedagogical theory and practice to understand how university students develop intercultural competence, contrasted with the limited progress in developing a pedagogical theory for intercultural competence in a rapidly changing society;
- the present-day society's emphasis on competency-based education and intercultural interaction, alongside the fact that professional competence is frequently not fully developed.

This paper aims to examine the key difficulties in intercultural communication and professional interaction during Ukrainian language classes. It focuses on the experiences of international medical students at Ukrainian universities.

Freshmen face various academic and social hurdles when starting university, with communication problems being highly significant. These issues can include communication apprehension, language obstacles, and difficulties with social adjustment, which can affect both academic success and personal development [Manakin, 2012]. Yet, existing research on this subject is often divided, with studies concentrating on particular aspects or student populations without considering the full range of communication challenges. A systematic review is necessary to combine current research, pinpoint areas needing more investigation, and offer a complete picture of these difficulties.

It is crucial to emphasize that in intercultural communication, both general and professional culture is shaped in future specialists. Their worldview expands, and a personal attitude towards other cultures forms during their study. Students also cultivate communication skills, values, feelings, emotions, and a positive attitude towards the foreign language and culture of the people who use that language. For instance, T.I. Oliynyk believes that incorporating cultural elements into foreign language teaching is an urgent need today. Understanding and distinguishing the features of different cultures, along with tolerant attitudes towards these differences, encourages linguistic, cognitive, and social development in students [Oliynyk, 2008: 29]. Therefore, learning a foreign language in higher education becomes culturally significant. This is because the future, modern professional who masters a foreign language needs to work internationally, adapt to new means of communication, learn another culture, and understand their own ethno-cultural roots. They need to quickly adapt in a multicultural environment and demonstrate tolerance towards foreign languages and cultures [Oliynyk, 2008: 32].

Literature review. Transformations in Ukrainian society, as it becomes part of the world, require updates to the education system. This involves creating theoretical and practical methods to cope with this social shift, which is multicultural because intercultural communication matters more now. People are inherently multicultural. Even when they follow the rules and ideals of a particular "home" culture, where they grew up, learned, and were socialized. When working, communicating, and learning, people seek freedom and the ability to make choices about their path and beliefs within cultural values and social connections.

Intercultural communication focuses on the meaning and ideas exchanged when individuals and groups from different cultures interact. The main aim of this type of communication is to create a shared understanding, while acknowledging the individuality of each person. Education is now moving towards fostering multicultural thinking, which includes encouraging tolerance among communicators. This strategy facilitates successful intercultural communication, imaginative cultural expression, personal growth, and achieving social success. As a result, the task of updating education to include multiculturalism and the idea that cultures are relative is gaining significance.

The technology involved in intercultural communication benefits from the broad spread of information technology. Because of the rise of "information overload" – a lack of organization, disorder, and too much information in the cultural context – the educational system plays a vital role. This means developing information literacy, choosing educational programs that encourage social progress, moral growth, and cultivating creative, flexible, and adaptive thought processes. Research in intercultural communication is by its nature a blend of multiple fields.

Communication is the process of transferring information from one person to another via interaction and different forms of media. These include established media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, as well as newer media like the internet, cell phones, and tablets [Toan, 2011].

Interaction involves the sharing of information between those taking part, using communication and media to share facts, skills, and ideas from a source to a recipient.

The phrase "intercultural communication" was introduced by Edward Hall, an American anthropologist and culture expert, following World War II. Initially, research on this topic concentrated on analyzing communication breakdowns and their consequences in cross-cultural environments. Later, the idea of "intercultural communication" has been adopted in translation theory, teaching of foreign languages, comparative cultural analyses, and contrastive pragmatic linguistics.

Intercultural communication began to be taught as a subject in the US more than twenty years ago. Several Western academics (G. Kolb, W. Gudykunst & R. Hammer, M. Paige & J. Martin, M. Hoopes, M. Bennett, among others) shared insights into their teaching practices. They put forward structures to help arrange intercultural lessons, with Bennett's and Hoopes' models being the most widely recognized.

Intercultural communication builds upon cultural anthropology and communication theory, originating in information science. Cognitive and social psychology, sociology, cognitive linguistics, and language typology heavily contribute to its research. This field explores how cultures shape social understanding, thought processes, and interactions, influencing the outcome of communication. Theories within intercultural communication are particularly useful for the socio-cultural analysis of socio-political endeavors, management, advising (within and between organizations), social work, education, and various areas involving communication between groups and individuals.

During the 20th century, researchers such as E. Cassirer, M. Heidegger, M. M. Bakhtin, and Yu. M. Lotman, studied the influence of culture on human conduct.

Sociologists who focus on intercultural communication employ established techniques, including observation, experiments, surveys, tests, and interviews. They analyze particular groups of participants who reflect various aspects of society. Psychologists in this area explore how cultural variations impact how we interpret and classify language, along with the character of connected behavioural tendencies (see, for example, the studies of /Fr.Berger, S.Langer, and others).

The scholarly works of Ukrainian academics, such as Bakum Z. P., Palchykova O. O., Bigich O. B., Borisko N. F., Boretska G. E., Leshchenko T. O., Kozak A. V., Shevchenko O. M. and others, explore modern-day issues concerning communicative spaces, the nature of ethno-linguistic identity, and the link between intercultural communication and foreign language learning, in addition to related research areas.

Current research strongly suggests studying intercultural communication is crucial. It's seen as key to update educational methods and to promote personal development in today's multicultural world. The changes of cultural environment and how cultural identity is formed require individuals to actively define and understand themselves. This theme is explored in publications like O. M. Shevchenko, T. O. Leshchenko "Development of intercultural communicative competence of students in Ukrainian as a foreign language classes"(Poltava, 2024) and "The communicative component in doctor-patient interaction"(Poltava, 2022), and similar works.

Education is regarded as a social entity with several functions, the primary ones being instruction and nurturing. Prior to the 21st century, education mainly aimed at transferring and maintaining the existing culture across generations. Currently, the emphasis is evolving towards cultural development as a process of societal evolution, societal betterment, and individual growth. Foundational writings by thinkers globally and within specific areas examine education as a mechanism for cultural creation.

Ukrainian academics and thinkers recognize the relationship between culture and learning. According to I. Bekh, culture is the universal factor and the spiritual and practical foundation for personal development, as well as for education, which entails acknowledging a person as a full-fledged subject of culture, crucial for the educational process [Bekh, 2003]. V. Andrushchenko believes that modern education should be grounded in the principles of the future socio-cultural environment, with its main objective being the development of individuals capable of thriving amidst socio-cultural uncertainty [Andrushchenko, 2005].

Education is currently moving towards communication-based methods. This includes the Internet, satellite TV, video, and also educational mobility, meaning studying in different countries based on one's interests, abilities, and drive. Contemporary education extends beyond just transferring information. It also strives to foster a wider cultural awareness, innovative thought (both in reflection and planning), and a future-oriented minds eatable to solve complex problems in any situation. Specialized professional knowledge quickly becomes obsolete, often within five to seven years. As a result, self-directed learning and retraining are becoming crucial for personal adjustment in the present world. Ongoing education can solve this by providing various and flexible teaching and self-learning techniques, a long side a focus on human values, equality, and individualization. Therefore, continuous education is transforming into a vital tool, assisting people in managing professional and personal difficulties.

Although much study exists on these subjects, there is, at this time, no specific research focused on the key concepts of process, content, organization, and learning resources used to foster university students' intercultural competence as both a personal and professional trait. The existing, dispersed research on this matter necessitates conceptual arrangement. Additionally, diverse academic methods for structuring professional training makes electing a sound methodological basis for designing an intercultural competence development model for university students more complex, not less. Within higher education, this topic is, to some degree, often treated separately from standard theory and practices of professional education, and it doesn't invariably match the trend towards educational advancement in our changing world.

Out of all the ways humans communicate, language is paramount, with its primary function being communication. Understanding another's language is vital for cross-cultural exchanges and is the initial step to building effective interaction between people from different countries and backgrounds, "V.M. Manakin writes in "Language and Intercultural Communication" [Manakin, 2012:10]. According to Manakin, the main aim of intercultural communication is to encourage intercultural competence, requiring knowledge about different people and their cultures. This is done to prevent ethnic and cross-cultural conflicts and to establish favorable conditions for interaction indifferent fields and life situations [Manakin, 2012:10].

Materials and methods. Intercultural communication, involving international students, is essentially a communicative interaction for a specific purpose, that occurs between different cultures. Its goal is to achieve mutual comprehension and the merging of cultural and communication meanings, leading to consensus while recognizing and maintaining each group's "national perspective. "Thus, th

basic elements of intercultural communication are language (which mirrors a culture), culture (relaying details of socio-historical contexts), and personality (formed by educational and social experiences) [Tepla, 2010].

To craft a set of exercises aimed at enhancing intercultural communication, the necessary components were examined. Drawing on N. Sklyarenko's recommendations, we'll concentrate on exercises intended to strengthen then: communication abilities, student engagement, cultural understanding, and practical application [Sklyarenko, 1999: 4]. Following the guidelines of problem-solving activities and the principles of cultural contrast, these requirements are suggested: tasks centered on problem-solving and a comparison of cultures.

Task 1. Describe to a friend your medical university studies: a) as a student in your home country; b) as an international student. Use the plan below.

1. Class schedule. 2. Dorm life. 3. The problems you face. 4. Your classmates.

The role-play promotes students' communication skills, the cultural aspect lies in using socio-cultural data to complete the task, and cultural variability is reflected in how information is presented from different cultural backgrounds.

Task 2. You need to get acquainted with your classmate and find out some information about them. Role-play dialogues, using the questions below.

Who typically greets first in your country?

Do you shake hands when you meet someone?

What's the appropriate distance between people when talking?

Identify the typical psychological traits of your classmate.

This exercise helps students develop their ability to extract and utilize necessary information. It encourages them to build a communicative situation according to the etiquette of a particular culture, motivates them to achieve a positive outcome in their interactions, and simulates a real-life conversation.

Task 3. National stereotypes are, as we know, quite intriguing.

Engaging with classmates, create your own stereotype map. Compare it with the maps made by other students. Compile a list of stereotypes associated with various countries. Compare these, identifying similarities and differences.

The goal of this activity is to highlight global cultural differences, motivating students to explore and analyze cultural data.

Task 4. Make a dialogue between the head doctor and a student who came to apply for a job. Find out what the requirements are for working conditions (education, experience, salary, working hours).

Dialogue requirements: You are a representative of reactive culture, and your employer is poly active.

This exercise encourages students to find solutions to a problematic situation; students' actions are motivated, each performs the assigned role, and attempts to reach an understanding with their interlocutor; the exercise's task is communicative.

Task 5. Complete the facts about the customs of different nations with the words can, can't, have, don't have.

1. In many Arab countries, punctuality is not considered necessary. Therefore, you _____ not to arrive on time for a meeting.

2. In some parts of Asia, it is considered offensive to touch or pat someone on the head. Therefore, you _____ to do it.

3. In many Asian countries, you _____ to eat with your right hand, because the left hand is considered dirty.

4. In many countries, you _____ use your index finger to call someone over – it is very impolite.

Task 6. Look at the photo. Comment on it.

How do people behave at the table?

Do they violate the rules of behavior at the table?

Is it possible to behave like this at a table where there are elderly people?

Is such behavior possible in your country?

What age group is characterized by such behavior?

Why do young people behave like this?

Task 7. Write a story about how you should behave when you are invited to dinner. Describe the following criteria.

Arrive on time.

Remove your shoes upon entering the house.

Bring flowers or a dish of food.

Use a knife and fork at the table.

Eat with your fingers.

Finish all the food served to you.

Task 8. Write some tips for tourists visiting your country. Explain the rules of politeness that you need to know when you are invited to a party.

Hello, _____!

Here's some guidance on how to behave politely.

You are expected to

You are not allowed to

You don't have to

Task 9. Read the beginning of the text "Dream land".

Using the photos, describe what events take place during the festival. The first Boris Lyatoshynsky Music Festival was held on the 130th anniversary of the well-known Ukrainian composer, a 20th-century classic, the founder of new Ukrainian music, a representative of modernism and expressionism, Boris Mykolayovych Lyatoshynsky (1895–1968).

The main objective of the Festival is to draw greater attention to the composer's heritage and to unveil its new layers of meaning. The key concepts of the Festival are memory, identity, genesis, awareness, and home. Dedicated to understanding these are not only the specifically curated programs of each concert, but also the panel discussions that precede them, featuring well-known intellectuals. The Festival is divided into five interconnected sections: Memory – "Ukrainian culture during the world crisis: ways of

rescue and self-preservation. Identity – "Ukrainian art of the Soviet period". Genesis – "Underground rivers of the future: Ukrainian art of the 1920s." Awareness – "The limits of acceptability: foreign culture in contemporary Ukrainian space".

Task 10. Ask a classmate if their country has any comparable festivals. Ask lots of questions (Where does it happen? How often? Who joins in? What is the festival for? What goes on?).

Using these exercises in Ukrainian language classes for foreigners helped assess the students' ability to utilize information from reading or listening, their capacity to respond to given information, and improve their skill in conveying thoughts with clarity, logic, and supporting arguments.

Task 11. Split into two groups. Read the text. Craft questions for the other group to get more information.

A wedding is a set of ceremonies and customs tied to marriage; it varies based on ethnicity, religion, region, and other specific features. Courtship is the first meeting of the groom's and bride's families to decide on the marriage. The girl's parents welcomed the match makers with bread, salt, and a prepared meal. If the girl approved the match, she presented embroidered towels, using them to bind the match makers. If she declined, she gave the young man a pumpkin.

After the proposal was agreed upon, viewings occurred – introductions to the groom's family. Two weeks before the wedding, the betrothal happened, solidifying the marriage agreement.

Invitations involved gathering the bride's friends and inviting guests. These took place on Sunday mornings. The bride, in traditional clothing, would visit homes, presenting pine cones to the hosts and saying: "My parents ask, and invite you to our wedding."

Prior to the wedding, farewell parties occurred for the bride and groom, as they said goodbye to their unmarried days. These events often happened on Saturdays. The women donned vibrant attire, styled their hair, and accessorized with vivid ribbons. The men would demonstrate their physical prowess and abilities. At the celebrations, youths danced, sang, and formed singing groups.

Upon getting married, the groom was required to provide a sort of payment to the bride, the amount of which matched her dowry. While on the way to the bride's house, the groom could be halted, and a ransom asked for her.

Before the wedding, the young woman would put on vibrant bridal attire, primarily in red. She'd wear an embroidered shirt, a skirt, a wreath with long colorful ribbons, and braid her hair. The groom would put on an embroidered shirt, tucking it into wide trousers.

These practices serve to grasp universal cultural and spiritual values and standards. They also facilitate a person's moral and ethical growth, as well as unbiased treatment of individuals from different cultures, and realizing the equality of cultures through comparison and analysis.

Task 12. Write a story titled "Folk Celebrations in Your Country".

Task 13. Nowadays, communication via the Internet is becoming increasingly common. Discuss these questions with your classmates and share your views from the perspective of:

a) a boy; b) a girl; c) an elderly person.

1. Is it possible to fall in love online?

2. Are online relationships safe?

3. Do you know anyone who has started a relationship online?

4. How do young people/adults feel about online dating?

Conclusions. Modern education, to meet society's evolving needs, should prioritize "developmental" teaching, concentrating on nurturing a creative, culturally aware individual. The central focus should be the individual's self-growth, seen as vital for professional success, ethical conduct, and cultural understanding. A crucial aspect of updating education is its embrace of multiculturalism. Multicultural education encourages discussion, collaboration, shared creation, group effort, appreciating differing perspectives, and respecting others. The goal is to cultivate multicultural spiritual values, defined by openness to the global cultural perspectives, irrespective of someone's nationality, religion, or beliefs.

In short, the proposed exercise system, aimed at enhancing intercultural communication skills, successfully assists international students in developing these competencies while studying Ukrainian. The exercise types are structured around: the focus on either receiving or conveying information, communication, and motivation. This system can be utilized in the teaching of Ukrainian as a second language. Its goal is to enhance students' self-improvement and professional advancement, boost their interest in languages and cultures, modify their perspectives on their own culture, and enable solutions to communication obstacles. It allows students to foster constructive interactions with people from various cultural backgrounds. The outlined exercises cultivate teamwork abilities, the capacity to manage their communication, create culturally sensitive monologues and dialogues, encourage respect for other cultures, and improve practical and creative language skills, particularly in the context of intercultural relationships.

Developing intercultural competence in a university student encompasses a strong understanding of "own" and "foreign" cultures; fostering tolerance; cultivating the ability to navigate societal norm and values ethically; and acquiring the language, etiquette, and nonverbal communication of another culture. The role of a university instructor in building a student's intercultural competence is to: to spark students' interest in understanding the diverse world of languages and cultures, exploring different realities of mentality and other cultures; not to create opposition, but to compare cultures, avoiding hasty assessments and judgments (especially condemnations); to help cultivate a tolerant attitude towards another culture, religion, and value system.

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