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### FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS OF NON-LINGUISTIC SPECIALITIES IN THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

**Abstract.** The article deals with the problem of preparing students of non-linguistic specialities for effective intercultural communication in the context of globalisation and Ukraine's integration into the world space. The aim of the article is to reveal the peculiarities of forming intercultural communicative competence in the process of foreign language teaching. It looks at modern scientific approaches to defining the concept of "intercultural communicative competence", which covers not only the ability to speak a foreign language, but also the ability to effectively interact with people from other cultures based on respect, empathy and cultural awareness. The opinion is expressed that the successful formation of competence in students of non-linguistic specialities requires a combination of linguistic, cultural and professional training with a focus on practical intercultural interaction. The importance of innovative teaching technologies, in particular the methods of projects, discussions, role-playing games and problem-based learning, as means of developing communication skills and tolerance, is emphasised. The peculiarities of training students of non-linguistic specialities are outlined: limited language practice, focus on professional communication, the need to develop soft skills. The importance of socio-cultural awareness, flexibility of thinking and the ability to avoid intercultural misunderstandings is substantiated. The role of cultural dialogue in improving the effectiveness of professional interaction and spiritual enrichment of the individual is revealed. It is proven that the formation of intercultural communicative competence is an integral part of training a competitive specialist. It is concluded that foreign language teaching methods need to be adapted to take into account the professional specifics and intercultural requirements of the modern labour market. It is emphasised that the development of intercultural communicative competence contributes to the

formation of a tolerant, flexible personality capable of effective interaction in a multicultural environment.

**Keywords:** intercultural communicative competence, foreign language, non-linguistic specialities, professional training, innovative technologies, cultural dialogue.

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## **ФОРМУВАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ НЕМОВНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ У ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ**

**Анотація.** У статті порушується проблема підготовки студентів немовних спеціальностей до ефективної міжкультурної комунікації в умовах глобалізації та інтеграції України у світовий простір. Мета статті полягає в розкритті особливостей формування міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності у процесі навчання іноземної мови. Розглянуто сучасні наукові підходи до визначення поняття "міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність", яка охоплює не лише здатність володіти іноземною мовою, а й уміння ефективно взаємодіяти з представниками інших культур на основі поваги, емпатії та культурної обізнаності. Висловлено думку, що успішне формування компетентності студентів немовних спеціальностей потребує поєднання мовної, культурної та професійної підготовки з орієнтацією на практичну міжкультурну взаємодію. Підкреслено значення інноваційних технологій навчання, зокрема методу проєктів, дискусій, рольових ігор та проблемного навчання, як засобів розвитку комунікативних умінь і толерантності. Окреслено особливості підготовки студентів немовних спеціальностей: обмежений обсяг мовної практики, орієнтація на професійну комунікацію, необхідність розвитку м'яких навичок. Обґрунтовано важливість соціокультурної обізнаності, гнучкості мислення та здатності уникати міжкультурні непорозуміння. Розкрито роль діалогу культур у підвищенні ефективності професійної взаємодії та духовному збагаченні особистості. Доведено, що формування міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності є невід'ємною складовою підготовки конкурентоздатного фахівця. Зроблено висновок про необхідність адаптації методів викладання іноземної мови з урахуванням професійної специфіки та міжкультурних вимог сучасного ринку праці. Наголошено, що розвиток міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності сприяє формуванню толерантної, гнучкої та здатної до ефективної взаємодії в багатокультурному середовищі особистості.

**Ключові слова:** міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність, іноземна мова, немовні спеціальності, професійна підготовка, інноваційні технології, діалог культур.

**Problem statement.** In the context of expanding international relations and Ukraine's integration into the global and European space, there is a growing need for society to train competitive, mobile, competent specialists who are well versed in various communicative situations, able to build dialogue with all actors in the common living space, choose appropriate means, methods and techniques of interaction, and establish productive relationships with representatives of different cultures. This need has led to significant changes in the content of foreign language education. There is an active introduction of an intercultural educational paradigm, which considers a foreign language as an important means of intercultural communication.

A foreign language promotes verbal understanding between citizens of different countries and ensures a level of cultural development that allows them to feel free and comfortable in the country whose language they are learning. In this regard, it is important to recognize that the ability to communicate effectively with someone from another culture depends not only on the correct use of linguistic units, but also on specific skills for understanding that culture's norms, including patterns of speech in various communicative situations. This obliges us to consider a foreign language as a kind of tool for learning about another culture and promoting our own, which contributes to spiritual enrichment and raises the level of humanitarian education.

Intercultural communicative competence is an indicator of a person's ability to act effectively in intercultural communication and is the main goal of foreign language education. Hence, it is quite obvious that teachers should refocus on preparing specialists for intercultural communication with representatives of other cultures and the practical use of foreign languages in their future professional activities. Foreign language teaching should reach the level of intercultural foreign language education and develop intercultural awareness in students as the ability to see themselves and their interlocutors as representatives of certain cultures, ready to understand a different way of life and thinking, to accept each other's "otherness", respect the right to cultural difference, be tolerant of values and behavioural patterns in another culture, counteract stereotypes and prejudices, and rethink their own cultural baggage [6, pp. 69-70]. The formation of intercultural competence involves qualitative changes in the student's attitude to the dominant worldviews of life and the learning process at the university based on the formation of an adequate value picture of the world and awareness of the priority role of intercultural communication in a multicultural educational space.

**Analysis of recent studies and publications.** In recent years, there has been a growing number of studies related to the problems of intercultural communication in general and the formation of intercultural communicative competence of students in particular. The problems of intercultural communication are covered in the works of M. Byram, F. Batsevykh, O. Misechko, S. Nikolaieva, I. Shavkun. O. Bezkorovaina, P. Bekh, N. Bibik, O. Bihych, O. Honcharova, V. Hurmaza, A. Maslova, and O. Rembach have devoted their research to various aspects of intercultural communicative competence. In particular, the works of F. Batsevykh, O. Misechko and O. Bezkorovaina focus on the specifics of forming intercultural communicative

competence in students of non-linguistic specialties, where foreign language learning is seen as a means of professional and personal integration into a multicultural environment.

**The purpose of the article** is to reveal the peculiarities of forming intercultural communicative competence of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of foreign language teaching.

**Presentation of the main material.** The concept of intercultural communicative competence is quite multifaceted, so its definition is interpreted differently in literary sources. From the researches' point of view, it encompasses not only the ability to speak a foreign language, but also the ability to interact effectively with representatives of other cultures on the basis of respect, empathy and cultural awareness. Thus, in his model of intercultural sensitivity development, M. Bennett considers the process of forming intercultural competence as a gradual transition from denial of differences to acceptance and adaptation to cultural diversity [9]. This model allows us to understand how a person's attitude towards another culture changes during intercultural interaction.

According to M. Byram's concept, intercultural communicative competence includes five main components: attitudes, knowledge, interpretive skills, interaction skills and critical cultural awareness [10]. His approach is widely used in European language education because it combines language and sociocultural training.

O. Bezkorovaina interprets intercultural communicative competence as an integrated personal quality that is formed in the process of learning a foreign language and combines linguistic, sociocultural, emotional-psychological and behavioural components [2].

N. Bibik emphasises the importance of intercultural competence as a component of civic education and an important factor in socialisation in the context of globalisation [3]. She highlights the role of intercultural dialogue as a tool for fostering tolerance and mutual understanding between peoples.

Thus, in contemporary scientific literature, intercultural communicative competence is viewed as an integrated system of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that ensures effective communication in an intercultural context. Its formation is a key task of language education in higher education.

It should be noted that Ukrainian scientific thought tends to give a broad interpretation of intercultural communicative competence. Thus, in Ukraine's first «Dictionary of Intercultural Communication Terms», this concept is defined as "the process of communication (verbal and nonverbal) between people (groups of people) who belong to different national linguistic and cultural communities and usually use different identical languages, feel the linguistic and cultural "foreignness" of their communication partner, and have different communicative competence, which can cause communication failures or cultural shock in communication" [1, p. 9]. As we can see, in revealing the content of intercultural communicative competence, attention is focused not only on verbal but also on non-verbal forms of communication.



It should be emphasised that the development of intercultural competence takes place when future professionals begin not only to recognise differences between people from different cultures, but also to respect variations in value systems and view them positively. This process also requires being psychologically and socially ready to make thoughtful choices in specific situations, rather than simply following the norms of their own culture.

Intercultural competence is one of the most important skills of a modern specialist. Using the term "intercultural competence", I. Shavkun refers to a set of the following professional qualities: theoretical knowledge of national cultures and models of education; psychological characteristics of the personality (openness, flexibility, tolerance, willingness to work with representatives of other cultures); knowledge of a foreign language [8, p. 117].

According to O. Honcharova and A. Maslova, intercultural competence can be developed by explaining the peculiarities of world perception and experience by other nations. Intercultural competence contributes to the development of practical skills for communicating with representatives of other cultures and is always manifested in activity, and in the context of the general integration and informatisation of society, intercultural competence can be interpreted as a student's ability to effectively solve problems during intercultural communication, which involves dialogue and mutual understanding, rather than a clash of different cultures [4, p. 10].

Intercultural communicative competence as an integrated system synthesises a set of knowledge (linguistic, sociocultural, professional and cultural), skills (verbal and non-verbal communication, general cultural and culture-specific) and value orientations. Noteworthy in this regard are the components of intercultural communicative competence, which are quite broadly represented in M. Byram's model:

- knowledge about social groups in "one's own" and "foreign" countries, the products and practices of their social activities, as well as general processes of social and individual interaction (e.g., historical and contemporary relations between "own" and "foreign" countries); "national memory" about one's country and attitudes towards these events from the perspective of citizens of one's own country and other countries; national definitions of the geographical space of one's country and their perception by other countries; social institutions that affect daily life; processes of interaction in one's own country);

- the ability to interpret events or documents in another country, explain them and compare them with events and documents in one's own country, identifying their ethnocentric aspect;

- the ability to make discoveries and interact, reveal new knowledge about culture, cultural meanings and connotations, similarities and differences in verbal and non-verbal communication, and use this knowledge in appropriate circumstances;

- an inquisitive and open attitude towards the culture of "one's own" and "foreign" countries, an interest in discovering new perspectives on familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in "one's own" and "foreign" cultures, a willingness to question values and assumptions in the cultural practices of one's own environment;

– critical cultural awareness as the ability to critically evaluate, based on clear criteria, the cultural positions, products and practices of "one's own" and "foreign" countries [10].

We fully agree with O. Misechko that a characteristic feature of this model is the combination of "cultural images" of "one's own" and "foreign" countries, which provides a critical understanding of one's own and foreign cultures and encourages one to distance oneself somewhat from the usual perception of one's cultural identity and look at oneself through the eyes of a foreign-language interlocutor – a representative of another culture [6, p. 67].

The inseparable link between learning a foreign language and the culture of another country is also pointed out by V. Hurmaza, who emphasises the principles of their unity. The first principle is realised in the assimilation by a person who has grown up in one national culture of the essential facts, norms and values of another national culture. At the same time, it is important to foster a positive attitude among students towards the information about the country obtained in the learning process. The second principle is the formation of a positive attitude among students towards the people who speak the language, since language learning begins with the aim of bringing peoples closer together. The third principle embodies the requirements of integrity and homogeneity of the language learning process: country-specific information should be extracted from natural forms of language and educational texts and should not be brought in from outside. Finally, the fourth principle is also related to clarifying the specifics of country studies: the country studies aspect of teaching implements a philological method of secondary cognition of reality in the educational process [5, p. 33].

Thus, knowledge about the culture of another country contributes to the development of general erudition, which is one of the important prerequisites for ensuring students' ability to engage in intercultural communication and achieve mutual understanding in it.

In the context of modern foreign language education, the role of intercultural communicative competence in the professional training of competitive specialists who are ready to engage in intercultural communication with representatives of other cultures is becoming increasingly important. Proficiency in a foreign language contributes to the improvement of professional skills, the enrichment of knowledge in the field of specialisation, and successful professional activity.

Intercultural competence is one of the important components of the professional competence of modern specialists. It encompasses a set of knowledge (knowledge of native and foreign cultures, knowledge of a foreign language), skills (using appropriate communication styles and identifying them in situations of intercultural interaction, interpreting phenomena of communicative activity and behaviour from the point of view of cultural determinants, understanding and adhering to the basic principles of intercultural and interpersonal communication, overcoming barriers caused by cultural differences, possessing strategies for avoiding misunderstandings in communication)

and psychological characteristics (tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures, differences in behaviour and thinking styles, customs and traditions, etc., striving for mutual understanding through compromise, understanding the facts of another culture and the ability to compare them with one's own worldview and cultural experience [7].

At Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, in accordance with the curricula for non-linguistic specialities at the first (bachelor's) and second (master's) levels of higher education, "Foreign Language for Professional Purposes", "Practical Foreign Language for Professional Purposes" and "Professional Communication in a Foreign Language" are compulsory disciplines. Teachers pay particular attention to the content of these disciplines.

The main objectives of studying these disciplines are aimed at:

- practical familiarisation with various aspects of a foreign language;
- familiarisation with the cultural traditions of Ukraine and other countries;
- readiness to engage in professional intercultural communication in various simulated situations of professional interaction;
- ability to conduct a dialogue of cultures with representatives of different nationalities in the process of professional interaction.

Future specialists in intercultural dialogue are expected to have "the right not only to express themselves, but also to be heard and accepted, the opportunity to feel like an equal participant in communication, and the duty to cooperate in achieving understanding" [6].

Studying material in the context of cultural dialogue ensures adequate mutual understanding and spiritual enrichment of representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities and requires the search for new foreign language teaching technologies as a means of forming intercultural competence and spiritual development of the student's personality. The cultural component in the content of foreign language training contributes, as O. Rembach emphasises, to the formation of a conscious and tolerant attitude towards cultural differences and stimulates the linguistic, cognitive and social development of future specialists [7, p. 395].

The successful development of intercultural communication skills and a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language among students of non-linguistic specialities is facilitated by the widespread use of innovative teaching technologies. The expediency of their application is indisputable, since they are aimed at facilitating the assimilation and memorisation of professional material and the formation of a set of professional competences. The use of innovative teaching methods creates the prerequisites for the development of problem-solving thinking in future specialists, as well as the ability to correctly construct communicative situations. Innovative teaching methods include the project method, problem-based learning, technologies for developing critical thinking through reading and correspondence, the method of debates, discussions, game technologies (language, role-playing and business games), interactive teaching technologies (in pairs, small groups) and portfolio technologies.

For example, let us consider problem-based learning as an important innovative method aimed at developing students' foreign language communication skills during foreign language classes. The undoubted advantage of this method is the creative rather than reproductive nature of the tasks. It is implemented on the basis of initiating independent search for knowledge by students through the selection of problem questions by the teacher. It requires clear organisation and skill on the part of the teacher in setting the problem-based task. Of particular interest are problem-based foreign language tasks for the cultural enrichment of students' worldview (cultural cognitive-search and cognitive-research tasks, foreign language discussions, projects).

Individual situational tasks (e.g., preparing and giving a short presentation on one's own educational project or agreeing on cooperation with a foreign colleague) can serve as the implementation of the problem-based learning method during foreign language classes. Completing such tasks allows the learning process to be brought as close as possible to specific professional activities, and the communicative act models situations typical for certain specialists.

The development of intercultural communication skills in students of non-linguistic specialties has certain characteristics that distinguish this process from the training of students in philology or linguistics:

1. Limited language training.

Students of non-linguistic specialties usually study a foreign language (most often English) within a limited number of hours, often without in-depth language courses. Therefore, the development of their intercultural communicative competence is based more on:

- developing the ability to communicate effectively in professional and everyday situations;

- developing socio-cultural awareness.

2. Focus on professional intercultural interaction.

Intercultural communicative competence in students of non-linguistic specialties is closely related to their future professional activities. Therefore, it is important to teach them:

- to communicate with foreign partners within a specific field (information technology, economics, law, education, ecology, etc.);

- to avoid intercultural misunderstandings in a professional context;

- to represent themselves, their company or country in an intercultural business environment.

3. Lack of special philological training.

In this regard, it is advisable to:

- avoid overloading students with complex linguistic terminology;

- focus on practical situations (role-playing games, case studies, intercultural conflicts);

- use interdisciplinary integration (e.g., discussion of approaches to environmental protection in different countries, analysis of international biodiversity conservation programmes, etc.).



#### 4. Low motivation to learn a foreign language.

Students of non-linguistic specialities sometimes do not see a direct need for a foreign language, so the teacher's task is to:

- show examples of how intercultural competence is needed in real professional situations;

- use interactive teaching methods that foster a positive attitude towards learning languages and cultures.

#### 5. Focus on universal intercultural communication skills.

Training should include the development of soft skills: interpersonal communication skills, tolerance, empathy and critical thinking in the context of cultural diversity.

We fully agree with the opinion of contemporary scholars (O. Bezkorovaina, N. Bibik) that the intercultural communicative competence of students of non-linguistic specialities is formed in conditions of limited language practice. Consequently, an important component of this competence is the development of universal communicative strategies, sociocultural adaptability and professionally oriented interaction in a multicultural environment.

Therefore, the formation of intercultural communicative competence in students of non-linguistic specialities requires the adaptation of approaches: a combination of linguistic, cultural and professional training, a focus on practice and intercultural interaction within a specific field of knowledge.

In the context of state educational policy, one of the important tasks in training students of non-linguistic specialities is the ability not only to perform complex and diverse professional tasks, but also to continuously improve their professional knowledge, skills and abilities. This trend is due to the significant intensity of information content in the educational space, which encourages a reorientation from the acquisition of knowledge to the formation of skills for independent work with a large amount of new information.

**Conclusions.** Thus, at the present stage of education development, improving foreign language training is becoming particularly relevant in the education of students of non-linguistic specialities. The ability to correctly form a communication strategy and be an active participant in the process of intercultural communication is the basis of the professional activity of future specialists.

Further areas of research include the study of foreign experience in the formation of intercultural communicative competence of specialists and the development of theoretical foundations on ways to improve intercultural interaction skills.

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