
DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

Language expresses a people's national identity and reflects the ethnic peculiarities of their worldview, social and cultural life, thoughts and feelings, customs, and rituals. According to Prof. V. Ushchyna, language is an essential part of an individual's speech activity that generates utterances and is also involved in the purposeful, practical, cognitive-theoretical, and socially significant activities of a person who is a subject of communication¹.

From birth, a person belongs to a specific group where communication competence is developed. Large groups, commonly called cultures, significantly shape the foundations of communication activities. Communication involves the exchange of messages, meaning the transfer of information from one participant to another. Since people cannot communicate through electrical impulses, information is encoded using a particular system of symbols, transmitted, and then decoded, or interpreted, by the message's recipient. Communication is always occurring. Among the various types of sign behavior in human society, the most crucial is the use of language (verbal communication) along with accompanying non-verbal behavior (non-verbal communication)².

The current socio-cultural situation in the multicultural world, the socio-cultural circumstances within Ukrainian society, and the integration of the Ukrainian education system into the unified European system imply certain requirements for higher education, namely, the definition of new tasks. There is no doubt that teaching foreign languages is no longer a simple transfer of linguistic knowledge, skills, and abilities, nor merely the acquisition of country studies information limited to geographical and historical data. For

¹ Ущина В. Соціокогнітивна дискурсологія: аспекти дослідження. *Science and Education a New Dimension: Humanities and Social Sciences*. Budapest: Society for Cultural and Scientific Progress in Central and Eastern Europe. 2016. IV (15). Issue 1. P. 35–39.

² Erl I A., Gymnich M. *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen – Erfolgreich kommunizieren zwischen den Kulturen*. Klett Lernen und Wissen. 2010. S. 11.

effective intercultural communication, future foreign language specialists must possess more than just communicative competence. Mutual understanding with representatives of other languages and cultures, as well as the avoidance of intercultural misunderstandings, is enhanced by the presence of sociocultural competence in these specialists. In the context of globalization, international cooperation, and the development of distance learning, it is crucial to update one's skills³.

This study holds significance as the acquisition of foreign languages increasingly supports both professional and personal development. Language acts not only as a medium of communication but also as a gateway to understanding different cultures, values, and customs. By learning a new language, students gain awareness of diverse worldviews, fostering openness, empathy, and critical thinking.

The resolution of authentic identity allows for the sustainable *integration of cultural difference* into communication. In this integrated condition, communication can shift from in-context to between-context states, allowing for the meta-coordination of meaning and action that defines intercultural communication. On a personal level, *Integration* is experienced as a kind of developmental liminality, where one's experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. Cultural liminality can be used to construct cultural bridges and to conduct sophisticated cross-cultural mediation. Organizations at *Integration* encourage the construction of third-culture positions based on mutual adaptation in multicultural work groups, with the anticipation that third-culture solutions generate added value⁴.

Furthermore, the development of intercultural competence is essential in contemporary education. It equips young people to navigate and thrive internationally, enhancing their competitiveness in the global job market. Therefore, integrating intercultural competence into foreign language education has the potential to contribute to a harmonious and productive society.

Intercultural competence has become a central theme in many current research initiatives, reflecting the increasing necessity for intercultural skills in our interconnected world. As communication technologies advance, international trade expands, and people migrate across borders, the ability to effectively navigate diverse cultures is more crucial than ever. Understanding different cultural norms, values, and communication styles can significantly

³ Зеліковська О. Формування міжкультурної компетенції студентів вищих економічних навчальних закладів: дис.... канд. пед. наук : 13.00.04 / Зеліковська Олена Олександрівна. Хмельницький. 2010. С. 131.

⁴ Bennett M. Development model of intercultural sensitivity. In Kim, Y (Ed) International encyclopedia of intercultural communication. Wiley. 2017. URL.: <https://surl.li/vezdqe>

enhance collaboration and reduce misunderstandings in both personal and professional contexts. Furthermore, fostering intercultural competence not only benefits individuals by improving their adaptability and awareness but also plays a vital role in global relations, enabling harmonious interactions in multicultural environments. In this context, we can examine the works of authors such as *Thomas Friedman*, a renowned author and journalist, who delves deeply into the intricate interplay of diverse cultures within our increasingly globalized society. He explores how globalization shapes cultural exchanges, influences societal norms, and fosters collaboration and conflict among communities. Through his insightful analyses, Friedman highlights the complexities of navigating cultural differences and the profound impact these interactions have on individuals and nations alike. *Derek Shabo* and *Darla Deardorff* conducted a thorough investigation into the intricate framework and essential elements of intercultural competence. Their research explores key attributes such as empathy, which enables individuals to understand and share the feelings of those from different cultural backgrounds; openness, characterized by a willingness to embrace new ideas and perspectives; and tolerance for uncertainty, reflecting one's ability to remain adaptable and composed in ambiguous or unfamiliar situations. Through their work, Shabo and Deardorff underscore the significance of these components in nurturing effective communication and understanding in an increasingly diverse world. *Milton Bennett* is known for his pioneering work in the realm of intercultural communication, specifically through the development of a comprehensive model that outlines the stages of intercultural sensitivity. This model serves as a valuable framework for understanding how individuals progress in their ability to adapt and respond to diverse cultural environments. By examining the various phases of sensitivity development, Bennett provides insights into the cognitive and emotional shifts that occur as people engage with different cultural perspectives. His research highlights the importance of awareness and empathy in facilitating meaningful interactions across cultural boundaries, ultimately fostering greater understanding and collaboration between individuals from varied backgrounds.

The research aims to study the importance of intercultural competence and analyze methods and techniques that contribute to its development among students during the process of acquiring a foreign language.

To achieve this goal, we believe that the following tasks need to be addressed:

1. Review the concepts of “intercultural communication” and “intercultural competence”.
2. Analyze theoretical approaches to the development of intercultural competence in the process of teaching a foreign language.
3. Study of the role of intercultural competence in the learner's communicative competence.

4. Identification of methods and techniques that promote the development of intercultural competence in students.

The research methodology incorporates a diverse array of techniques and approaches designed to enable an in-depth investigation into both the theoretical foundations and practical strategies for enhancing intercultural competence among students. This comprehensive exploration involves qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and case studies, which collectively provide valuable insights into the various dimensions of cultural awareness, communication skills, and the ability to navigate multicultural environments. By integrating these methods, the study aims to shed light on effective pedagogical practices that foster students' ability to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with individuals from diverse backgrounds. This methodology is grounded in the following approaches: The *communicative approach* prioritizes the development of interpersonal communication skills, recognizing them as a crucial element of intercultural competence. This approach fosters an environment where learners engage in real-life conversations and collaborative interactions, helping them to navigate the complexities of diverse cultural contexts. Unlike traditional language education methods that focus primarily on grammar and vocabulary, the communicative approach encourages students to use the language dynamically in authentic situations. By participating in role-plays, group discussions, and practical exercises, learners enhance their ability to express themselves clearly and understand others, thereby building the confidence necessary to interact effectively across different cultures. The *intercultural approach* emphasizes the incorporation of diverse cultural elements within the educational framework, promoting an atmosphere of tolerance and encouraging a profound understanding of various cultural distinctions. By blending cultural practices, traditions, and perspectives into the curriculum, educators can create a rich learning environment that not only respects but also celebrates diversity. This approach empowers students to engage with and appreciate the nuances of different cultures, ultimately fostering empathy and global citizenship among them. Through activities such as collaborative projects, cross-cultural exchanges, and the study of global histories and literatures, students gain invaluable insights into the complexities of human experience and the importance of coexistence in an increasingly interconnected world. To effectively tackle the objectives presented in this paper, a *comprehensive literature analysis method* was utilized. This approach facilitated a thorough and systematic investigation of a wide range of scientific sources that pertain to the concept of intercultural competence. The analysis focused on examining the various strategies and pedagogical methods for fostering intercultural competence specifically within the context of foreign language education. It also explored diverse theoretical and practical frameworks that guide intercultural interaction and communication among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This systematic examination provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of intercultural competence and its critical role in enhancing language learning and intercultural exchanges. Furthermore, a *comparative analysis approach* was

employed to rigorously examine various teaching methodologies and techniques specifically designed to promote intercultural competence among learners. This process involved evaluating a range of educational programs and strategies focused on the principles of intercultural education. By implementing methods of generalization and systematization, the research facilitated the distillation of key insights and the development of practical recommendations derived from the findings of the study, thereby enhancing the understanding of effective practices in this vital area of education.

1. Theoretical foundations of intercultural competence

1.1. The concepts of intercultural communication and intercultural competence

In the context of intercultural interactions, the engagement between representatives of diverse cultural backgrounds presents unique challenges distinct from those encountered within a homogeneous cultural framework. Individuals who have resided abroad for extended periods or who frequently interact with diverse cultures in their home environment often possess insights into the complexities of mutual understanding and the potential for misunderstanding.

As globalization accelerates, it has become increasingly evident that intercultural communication frequently faces substantial obstacles. However, the origins of these difficulties and strategies for resolution are not always readily apparent. We contend that manifestations of foreign animosity represent the most extreme and remote repercussions of inadequate intercultural competence. This lack of competence can lead to tangible negative outcomes, such as the dissolution of international commercial contracts, educational challenges within multicultural classrooms, and unmet expectations during study abroad experiences.

Conversely, it is essential to acknowledge the positive dimensions of intercultural encounters. Engaging with diverse cultures provides invaluable experiential learning opportunities, enabling individuals to enhance their understanding of their own cultural identity, language nuances, and to make informed behavioral choices in various contexts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering effective intercultural communication and mutual understanding in an increasingly interconnected world.

The date of birth of intercultural communication as an academic discipline is 1954, when E. Hall and D. Trager's book "Culture as Communication" was published, in which the authors first proposed the term "intercultural communication" for widespread use, which, in their opinion, reflected a special branch of human relations. Later, the main provisions and ideas of intercultural communication were developed in the famous work of W. Hall "The Silent Language" (1959), in which the author showed the close relationship between culture and communication⁵.

Over the past decade, intercultural communication has emerged as a crucial factor in fostering mutual understanding, playing a significant role in

⁵ Hall, Edward T. *The Silent Language*. New York: Doubleday 1959. P. 54.

discussions surrounding globalization, internationalization, and multiculturalism. In light of current social developments, particularly the increasing globalization of the economy, the internationalization of science, and the prevalence of multiculturalism in daily life, there is a widespread belief that effective communication with individuals from different cultural backgrounds necessitates specific skills and competencies.

Intercultural communication is a supra-professional competence, i.e., it is mandatory in many professions regardless of the specialization of education. It is important for managers who will conclude a contract, for engineers who will share their experience abroad, for those involved in the tourism industry, for scientists in their work at international conferences, and for politicians in international negotiations and meetings. In recent years, the topic of intercultural communication has emerged in the light of teaching a foreign language for professional purposes, in particular in the training of IT specialists (Zelikovska, 2017), sociologists (Baibakova, 2017), German language specialists (Bondarchuk, Pasyk, Rys, 2021), and its formation is facilitated by the study of intercultural communication as an academic discipline and the use of training methods for its mastery (Rys, Pasyk, 2020), etc.

The concept of “intercultural communication” encompasses a broad spectrum of skills, knowledge, and attributes that facilitate effective interaction with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It entails a set of competencies that are crucial not only for everyday conversations but also for engaging in deeper exchanges across cultural boundaries. Intercultural competence is not simply a skill set that can be isolated or categorized as a distinct academic discipline; rather, it represents an interdisciplinary fusion of various fields of study.

In today’s globalized world, intercultural competence draws from several key disciplines. Social psychology enhances our understanding of how cultural contexts influence behavior and perceptions, while pedagogy illuminates effective teaching methods that accommodate diverse learning styles. Anthropology fosters a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and human behavior within different social contexts. Philosophy promotes critical thinking regarding ethical considerations and values in cross-cultural situations. Cultural studies provide tools for analyzing and interpreting cultural phenomena, and philology highlights the complexities of language as a medium for cultural expression. Collectively, these disciplines form a rich framework for promoting intercultural understanding, enabling individuals to navigate and appreciate the nuances of communication in our increasingly interconnected world.

Intercultural communication is a central socio-pedagogical condition in the formation of socio-cultural competence. It is in the process of intercultural communication that the socio-cultural tolerance of foreign language specialists is manifested.

The theoretical search for the content of the concept of “intercultural communication” has allowed us to trace the following:

– intercultural communication is the process of communication (verbal and non-verbal) between people (groups of people) who belong to different national and social linguistic and cultural communities, usually use different idiolects (or different social dialects of the same language), feel linguistic and cultural “foreignness” of their communication partner, have different communicative competence, which can cause communication failures or culture shock in communication. Intercultural communication is characterized by the fact that its participants, in cases of direct contact, use the means of the language code with culturally specific meanings, as well as communication strategies and tactics that differ from those used in cases of integration within the same culture⁶.

– intercultural communication is manifested in the ability to embrace, respect, appreciate, and productively use cultural conditions and factors influencing it⁷. The scientist associates two areas of application with this term, which can be closely combined with the keywords “abroad” and “at home”, that is, “international interaction” and “interaction within society”. Speaking of international interaction, we are discussing contact situations between people from different national cultures. For example, a German studying in China, an Italian working in France. Another area of application arises when it comes to interaction within a multicultural society. Intra-social contact between representatives of different cultures is a matter of everyday life. Examples of this include a Turkish student studying in a German school or a Native American working with a Chinese American.

Intercultural education promotes the development of intercultural competence, which is important for successful communication and cooperation in the international community. This competence includes the ability to effectively interact with representatives of different cultures, taking into account their characteristics and specifics⁸.

Competence, defined as “the ability to act,” ensures readiness to set goals and objectives, evaluate actions, and reflect on and self-analyse the results achieved⁹. It includes understanding and adapting to cultural characteristics and accounting for differences in perception, values, and communication styles. The key components of intercultural competence are tolerance, empathy, and the ability to engage in dialogue and avoid stereotypes.

Intercultural competence also includes knowledge of languages, customs, religions, and social norms, which helps people understand each other even in difficult intercultural situations. Another important aspect is the development of flexibility in one's own beliefs and willingness to adapt, which is especially

⁶ Бацевич Ф. Основи комунікативної лінгвістики. Київ. Видавничий центр «Академія». 2004. 24 с.

⁷ Thomas A. (Hg): *Psychologie interkulturellen Handelns*. Göttingen et. al.: Hogrefe 1996. S. 143.

⁸ Elias A., Mansouri F. A Systematic Review of Studies on Interculturalism and Intercultural Dialogue. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 41(4). 2020. P. 499.

⁹ Зеліковська О. Формування міжкультурної компетентності студентів ІТ-спеціальностей: Сучасний вимір. *Professional Pedagogics*, 15. 2018. С. 130. UTL.: <https://doi.org/10.32835/2223-5752.2018.15.129-135>.

valuable in a globalized world where interaction with different cultures is a daily necessity.

Among the strategies and policies for building a harmonious and diverse society, Anthony F. believes that it is necessary to study foreign languages, which are the key to understanding cultural characteristics and promoting intercultural relations; development of programs aimed at integration, organization of language courses, support for familiarity with local culture and history; intercultural education in schools and universities: inclusion of subjects and courses on intercultural education in the curriculum, which will help prepare the younger generation for life in a diverse world¹⁰.

It follows that intercultural competence is the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with representatives of other cultures. It involves not only knowledge of another culture but also understanding its peculiarities, respect for cultural differences, and the development of skills necessary to overcome potential communication barriers. These skills include effective communication, conflict resolution, adaptation to new cultural contexts, value and attitude of openness to diversity, willingness to understand and respect other points of view, and critical thinking that helps a person analyze and rethink their prejudices and stereotypes.

1.2. Intercultural communication and language

One becomes a person through work and communication. Language is a mental phenomenon that acts as an unconditional core of communication. It is a sign system, a means of communication and thinking, a way of cognizing the world, and a way of storing and transmitting information. Therefore, knowledge of languages and their practical use indicate a person's culture¹¹.

Language is not only the immediate reality of thought, but also facilitates the exchange of ideas, mutual understanding of people, and the organization of their joint actions¹².

As a universal means of interpersonal communication, a means of communication, language performs an educational, developmental, humanistic, and educational, human-creating function. Language helps to form a person's personality, and through mastery of a variety of languages, it helps to perceive others as equal individuals. Language thus unites people, and together with them, it unites nations, helping them to recognize themselves as the same and at the same time as individuals, special. The mystery of the human-creating and unifying function of language lies in the fact that its lexical composition contains a general echo of the "spirit of

¹⁰ Anthony F. Intercultural Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue: An Introduction. *Religions*, 14(9). 2023. P. 3.

¹¹ Коваленко Т. Роль української мови у сучасних міжкультурних комунікаційних процесах. Актуальні проблеми лінгвістики та лінгводидактики // Серія: Філологічні науки. 2017. Випуск XIV. С. 10.

¹² Белих О. До питання зв'язку міжкультурної комунікації і мови. Наукові записки. Випуск 96 (1). Серія: Філологічні науки (мовознавство): У 2 ч. Кіровоград: РВВ КДПУ ім. В. Винниченка, 2011. С. 294.

humanity” and a special echo of the “spirit of the people” whose language it is. The unity of these two substances creates a unique opportunity to identify oneself with humanity and at the same time with one's people, to understand other people as an equal representative of humanity, to establish a dialogue, and then to interact and cooperate. World experience shows that the spiritual unity of people in a particular community is based primarily on language¹³.

The most important factor in verbal communication is *trust*. The communicative effect of the words of a trustworthy person is fundamentally different from the effect of the same words spoken by another person. Trust is associated with compliance with the rules of communication accepted in a particular culture. The intercultural communication process involves taking into account *the cultural conditionality* of the native language and the language of the communication partner too. In other words, the interlocutor's language should be perceived in the context of the culture in which he or she lives and is a native speaker. This requires not only linguistic competence but also behavioral competence. For example, the *manner of greeting, farewell, and introduction*, while universal, has different shades. After all, each element of communication is associated with people's verbal habits and brings originality to their behavior. Of particular interest are those language norms that seem to be quite typical in conversational situations.

The key factors influencing the effectiveness of communication are: the adequacy of information perception; the capacity to elicit positive feelings of empathy and approval; the formation of enduring relationships built on mutual understanding; and the mutual enrichment of the participants in the communication process.

Consequently, language functions not merely as a medium for conveying information but also fosters an understanding of diverse cultures, their values, and characteristics. This, in turn, aids in establishing intercultural dialogue and promoting tolerance.

2. Practical aspects of intercultural competence development

2.1. Formation of intercultural competence

In our view, intercultural competence is an area that warrants lifelong study. Even after years spent living abroad or decades of working with international partners, effective communication remains a challenge. This is largely because intercultural communication is continually evolving, leading to the emergence of new situations. Linguist D. Deardorff refers to this ongoing development as a “language spiral”¹⁴. According to this framework, an individual's entry point into the learning spiral and the sequence of stages that follow are influenced by their unique life experiences and educational journey. Deardorff identifies intercultural competence as comprising three key

¹³ Скубашевська Т. Розвиток мовних стратегій та їх роль у зміцненні міжкультурного діалогу. Мультиверсум. Філософський альманах. Випуск 42. Київ. С. 108.

¹⁴ Deardorff D. Police Paper zur Interkulturellen Kompetenz. *Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Schlüsselkompetenz des 21. Jahrhunderts?* Thesenpapier der Bertelsmann Stiftung auf Basis der Interkulturellen-Kompetenz-Modelle von Dr. Darla K. Deardorff. Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006. S. 13-34.

components: *the emotional component*, which includes interest, openness, empathy, understanding of others, and tolerance; *the cognitive component*, which encompasses knowledge about other cultures, cultural theory, and self-reflection; and *the pragmatic and communicative component*, which focuses on the application of effective communication models and conflict resolution strategies.

Most intercultural competence learning spirals are likely initiated by specific experiences, such as a long stay abroad as a child or friendship with migrants. To transform positive or negative experiences of cultural differences gained in such interactions into conscious intercultural knowledge, self-reflection is first necessary, i.e., the transition from the pragmatic-communicative level to the cognitive level, as well as the transformation of already acquired implicit practical knowledge into explicit intercultural knowledge. In this case, in our opinion, both country-specific knowledge of a particular country and knowledge of the culture of that country and the rules of communication can help.

The development of intercultural competence requires specific practical steps that can help people interact more effectively with representatives of other cultures. Having analyzed the approaches of leading linguists to the development of intercultural competence, we will give examples of some practical aspects that contribute to this development:

1. Learning foreign languages: A crucial pathway for improving intercultural competence lies in the development of language skills, which provide a valuable window into the cultural values and unique characteristics of a country. Mastery involves more than simply grasping grammar and expanding vocabulary; it encompasses an exploration of the cultural nuances that inform everyday communication. This includes understanding idiomatic expressions that reflect local beliefs and attitudes, as well as the subtleties of social etiquette that govern interactions. By delving into the customs, traditions, and nonverbal cues prevalent in the target culture, individuals can achieve a richer and more meaningful engagement, fostering mutual respect and understanding in diverse settings¹⁵.

2. Raising awareness of cultural differences: Grasping the intricate traditions, rich histories, diverse religious beliefs, and unique social norms of various cultures is crucial for gaining insights into how these elements shape individuals' behaviors and attitudes. For example, in many Asian cultures, there is a strong emphasis on group harmony and collective well-being. This often translates into a deep value placed on maintaining relationships and avoiding conflict. In contrast, many Western societies tend to prioritize individualism, fostering a sense of personal autonomy and self-expression. This distinction can lead to varying approaches in communication, decision-making, and social interactions, further highlighting the importance of cultural context in understanding human behavior¹⁶.

¹⁵ Anthony F. Intercultural Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue: An Introduction. *Religions*, 14(9). 2023. P.1-5.

¹⁶ Deardorff D. Police Paper zur Interkulturellen Kompetenz. *Interkulturelle Kompetenz – Schlüsselkompetenz des 21. Jahrhunderts?* Thesenpapier der Bertelsmann Stiftung auf Basis der

3. Development of observation and empathy skills: The ability to keenly observe and analyze the subtle non-verbal signals such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice of a conversation partner is an essential skill in the field of intercultural communication. These non-verbal cues often convey emotions and intentions that words alone may not fully express. Empathy is a vital component in this process, enabling individuals to accurately grasp the underlying feelings and perspectives of others, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. This deep understanding fosters the creation of genuine and trusting relationships, as it allows for a more nuanced appreciation of different cultural expressions and emotional responses. By honing these skills, communicators can bridge cultural divides and engage in more meaningful and effective interactions¹⁷.

4. Participation in intercultural events: Participating in cultural exchanges, workshops, seminars, or volunteer programs within a vibrant multicultural setting allows individuals to immerse themselves in diverse cultural practices and traditions. These experiences provide a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions with people from various backgrounds, fostering a deeper understanding of their customs and perspectives. Through guided discussions and collaborative activities, participants can develop essential conflict resolution skills, learning how to navigate and address misunderstandings that arise from cultural differences. Such environments not only enrich personal growth but also promote harmony and appreciation among diverse communities, paving the way for enhanced intercultural communication and cooperation¹⁸.

5. Reflection and self-development: In order to develop a profound level of intercultural competence, individuals must commit to an ongoing and reflective evaluation of their own beliefs and preconceived notions. This introspective journey involves scrutinizing how these personal biases shape their perceptions and interactions with different cultures. Engaging in this critical analysis is essential for recognizing the nuances that exist within diverse societies and avoiding the oversimplification that often leads to stereotypes.

To foster a deeper understanding of various cultural contexts, it is imperative to cultivate critical thinking skills that allow one to confront and challenge their own prejudices. This process not only aids in dismantling overgeneralizations but also plays a crucial role in preventing the formation of negative attitudes toward individuals from different backgrounds. By actively seeking to expand their awareness and knowledge, individuals can

Interkulturellen-Kompetenz-Modelle von Dr. Darla K. Deardorff. Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006. S. 13-34.

¹⁷ Göller T. Interkulturelles Verstehen und sein Verhältnis zur interkulturellen Kompetenz. *Erwägen, Wissen, Ethik*. 14.1. 2003. S. 174-176.

¹⁸ Hofstede G. *Lokales Denken, globales Handeln. Interkulturelle Zusammenarbeit und globales Management*. 3. vollst. übersrb. Aufl. München: Beck. 2006. S. 318.

enhance their ability to relate to and appreciate the rich tapestry of human experience across cultures¹⁹.

We contend that these methodologies not only aid individuals in adapting to diverse cultural contexts but also significantly enhance their own cultural experiences. This enriched engagement with varied perspectives promotes a deeper sense of tolerance, allowing individuals to appreciate the subtleties of different ways of life. Additionally, it fosters cognitive flexibility, enabling individuals to adjust their thinking and behaviors to navigate complex social environments. Consequently, individuals become more socially open, welcoming new ideas and practices that improve their interpersonal relationships and contribute to a more inclusive worldview.

2.2. Methods of forming intercultural competence in foreign language lessons

Intercultural competence is an integral part of learning a foreign language, as language is closely related to culture. Developing intercultural competence at school prepares students for life in a globalized world where diversity is the norm. It contributes to building a peaceful society in which people of different cultures can cooperate, resolve conflicts, and understand each other.

Thus, the role of the teacher in this process cannot be overemphasized, as he or she is an example of openness and tolerance, and should be able to create a safe environment where students can discuss cultural differences and teach students to recognize stereotypes and avoid prejudiced thinking.

According to the researchers of intercultural communication Rys L. and Pasyk L., conducting classes on intercultural communication in the form of instructional and interactive training allows one to master such concepts as culture, intercultural interaction, ethnocentrism, stereotype, and others not only the cognitive but also at the emotional and affective level. Simulation and role-playing games help to acquire such competencies as tolerance of diverse interests, flexibility, empathy, tolerance, impartiality, low level of ethnocentrism, and respect for other cultures. Intercultural training can develop the ability to cooperate, negotiate, build relationships with representatives of other cultures, and serve as a motivating factor for initiating further intercultural projects²⁰.

Below are methods that can be used in foreign language classes to develop intercultural competence.

1. Engaging in project activities that center around the creation of multimedia presentations about diverse cultures within foreign language classes significantly enriches students' language proficiency. These projects not only enhance students' communication skills, but also nurture their

¹⁹ Hall E. *Beyond culture*. Garden City. New York. Anchor Press. 1976. P. 256.

²⁰ Рись Л., Пасик Л. Форми та методи міжкультурного тренінгового навчання. *Нова філологія. Збірник наукових праць*. Запоріжжя : Видавничий дім «Гельветика», 2020. № 80. Том II. С. 180. DOI : 10.26661/2414-1135-2020-80-2-27

creativity and refine their abilities to process information effectively. By integrating interactive teaching methods, these activities encourage vibrant discussions on pressing global issues and the rich tapestry of cultural diversity.

Here are some examples of the project-based activities in foreign language classes:

1. Students prepare interview questions in the target language about cultural topics (e.g., family traditions, holidays, daily routines). They interview a classmate, a teacher, or someone from another culture and create a short presentation or poster summarizing their findings and comparing them to their own culture.

2. Students research traditional dishes from the target culture and create a recipe card in the target language. They can prepare the dish at home, take pictures/videos, and present their experience to the class and reflect on the differences in ingredients, meal customs, and table manners.

3. Students choose a city or region from the target culture and create a *digital travel guide* (slides, website, or brochure). The guide includes key attractions, food recommendations, greetings, and cultural do's & don'ts. Groups present their guides, and classmates vote on the most interesting travel destination.

4. Students select popular songs from the target culture, analyze the lyrics, and compare the themes to songs from their culture. They create a playlist with explanations of why they chose each song. Optionally, they translate a song or write their lyrics inspired by it.

In these sessions, students explore various cultural elements such as traditions, art, history, and social norms, allowing for a deeper appreciation of the subject matter. This immersive approach not only heightens students' motivation to learn languages, but also equips them with essential research skills enhancing their ability to seek out, analyze, and synthesize information from diverse sources.

Furthermore, through collaborative group work and presentations, students can engage in meaningful conversations, fostering intercultural understanding. This environment promotes the development of crucial speaking and listening skills, enabling students to articulate their ideas clearly and respond thoughtfully to their peers. Ultimately, these project activities create a dynamic learning atmosphere that not only prepares students for linguistic proficiency but also cultivates a global mindset.

2. Intercultural activities: Intercultural activities in schools are essential for cultivating intercultural competence, fostering tolerance, and enhancing communication skills among students while also broadening their worldviews. These engaging initiatives allow students to immerse themselves in diverse cultures and interact within a multicultural environment, enriching their educational experience.

One notable example is an "*international book club*" that encourages participants to read and discuss literature from a wide range of authors, representing various cultures and perspectives. This club not only nurtures a

love for reading but also stimulates thoughtful conversations about different societal values and beliefs.

Another enriching initiative is an “*international film club*”, where students gather to watch films in their original languages. This experience not only introduces them to unique storytelling techniques but also provides insights into the cultural contexts and social issues reflected in the films. Following each screening, students can engage in discussions that foster critical thinking and cultural appreciation.

In addition, schools can organize “*intercultural quizzes or quests*”, designed to challenge students' knowledge about the cultures, languages, histories, and traditions of various countries. These interactive games can be a fun way to encourage teamwork and healthy competition while deepening students' understanding of global diversity.

A highlight of the school year might be the “*festival of cultures*”, a vibrant event where students have the opportunity to showcase the customs of different nations. This immersive celebration can include a variety of activities—from sampling traditional foods and listening to music from around the world to wearing culturally significant clothing and participating in traditional dances and art displays. Each booth or performance can represent a different country, turning the school into a global village.

Moreover, a “*foreign language week*” can be creatively orchestrated with themed days dedicated to different languages. Activities might include language workshops, where students learn basic conversational phrases, or fun challenges like a scavenger hunt that requires them to use their language skills to solve clues.

To further reinforce intercultural awareness, schools may host “*game nights*” focused on board games that emphasize intercultural themes. For instance, students can engage in games that teach them to identify flags, capitals, and famous monuments from around the world or play interactive language games that involve learning phrases and vocabulary through playful competition.

By integrating these diverse intercultural activities, schools not only nurture inclusivity but also prepare students to thrive in a globally connected society.

3. An interdisciplinary approach to foreign language learning involves a rich exploration of cultural diversity, interwoven with lessons in literature, geography, and history.

This innovative teaching method seeks to integrate insights and methodologies from various academic disciplines, resulting in a holistic educational experience. By engaging students not only in language structure and vocabulary but also in the cultural contexts that shape language use, learners are empowered to develop robust language skills. This approach

ensures that students gain a nuanced understanding of different cultures, traditions, and worldviews, fostering a deeper appreciation of global diversity.

The application of these interdisciplinary methods can be enhanced through the design of practical tasks aimed at cultivating intercultural communication and enhancing intercultural competence within the realm of foreign language instruction. For instance, students might participate in projects that involve research on literary works from different regions, exploring how historical events have influenced cultural narratives. Additionally, interactive activities, such as role-playing situations or virtual exchanges with speakers of the target language, can facilitate real-world practice and deepen students' connections to the language's cultural backdrop. Overall, this comprehensive methodology not only enriches language acquisition but also promotes meaningful dialogue and understanding among diverse cultural perspectives.

1. Utilization of Authentic Materials

To enrich the language learning experience, it is imperative to engage with a variety of authentic texts that delve into the cultural traditions, customs, and social norms of countries where the target language is spoken. This involves analyzing literary works, articles, and essays that highlight these cultural aspects. A particularly insightful exercise would be to compare and contrast these traditions with those found in Ukraine, enabling students to identify and reflect on cultural similarities and differences. Furthermore, incorporating multimedia resources such as podcasts, popular music tracks, and feature films or short video clips in their original language can greatly enhance comprehension and appreciation of the language in context. For instance, listening to a podcast that discusses a cultural festival can provide a vivid auditory experience that complements the study of related vocabulary and phrases. Additionally, analyzing international news coverage can offer students a broader perspective on how similar events are interpreted and reported in diverse cultural contexts, fostering critical thinking and cross-cultural awareness.

2. Role-Playing and Simulations in Intercultural Learning

In a dynamic learning environment, participants can immerse themselves in the roles of individuals representing a wide array of cultures, engaging in simulated scenarios that require meaningful intercultural interactions. For instance, envision a vibrant simulation set in an international restaurant where learners are assigned roles as both waitstaff and patrons hailing from different countries.

In this scenario, students might take on the persona of a Japanese diner accustomed to polite and nuanced communication when ordering sushi, while another might portray an Italian tourist who favors a lively and expressive interaction with the waitstaff. As they step into these roles, learners will engage in dialogues employing a foreign language, enhancing their conversational skills while also grappling with the intricacies of cultural customs.

For example, the Japanese character may respectfully bow before making their selections, reflecting their cultural values of politeness and mindfulness. In contrast, the Italian character might engage in animated discussions, perhaps even punctuating their points with hand gestures that illustrate their passion for food.

Through these interactions, participants will not only practice language skills but also gain insights into the social norms and etiquette that govern dining experiences in various cultures. This immersive simulation fosters a deeper understanding of cultural nuances, helping learners appreciate different perspectives and develop empathy in their interpersonal communications.

3. Project-Based Learning

We highly encourage the organization of collaborative international projects that involve students from various countries, utilizing online platforms like eTwinning and PenPal Schools. These projects should delve into engaging and culturally rich topics such as the exploration of traditional national cuisines, where students can share recipes and cooking techniques, as well as engage in live cooking demonstrations. Additionally, projects could highlight unique musical traditions, allowing participants to showcase instruments, traditional dances, and folk music from their cultures. Fashion-oriented projects might involve students researching and presenting the evolution of traditional attire, while also designing new outfits that reflect a fusion of styles from different countries. Lastly, students can explore significant historical events that shaped their nations, creating presentations or even virtual timelines that illustrate each country's historical context and its global impact. Through these collaborative efforts, students will not only learn about each other's cultures but also develop essential skills such as teamwork, communication, and global awareness.

4. Exploration of festive traditions and celebrations offers a rich tapestry of culture, highlighting the unique practices, rituals, and symbols that define various countries. Understanding the specifics of these celebrations such as the joyous parades of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, the intricate lantern displays during the Mid-Autumn Festival in China, or the heartfelt family gatherings of Diwali in India is essential in grasping the essence of each tradition.

To truly immerse students in these diverse cultures, organizing classroom events that reflect the studied festivities can be highly effective. For instance, setting up a traditional Thanksgiving feast or hosting a colorful Holi celebration with vibrant powders can provide hands-on learning experiences. These events can be tailored to suit the proficiency levels of the students, ensuring everyone can actively participate and appreciate the cultural significance behind these celebrations. By integrating food, music, art, and storytelling into these activities, students will not only learn about the traditions but also foster a deeper respect and understanding for the diverse world around them.

5. Interactive Games for Cultural Learning

Interactive games serve as a powerful educational tool, particularly in helping students explore and understand the diverse cultural characteristics of various countries. A prime example is the game “Cultural Maze”, which captivates students with an engaging blend of quiz-style questions that delve into the nuances of different nations. The players navigate through a visually designed board map, where each space represents a different cultural theme. As they progress, they are challenged with questions that may cover a wide array of topics, such as iconic national dishes and culturally significant gestures. For instance, students might be asked, "What traditional meal is considered Germany's national dish?" prompting them to discover the rich flavors of Sauerbraten or Bratwurst. Similarly, they could encounter a question like, "What does this gesture signify in Japanese culture?" which encourages them to learn about the deep meanings associated with bowing or giving a “thumbs up.”

By answering these questions correctly, students not only advance further along the board but also deepen their understanding of global cultures. This interactive approach makes the learning process both enjoyable and informative, fostering a sense of curiosity and appreciation for the world’s diverse traditions and practices.

6. Utilization of Advanced Technology in Promoting Intercultural Competence

In today's digital age, contemporary technological tools provide a wealth of authentic resources that can significantly enhance the development of intercultural competence (ICC). These resources include an exciting range of mediums such as music, films, literature, and visual arts, all of which offer immersive insights into diverse cultures. For instance, incorporating global music playlists allows students to engage with the sounds that define various cultures, while curated film selections can illustrate the nuances of cultural narratives and traditions.

Additionally, methodological frameworks grounded in ICC learning models present educators with comprehensive resources designed to foster an objective understanding of foreign cultures. These frameworks not only facilitate comparative analyses with students' own cultural backgrounds but also play a critical role in challenging and dismantling stereotypes and biases that often hinder meaningful intercultural interactions.

Interactive platforms such as Kahoot, Quizlet, and Duolingo serve as effective pedagogical tools, encouraging active participation and engagement through gamification of learning. These platforms can be used to create quizzes that test knowledge about different cultures or vocabulary from the languages being studied, making the learning process both enjoyable and informative.

Furthermore, the use of virtual tours such as a guided exploration of the British Museum provides an enriching avenue for students to delve into cultural characteristics in real-time. After participating in such a virtual tour, students can be prompted to articulate their reflections, discussing aspects

such as the historical context of the artifacts they encountered or the linguistic elements related to the culture they are studying. This active engagement cements their learning and deepens their appreciation for different cultural contexts.

By integrating these modern technological tools and interactive experiences, educators can create a dynamic classroom environment that not only promotes intercultural competence but also prepares students to navigate and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

In our assessment, such methods and approaches not only significantly enhance motivation for learning foreign languages but also cultivate empathy and tolerance. Moreover, they promote teamwork and creativity while expanding students' perspectives.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of globalization and migration, the significance of intercultural competence is increasingly pronounced as international relations evolve at a rapid pace. Possessing proficiency in a foreign language is essential; however, it is equally important to understand the cultural nuances of its native speakers. The cultivation of intercultural competence significantly contributes to the mitigation of stereotypes, the prevention of conflicts, and the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding.

We can assert that language plays a crucial role in nurturing empathy and promoting tolerance for a variety of perspectives and cultural traditions. These elements are essential for developing intercultural competence, which allows individuals to engage meaningfully across cultural divides. By improving our understanding of one another, language serves as a powerful tool that minimizes the potential for conflicts and enhances the overall quality of communication. This is not just about exchanging words; it's about fostering an environment where all participants feel seen, heard, and valued.

In our increasingly interconnected world, where encounters between diverse cultures are becoming the norm, the cultivation of intercultural competence is of utmost importance. It acts as a catalyst for breaking down long-standing stereotypes and preconceived notions, paving the way for constructive and positive relationships among different cultural groups. By embracing this competence, we can create a more harmonious global community, effectively celebrating our differences while discovering the shared values that bind us together.

The investigation of effective methods and strategies for teaching intercultural communication offers educators a rich and nuanced understanding of the essential processes required to develop intercultural skills. This knowledge is crucial for fostering an educational environment that supports students in becoming adept communicators in diverse cultural contexts.

To cultivate intercultural competence, it is essential to adopt a structured approach that focuses on the systematic accumulation of relevant intercultural

knowledge. Educators can enhance this process by carefully assessing each student's pre-existing knowledge and language proficiency levels. By doing this, they can tailor their instructional methods and provide targeted support that helps students progressively improve their language skills over time.

Moreover, all activities related to foreign language learning in the classroom must be not only engaging but also relevant to real-world applications. Classroom activities should be aligned with the practical demands of various professional fields and resonate with the pragmatic values that students encounter in their future careers. By integrating motivating and contextually meaningful tasks, educators can ensure that students remain engaged and invested in their learning journey, ultimately leading to a deeper mastery of both language and intercultural communication.

In secondary education, several widely recognized methods exist for effectively teaching intercultural competence. One prominent approach is the use of authentic materials, which includes real-world texts, videos, and artifacts that expose students to the nuances of different cultures. These materials help bridge theoretical knowledge and practical understanding.

Another key method is the implementation of cultural projects. These projects often encourage students to delve into specific cultural themes or traditions, allowing for hands-on engagement and deeper exploration of cultural identities. This not only fosters creativity but also enhances collaborative skills as students work in groups. Interactive teaching methodologies play a crucial role as well. Techniques such as role-playing, simulations, and peer teaching create dynamic classroom experiences where students actively participate in the learning process, facilitating a more immersive cultural understanding.

Additionally, the integration of internet resources and technology offers vast opportunities for exploration. Students can connect with peers across the globe, participate in online forums, or engage in virtual collaborative projects, broadening their perspectives on different lifestyles and viewpoints. Facilitating cultural discussions and debates is another effective strategy. These activities encourage students to articulate their thoughts and engage critically with varying cultural perspectives, fostering tolerance and open-mindedness.

Engaging in virtual excursions allows students to "visit" different countries or cultural sites without leaving the classroom. Through virtual reality, documentaries, or guided online tours, students can experience diverse environments and traditions firsthand, enriching their contextual understanding. Lastly, executing cultural research projects gives students the chance to investigate and present findings on specific cultural aspects, deepening their analytical skills and appreciation for diversity. Together, these approaches contribute significantly to the development of well-rounded intercultural competence, which is essential in our increasingly interconnected world.

Looking ahead, future research within the context of foreign language instruction in secondary education may explore the various hurdles faced in nurturing this competence among aspiring foreign language teachers. Such investigations could illuminate the specific challenges and potential strategies for effectively preparing educators to foster intercultural understanding in their classrooms.

SUMMARY

In the context of globalization and migration, the importance of intercultural competence is becoming increasingly clear as international relations evolve at a rapid pace. Intercultural communication serves as a crucial socio-pedagogical foundation for developing socio-cultural competence. It is through intercultural communication that foreign language specialists demonstrate their socio-cultural tolerance. This process requires consideration of the cultural context of both the native language and that of the communication partner. Developing intercultural competence necessitates specific practical steps that enable more effective interaction with representatives of other cultures. Methods that can be employed in foreign language classes to foster intercultural competence include *engaging in project-based activities, participating in intercultural initiatives, and adopting an interdisciplinary approach to language learning.*

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