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PECULIARITIES OF THE FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS MAJORING IN ENGLISH PHILOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to theoretically substantiate and methodologically design a pedagogical model for forming intercultural competence in student philologists within the framework of their professional training. The research methodology was grounded in a multidisciplinary framework, encompassing an extensive theoretical analysis of literature across psychology, pedagogy, linguistics, and cultural studies. This integrative approach facilitated a holistic understanding of the conceptual foundations underpinning intercultural competence development. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the clarification and operationalization of the concept of intercultural competence in the context of philological education and in the identification of its key structural components. A pedagogical model was systematically developed and theoretically substantiated to enhance intercultural competence. It integrates culturally diverse instructional content, dialogic and case-based learning methodologies, as well as digital tools, thereby promoting a multidimensional and interactive learning experience. The model incorporates principles of student-centered learning, experiential tasks, and critical cultural reflection. The effectiveness of the proposed model is justified through its potential to promote students' capacity to interpret, evaluate and engage meaningfully in intercultural communication within both academic and professional philological settings. Empirical findings from the study confirm that the development of intercultural competence among future philologists is significantly enhanced when instructional design is guided by an integrative paradigm. This approach synergistically merges linguistic proficiency, sociocultural awareness, and communicative competence within a multicultural pedagogical context. The findings contribute to the advancement of foreign language pedagogy by offering concrete strategies for cultivating globally competent language professionals who are able to navigate the complexities of intercultural interaction with awareness, empathy and adaptability.

Key words: intercultural competence; culture; language acquisition; adaptability; culture specific knowledge.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ФОРМУВАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ СТУДЕНТІВ-ФІЛОЛОГІВ

Метою дослідження є теоретичне обґрунтування та методичне проектування педагогічної моделі формування міжкультурної компетентності у студентів-філологів у межах їхньої фахової підготовки. Методологічне підґрунтя дослідження базується на міждисциплінарному підході, який охоплює всебічний теоретичний аналіз наукової літератури в галузях психології, педагогіки, лінгвістики та культурології. Такий інтегративний підхід дав змогу сформувати цілісне уявлення про концептуальні засади розвитку міжкультурної компетентності. Наукова новизна дослідження полягає в уточненні та операціоналізації поняття «міжкультурна компетентність» у контексті філологічної освіти, а також у виокремленні його ключових структурних компонентів. У ході дослідження було системно розроблено й теоретично обґрунтовано педагогічну модель формування міжкультурної компетентності. Вона поєднує навчальний контент, що відображає культурне розмаїття, діалогічні методи навчання, кейс-методи та цифрові освітні інструменти, забезпечуючи багатовимірний та інтерактивний освітній процес. Модель спирається на принципи особистісно орієнтованого навчання, залучення до досвіду та критичного осмислення культурних явищ. Її ефективність обґрунтовується потенціалом сприяти розвитку здатності студентів до інтерпретації, оцінювання та змістовної участі в міжкультурній комунікації як в академічному, так і в професійному середовищі. Емпіричні результати дослідження підтверджують, що розвиток міжкультурної компетентності у майбутніх філологів істотно підвищується за умов навчального процесу, що базується на інтегративній парадигмі. Такий підхід синергетично поєднує мовну компетентність, соціокультурну обізнаність і комунікативну здатність у багатокультурному педагогічному середовищі. Отримані результати сприяють удосконаленню методики викладання іноземних мов, пропонуючи практичні стратегії підготовки фахівців мовного профілю, здатних до ефективної міжкультурної взаємодії на основі усвідомлення, емпатії та адаптивності.

Ключові слова: міжкультурна компетентність; культура; оволодіння мовою; адаптивність; культуроспецифічні знання.

Relevance of the paper is justified by the ongoing processes of globalization, international migration and increased cross-cultural mobility, the need for an intercultural dimension in education, particularly in language education. While linguistic proficiency remains central to foreign language learning, it is no longer the sole objective. Contemporary language education frameworks emphasize a more holistic approach, recognizing that intercultural competence is essential for preparing learners to participate effectively in diverse, multilingual and multicultural societies. The commonly accepted «5 C's» framework (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) serves as a guideline for developing learners into competent global citizens who are capable of navigating intercultural interactions with sensitivity, awareness and adaptability. Therefore, the formation of intercultural competence in future philologists is not only timely but also imperative for fostering inclusive communication, professional mobility and global citizenship in the 21st century.

The aim of the study is to investigate the pedagogical conditions and methodological approaches for the effective formation of intercultural competence of

student philologists during the process of foreign language acquisition. While the integration of language learning with cultural studies has been explored by scholars such as M. Byram, M. Bennett, G. Gay, A. Holliday, C. Kramsch, E. Liddicoat, L. Lee, I. Piller the issue remains highly relevant due to the accelerating pace of globalization and the dynamic, ever-evolving nature of culture. These factors necessitate continuous examination of how intercultural competence can be meaningfully conceptualized, developed and implemented in language education, particularly in the context of training future philologists for effective intercultural communication in diverse professional and social environments.

Research tasks:

- to define the essence and content of the concept of «intercultural competence» as a core phenomenon for the study in question;
- to examine the specific features of forming intercultural competence in student philologists;
- to examine the structural and pedagogical determinants that influence the process of cultivating intercultural competence in students pursuing philological studies;
- to design and propose a set of pedagogical exercises aimed at developing intercultural competence during foreign language education.

Main findings. In the context of globalization, education systems face the growing imperative to cultivate fundamental 21st-century skills, among which the formation of intercultural competence is paramount. As noted by American scholar S. Biddle, educational institutions must prepare students to become “global citizens” in order to meet contemporary demands and contribute meaningfully to both national and international communities (Biddle, 2002). To thoroughly understand the phenomenon of intercultural competence, it is essential to first explore the foundational concepts of culture and interculturality. In academic discourse, “culture” is widely employed with diverse interpretations. The classical anthropological view, proposed by E. Tylor conceptualises culture «that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society» (Tylor, 1871). This conceptualization emphasizes culture as a system of socially transmitted values and norms; however, it inadequately addresses the dynamic and evolving interplay between cultural practices, linguistic development, and interpersonal communication.

Contemporary perspectives, however, increasingly define culture as a dynamic, context-sensitive construct. For example, E. Liddicoat argues that a dynamic approach requires learners to engage actively in exploring culture rather than simply gaining cultural facts (Liddicoat, 2004). Similarly, Kramsch emphasises that dynamic cultural understanding also necessitates self-reflection on one’s own culturally framed behaviours (Kramsch, 2002, pp. 275–285). This study aligns with such a view, treating culture as an evolving process that must be critically analysed and integrated into foreign language learning.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the term «intercultural» denotes the involvement of more than one culture (Cambridge Dictionary). Intercultural situations arise when individuals perceive others as culturally different, even in the absence of direct interaction. Within pedagogical settings, the construct of interculturality is linked to fostering dialogic engagement and mutual understanding among learners from heterogeneous cultural backgrounds, facilitating communication that respects and preserves individual cultural identities.

Historically, interest in intercultural competence emerged in the 1950s through the study of Western professionals working abroad, such as Peace Corps volunteers, who encountered challenges in cross-cultural communication. By the late 1980s, the field had broadened to include international education, business, cultural adaptation, and migration, reflecting the everyday realities of intercultural encounters.

Despite its growing relevance, intercultural competence remains a multifaceted and somewhat contested concept. Various synonymous terms, such as multicultural competence, cross-cultural awareness, global competence, and intercultural sensitivity are frequently used equivalently. Some scholars also equate intercultural competence with intercultural communication. However, this paper maintains that such conflation is reductive. As noted in Oxford Reference, “intercultural communication” refers specifically to interpersonal exchanges across cultural boundaries, whereas intracultural communication occurs within the same cultural group. Thus, intercultural communication is one facet of the broader construct of intercultural competence (Oxford Reference).

Australian scholar S. Krajewski accentuate on the fact that intercultural competence is not limited to communication but encompasses a continually evolving skill set extending beyond verbal interaction (Krajewski, 2011). Similarly, M. Hammer defines intercultural competence as «the ability to think and act appropriately in intercultural contexts» (Hammer, Bennett, Wiseman, 2003. pp. 421–443).

A review of key literature suggests that while no single universal definition exists, most models agree on core components: motivation, knowledge, skills, outcomes, and context. To these, this paper adds adaptability as a critical element.

Among the numerous conceptual models of intercultural competence, three are particularly noteworthy. The compositional model by J. Stier, and the developmental model by M. Baxter Magolda and P. King, offer comprehensive frameworks. Stier’s conceptual framework offers a critical bifurcation of intercultural competence into content-oriented (“knowing what”) and process-oriented (“knowing how”) dimensions. The former pertains to declarative knowledge of language, cultural values, and normative structures, while the latter involves situational adaptability, self-reflection, and effective interpersonal interaction (Stier, 2006).

In the contemporary educational landscape, language instruction transcends the mere acquisition of theoretical knowledge and practical language skills. For students of English philology, particularly at the tertiary level, language learning increasingly entails the development of the ability to engage meaningfully with speakers of other

cultures, accurately interpret intercultural situations and negotiate meaning in both direct and indirect intercultural encounters.

A key factor underpinning the successful formation of intercultural competence is learner motivation. From a pedagogical standpoint, motivation functions as a multidimensional construct that reflects learners' conscious engagement with educational goals and their disposition toward the learning process as a means of self-development. The stronger and more intrinsic the motivation, the greater the likelihood that acquired knowledge and skills will be transferred into real-life intercultural contexts. Therefore, any pedagogical model aiming to foster intercultural competence must integrate motivational mechanisms that stimulate students' interest in exploring cultural knowledge.

As Portuguese scholar R. Ciolăneanu posits, students should be encouraged to ask reflective questions such as, "*Why should I study the culture of another country? How might this knowledge benefit my future?*" (Ciolăneanu, 2007, pp.22–28). Such introspection nurtures a cognitive-motivational orientation toward intercultural learning. Language, in this framework, becomes not only a communicative tool but also a medium through which cultural values, social norms and worldviews are transmitted and internalized. Consequently, when motivation is linked to a meaningful and culturally enriched curriculum, learners develop a deeper, more sustained engagement with both the language and its sociocultural context.

From a didactic perspective, learners' interest is stimulated not only by the subject matter itself but also by the modes of knowledge acquisition, in particular those that require instant, stable and often creative participation. Intercultural competence, as a pedagogical aim, can be effectively cultivated when students recognize the applicability and relevance of cultural knowledge in their current and future professional lives. Instructors, therefore, must prioritize the cultivation of long-term motivation that supports the parallel development of language proficiency and cultural literacy.

The development of intercultural competence, particularly among students of English philology, can be conceptualized as a staged process. At the initial stage, the teacher's responsibility lies in selecting or designing learning materials that authentically reflect intercultural issues and challenges. Authentic texts, audiovisual materials and real-life scenarios, especially those relevant to students' future professional environments, serve as effective tools for introducing learners to the nuances of intercultural interaction. Such materials not only expose students to culturally marked language but also reflect the evolving nature of modern English as it is used in real-world contexts.

Beyond linguistic knowledge, intercultural competence requires an understanding of one's own culture as well as the target culture. Intercultural competence entails the capacity to critically interpret and assess cultural phenomena through the lens of the target community, to recognize and respect alternative value frameworks, and to strategically adjust communicative behavior in accordance with

culturally specific norms, etiquettes, and behavioral conventions, especially when these diverge from one's own cultural background.

The second phase in the development process centers on the acquisition of both domain-specific and culture-specific knowledge. At this stage, learners are introduced to national communication styles and their defining features. A comparative perspective becomes essential: it is through identifying similarities and differences between cultural and linguistic systems that students evolve reproving cultural awareness, enrich their intercultural repertoire.

According to C. Kramsch, intercultural education should establish what she terms «a third space» or «sphere of interculturality» that is a conceptual space where learners can mediate between their cultural identification and that of the target culture (Kramsch, 1993). Culture, she argues, should be taught as a process of differentiation, rather than assimilation. Thus, the pedagogical aim of the third stage is to develop intercultural communicative skills and behavioural flexibility through the implementation of creative, task-based activities. Instructional components must be systematically sequenced to ensure balanced development across the four core language modalities – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – while concurrently integrating culturally contextualized content reflective of national traditions and values.

The design of such tasks must adhere to sound methodological criteria, including communicative authenticity, learner-centeredness, linguistic relevance and skill integration. Importantly, etiquette in English, in particular in its spoken form, should be treated as a high-priority component of instruction. Creating a classroom environment that mirrors real-life interactional settings allows for the contextualization of cultural behaviours and supports experiential learning.

The fourth and final stage of development of intercultural competence provides promoting learner autonomy in applying intercultural knowledge to complex and unpredictable communication scenarios. At this point, learners are expected to demonstrate the capacity to construct independent responses in both form and content, to engage in self-reflection, and to resolve intercultural dilemmas using nuanced judgment. Activities such as role-plays, simulations, case studies, and critical incident analysis prove effective in consolidating intercultural awareness and behaviour.

Teaching materials utilized during this phase should possess high interactional value and be designed to support student-centered methodologies, including collaborative learning, problem-solving tasks, gamified instruction, and immersive scenario-based activities. These strategies not only facilitate deeper understanding but also encourage learners to negotiate meaning collaboratively and develop empathy toward culturally diverse interlocutors.

The formation and enhancement of intercultural competence of students majoring in English philology must be guided by a pedagogical framework rooted in sustained motivation, cultural comparison and experiential engagement. The pedagogical trajectory is most effectively represented as a four-stage developmental framework in which instructors assume the role of facilitators within culturally

immersive environments. The deliberate integration of authentic cultural artifacts and interactive teaching strategies ensures a pedagogically relevant and engaging experience that prepares future philologists for proficient intercultural communication and adaptive expertise in global professional settings.

In higher education, particularly in the training of future specialists in English philology, the cultivation of intercultural competence is increasingly viewed as a fundamental objective. It is not sufficient for students to master grammar, vocabulary and communicative strategies in isolation from cultural context. Rather, their educational experience must be framed within a global perspective, where cultural awareness, empathy and the ability to navigate diverse communicative situations are treated as core competencies.

A crucial aspect of effectively developing any competence lies in the systematic and structured assessment of its progression across different stages of instruction. Intercultural competence is no exception. Monitoring its development enables educators to measure the influence of instructional interventions and make timely pedagogical adjustments. In this regard, British scholar M. Byram has proposed a diversity of self-assessment tools and reflective questionnaires designed to help learners evaluate their intercultural awareness, attitudes and skills (Byram, 2021). Such assessment instruments serve dual functions – diagnostic and formative – enabling instructors to refine instructional strategies and respond adaptively to students' evolving needs, thereby enhancing pedagogical effectiveness.

Scholars such as Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe emphasize that optimal preparation for global engagement requires the parallel development of linguistic proficiency and intercultural skills (Sinicrope, Norris, Watanabe, 2012). When learners are motivated to apply the target language in environments that simulate authentic intercultural interaction, their communicative competence becomes more contextually grounded, purposeful and adaptive. This dual focus not only enhances language acquisition but also prepares students to function meaningfully in international academic, professional and social spheres.

Within an intercultural learning environment, the pedagogical process is most effective when it is learner-centered, participatory and inquiry-driven. Students are no longer passive recipients of cultural information, but rather take on the impact of cultural researchers who investigate, interpret and reflect upon cultural practices both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, the teacher transitions from being the sole authority on cultural content to a facilitator who designs engaging learning opportunities and guides students through critical analysis and self-reflection.

The reconceptualization of the educator's role necessitates the incorporation of diverse and evolving cultural resources, including canonical texts, oral traditions, and digital media formats such as interviews, documentaries, and social networking content. Acknowledging the fluidity of culture, instructors must foster an inquiry-driven learning environment wherein students develop intercultural awareness through experiential engagement rather than through static knowledge acquisition.

Intercultural competence, then, becomes not a fixed set of knowledge, but a constellation of dispositions, behaviors and interpretive frameworks that evolve over time. Through exposure to culturally nuanced texts and engagement in reflective discussion, learners begin to question assumptions, appreciate ambiguity and adopt a more flexible stance toward cultural difference.

Furthermore, the practical implementation of intercultural instruction in higher education benefits from a structured pedagogical approach. Effective implementation entails the formulation of explicit learning outcomes, the integration of intercultural communicative scenarios into classroom discourse, and the application of comparative analytical methods to enhance critical cultural literacy. Experiential tasks – such as ethnographic interviewing, simulation-based activities, and digital storytelling – serve to operationalize theoretical concepts, promoting deeper internalization of linguistic structures and intercultural norms. This dialogic interplay is essential for building tolerance, intercultural sensitivity and a sense of global citizenship, qualities that are indispensable for future philologists who may engage in translation, diplomacy, education or international collaboration.

A number of assignments have been designed to favour the formation of intercultural competence while English language acquisition by students majoring in English philology.

Task 1. Watch the video USA v Europe | Cultural Differences (Youtube. USA v Europe. Cultural Differences, 2018).

Instructions are the following:

1. Watch the video attentively;
2. Answer the following questions in approximately 150–200 words each:
 - What main argument can you figure out from the presented video about the importance of intercultural competence?
 - How are cultural differences/gaps defined in the video? What is emphasized?
 - What examples or metaphors are used to explain cultural misunderstandings?
 - Which points resonate most with your experiences or future role as a philologist/teacher?
 - In what ways can language learning facilitate the development of intercultural awareness?
3. Conclude with a short paragraph (300–400 words) reflecting on how your own intercultural experiences align with the concepts presented in YouTube.

Task 2. Conduct an interview on intercultural experiences

1. Identify an individual who has experienced intercultural communication in an academic or professional setting.
2. Prepare and conduct a 5-question interview covering topics such as:
 - Significant cultural challenges faced.
 - Handling misunderstandings due to cultural differences.

- Impact of intercultural competence on their academic or career path.
 - Advice for developing intercultural skills.
 - Role of language in bridging cultural gaps
3. Then summarize the interview in 600–800 words.
 4. Provide an analysis (300–400 words) connecting the interviewee's experiences to the video's concepts and course content from YouTube.

Task 3. Roleplay to navigate cultural misunderstandings

- 1) In groups, create a short role-play inspired by a cultural misunderstanding discussed in the video or personal experiences. Mind that the script should:
 - clearly present the misunderstanding;
 - highlight the cultural values causing the friction;
 - demonstrate how intercultural competence resolves the issue.
- 2) After the performance, each group member submits a 200-word reflection explaining the key cultural differences and lessons learned.

Task 4. Do the research on universal, personal and cultural types of behaviour and study the information from the article Peace Corps. World Wise Schools. Teaching About Culture. Culture Matters Workbook. Chapter 1 (Peace Corps. World Wise Schools. Teaching About Culture. Culture Matters).

Then identify the types presented and give your justifications

TASK	TASK	TASK
Classify the following behavior as universal, personal, or cultural. Discuss your responses with a partner.	Classify the following behavior as universal, personal, or cultural. Discuss your responses with a partner.	Classify the following behavior as universal, personal, or cultural. Discuss your responses with a partner.
		
SLEEPING IN SOCKS	MAKING A CIRCLE	EATING WITH CHOPSTICKS
INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE	INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE	INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

The formation of intercultural competence among university-level students of English philology must go beyond curriculum content and include a pedagogical philosophy grounded in inquiry, reflection and interaction. Assessment tools such as self-evaluation checklists, cultural awareness scales and reflective portfolios play a vital role in personalizing learning and ensuring progress. Educators are called upon to act as mentors who cultivate an environment of exploration and openness, where students are empowered to become critical thinkers, effective communicators and culturally responsive professionals in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conclusion and study forward. The findings of the present study affirm the centrality of intercultural competence in the academic preparation of future philologists, particularly within the contemporary landscape characterized by global

interconnectedness and cross-cultural exchange. Intercultural competence, defined as the ability to interpret, evaluate, and interact appropriately across cultural boundaries, must be cultivated in parallel with linguistic proficiency. The use of culturally authentic materials, real-life communicative tasks, dialogic pedagogy, and digital platforms enhances learners' intercultural awareness, motivation, and adaptive skills. Moreover, the study underscores the multidimensional nature of this competence, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. The proposed staged model, from awareness to autonomous intercultural action, offers a coherent instructional scaffold, yet future research is required to explore long-term impacts on professional readiness, the efficacy of virtual intercultural exchanges, and the development of nuanced assessment tools capable of capturing longitudinal attitudinal and behavioral transformations.

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