

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AS A MODERN SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the specifics of the formation of intercultural communication competence in Russian language teachers in terms of pedagogical higher education institutions. A model of educational-information environment for the formation of intercultural competence in Russian language teachers has been developed.

KEYWORDS: *Competence, Being Competent, Intercultural Communication Competence, Linguistic Competence, Sociolinguistic Competence, Discursive Competence.*

INTRODUCTION

When representatives of different cultures meet each other, regardless of the environment and relationship, this relationship causes more difficulties or misunderstandings than relationships within the same culture, more knowledge and skills are required from the participants of this relationship. Anyone who has lived abroad for some time or has regular contact with representatives of other cultures in their own country is aware of the problems and misunderstandings of intercultural communication. In the process of internationalization and globalization, which is growing more and more, most people are facing certain problems in intercultural relations. However, it is impossible to determine the causes of such problems and difficulties, let alone how to eliminate them. While xenophobia is the most serious consequence of lack of intercultural competence, failed business deals in the international arena, communication problems in multicultural school classrooms, and frustration with foreign academic trips are possible consequences of intercultural misunderstanding. Through contact with other cultures, a person enriches his personality and general behavioral competence, gains experiences in this regard.

Intercultural competence has undoubtedly risen to the level of the most important competence in the last decade, which is gaining importance in the context of globalization, internationalization and multiculturalism debates. Due to modern social changes, such as economic globalization and internationalization of science, as well as the increasingly developing multiculturalism in everyday life, successful interaction with representatives of other cultures requires unique perspectives and skills. "Multiculturalism", "intercultural competence" and "intercultural communication" have become modern slogans, as evidenced by the increasing number of publications on this topic. From internationally active top managers to undergraduate students, everyone in an increasingly networked and cultural world needs the ability to successfully

communicate and interact with people from other cultures. The social status of intercultural competence and the wide interest in this priority competence prompted its inclusion as a science in the higher education system ("Formation of intercultural communication in teaching foreign languages", "Intercultural communication", etc.).

Intercultural competence is an interdisciplinary competence, which means that it is one of the core competencies required in many professions, regardless of the specific field of study. It is also very important for managers aiming for international cooperation, as well as for engineers sent abroad, anyone working in the field of international tourism, scientists at international conferences, teachers and social workers.

Intercultural competence is not only a skill that we encounter every day, but also a skill that is always needed. Moreover, it has become the subject of scientific research. As written in the field literature, teaching intercultural competence cannot be done by a single discipline, it requires cooperation between different disciplines. Indeed, research on intercultural communication and competence has been interdisciplinary in nature from the beginning. Even in the 1960s, early North American approaches (on intercultural or crosscultural competence/communication) were based on findings from various disciplines, particularly psychology and linguistics. Today, the range of disciplines involved in the study of intercultural competence has expanded from social psychology, linguistics and economics to sociology, pedagogy and anthropology, philosophy, cultural studies and philology (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Cross-cultural competence is a field of study and a field of practical application

The interpretation of extensive intercultural communication, which is considered important in various fields of practical and scientific science, causes certain difficulties. In particular, social psychologist Alexander Thomas, one of the famous researchers of intercultural competence in German-speaking countries, proposed the following definition for this term: "Intercultural competence as a cultural condition and influencing factor in perception, decision-making, feeling and personal behavior (one's own and by others) is manifested as the ability to recognize,

respect, and appreciate one's own and other cultures, through which mutual cooperation, even in the opposite points of view regarding the way of life, understanding and correct interpretation of the world, is achieved, to be in a mood of tolerance. "

Today, two main fields of application are associated with the concept of "intercultural competence": foreign and native, that is, international and local social interaction. International is a connection between people from different national cultures: an Uzbek student studies in other countries, or vice versa, foreigners study in Uzbekistan. Intercultural training sessions are directed to such international communication/communication situations.

The concept of intercultural competence, which has become the subject of a number of scientific fields, covers individual abilities and qualities that allow a person to successfully communicate with representatives of another culture, or at least help to interact with representatives of another culture. According to the literature, this complex concept consists of three sub-competencies, which complement each other and form a whole: (1) cognitive competence, (2) affective competence and (3) pragmatic-communicative competence (Figure 2).

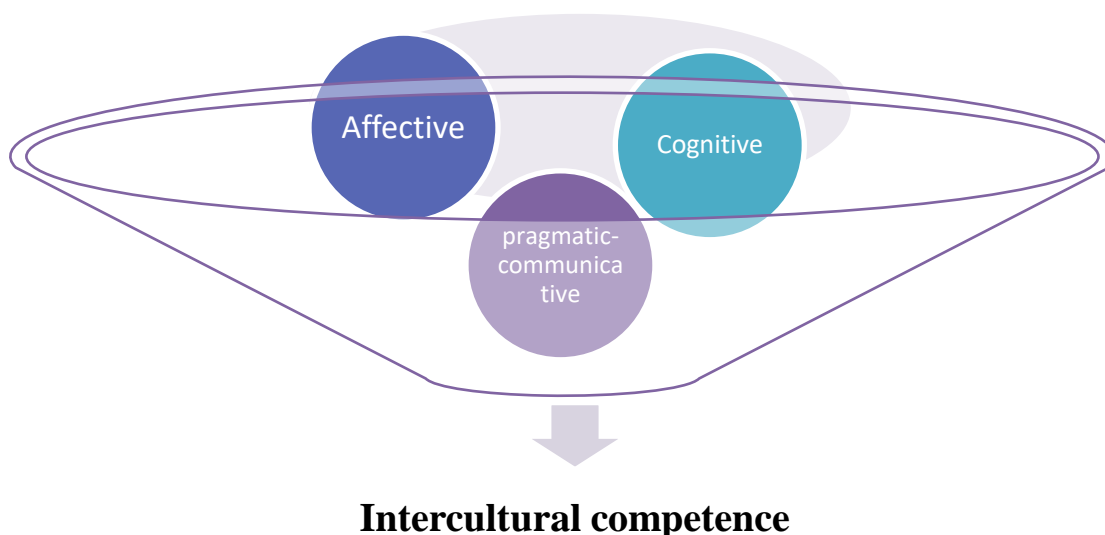


Figure 2. Structural sub-competencies of intercultural competence (Irrll/Gumnix 2010)

Cognitive sub-competence includes the necessary knowledge for intercultural encounters. In this case, knowledge about the culture(s) of a particular communication partner is considered necessary knowledge. Gathering information about the country in which the language is being studied is part of preparing for intercultural interaction/communication. Although specific knowledge of another culture can have a very beneficial effect on an intercultural encounter, detailed knowledge of the country is also considered an important prerequisite for successful intercultural communication/communication. But in this process, knowledge of a cultural-theoretical nature is more important, and its formation in future pedagogues is the need of the hour: the way cultures work/function, the existence of cultural differences and their possible effects in intercultural interaction. This knowledge is closely related to other important components of intercultural cognitive subcompetence: self-representation, the ability to reflect

on one's true images, self-image, values, behavior, and communication patterns. There are close relationships between the following three components of cognitive subcompetence, as the components complement and reinforce each other:

- Knowledge of other cultures (culture or country-specific knowledge);
- Cultural-theoretical knowledge (knowledge about the functions of cultures, cultural differences and their consequences)
- "Manifestation, realization" of oneself.

The affective subcompetency of intercultural competence mainly includes views and attitudes towards representatives of other cultures. Interest in and respect for other cultures is undoubtedly a prerequisite for successful intercultural communication. In addition, it is necessary to learn to sympathize with a stranger (empathy) and pay attention to subtle communicative signals. Another important component of intercultural affective subcompetence is the ability to tolerate ambiguity, which allows a person, for example, to overcome/resolve conflicts between his communication partner's values and norms. This sub-competency consists of the following components:

- Interest in and openness to other cultures;
- Ability to empathize and understand others;
- Tolerance for uncertainty.

In addition to cognitive and affective competence, the pragmatic-communicative component is the third central part of intercultural competence. This sub-competency includes communication skills that have a positive impact on effective interactions with representatives of other cultures, as well as strategies for solving specific communicative problems. Compared to the two sub-competencies mentioned above, the pragmatic-communicative competence shows a higher level of concretization, as it can be divided into examples of communication. Culture-specific greeting customs and the use of other cultural communication strategies are formed through cognitive and affective sub-competences of intercultural competence (affective sub-competence), and are corrected when necessary (cognitive sub-competence). Pragmatic-communicative competence, in turn, is closely related to the other two competences.

Pragmatic-communicative subcompetency includes:

- Use of certain communicative models;
- Use effective conflict resolution strategies.

Intercultural competence also requires linguistic competence. In fact, knowing the language or languages spoken in another culture can make communication with members of that culture much easier. Language proficiency cannot be a prerequisite for successful intercultural communication. Linguistic competence usually has a positive effect on intercultural competence, since language acquisition is often associated with a longer process of "working" with the culture of the language being studied.

In European sources, it is noted that intercultural competence is included among the knowledge that a person learns throughout his life. It is not easy to develop this competence after several years of work abroad, even after decades of intercultural partnership; intercultural competence is

increasingly developed with each new intercultural encounter/encounter. This development can be described using the "learning cycle" model. In this case, the three sub-competencies of intercultural competence are closely related (Figure 3).

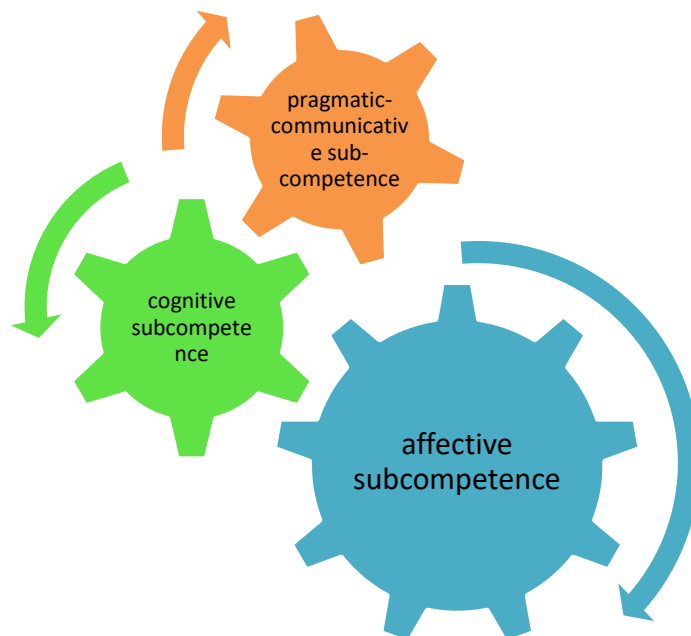


Figure 3. Intercultural Competence "Circle of Learning"

"Entering" this learning circle, from which stage to start depends on personal life (experience) and educational process. Knowledge specific to the country where the language is being studied and its culture are considered important in the acquisition of intercultural competence. A person who acquires such knowledge not only learns to respect another culture in every intercultural meeting, but also understands his own cultural values more deeply through comparison (What do my interlocutors and I think and feel? Why is this normal or unusual for our culture? etc.). The acquired knowledge about the studied language and features of communication should be manifested on a pragmatic-communicative scale. Appropriate communication patterns and conflict resolution strategies are used as effectively as possible. Affective sub-competencies – interest, open-mindedness, empathy – are also expected to be developed to some extent in these situations. But in the process of certain concrete intercultural communication, the understanding of others and the tolerance for uncertainty increases. By constantly comparing the experience and previously acquired knowledge about the other culture and their communication mechanisms with "one's own", the "circle of learning" is increased to a higher level.

Thus, the mentioned sub-competencies of intercultural competence - cognitive, affective and pragmatic-communicative - are a necessary condition for successful intercultural "movement". That is why many critics consider intercultural competence in a broad sense, in general, "the ability to act (behave)". The question of whether specific intercultural competence exists at all is also open to reflection.

In fact, intercultural competence can be understood as the ability to connect all personal (cognitive, affective and pragmatic-communicative) competences to the "context of intercultural movement" and use it. In this, first of all, there is a qualitative difference between general

mobility competence and intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is located at another level, which is characterized by cultural responsiveness as well as intercultural perspective. Thus, intercultural competence is "the general competence of moving with an intercultural sign (sign)".

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