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ҒЫЛЫМИ ЖУРНАЛЫ

НАУЧНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ  
Торайғыров университета

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## **IMPORTANCE AND FORMATION OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS MAJORING IN ENGLISH TEACHING**

*Nowadays English education not only requires students to master the ability of listening, speaking, reading and writing, but also intercultural communication competence has become an indispensable part. However, we have to think about whether the university pays enough attention to and supports students' intercultural communication ability. The intercultural communication of students majoring in English education are uneven, and the way of improvement is relatively simple. The research was conducted in the form of questionnaires for the students of Two Foreign Languages in Eurasian National University. This paper analyzes the intercultural communication competence of students from five aspects: the degree of intercultural competence, the way of learning intercultural communication, the establishment of intercultural courses in university, the perception of intercultural competence, and the perception of university support. The results of the questionnaire show that students have different abilities and levels, and they do not pay enough attention to learning intercultural communication. University, students, and teachers need to put efforts to solve the learning problem of intercultural communication. The researcher investigate and think about the current situation and existing problems, and put forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions for reference.*

*Keywords: intercultural communication competence; foreign language teaching; approach; attention; simulation game.*

### **Introduction**

English teaching in 21st century has developed from simply vocabulary and grammar teaching to a combined teaching of language knowledge and culture, and the importance of cross-cultural knowledge in language teaching has emerged. Wangyin and Huangjie pointed that the fundamental purpose of

English teaching is not only to impart language knowledge, but also to cultivate students' communicative ability, especially the ability to conduct cross-cultural communication, so as to meet the needs of different industries in the society [1]. Therefore, for students' personal development and career needs, it is essential to cultivate sensitivity to cultural differences, shorten cultural distances, and improve intercultural communication skills. According to Yan Jinglan, understanding and comparing different cultures can help students use the foreign language they have learned to communicate and communicate effectively with people with different cultural backgrounds, so as to truly cultivate high-quality citizens of globalization [2]. It can be seen that the purpose of foreign language teaching is not only to allow students to reserve foreign language knowledge, but also to practically use the value and function of the acquired knowledge, so that they can communicate smoothly with people from different cultural backgrounds in future study and work. At the same time, the goal of foreign language teaching is not limited to cultivating students' translation ability, but also cultivating students to understand deeper about their own culture. Students are supposed to be tolerant of foreign cultures, and improve their comprehensive quality to adapt to the globalized environment.

Byram believes that knowledge on the social group and culture of one's own country and the country of communication party, and knowledge in the process of communicating with groups or individuals are the two main types of knowledge required for cross-cultural communication [3]. Intercultural communication competence covers the fields of language, culture, psychology, etc. In addition to the storage of cultural knowledge and fluent mastery of the language used in dialogue, both parties in communication need to have psychological insight and interpersonal communication skills. In the process of improving intercultural communication skills, learners will accumulate cultural knowledge of the country they communicate with, and understand the values of people in that country. At the same time, they would have a positive effect on comprehensively and deeply understanding themselves. In addition, the learner's social skills will be improved, and this change also has positive significance for the learner to communicate with people who have the same cultural background. Regarding the aspects of intercultural communicative competence, Bi Jiwan's points that intercultural communicative competence is a combination of linguistic competence, non-verbal competence, intercultural understanding ability and intercultural communication adaptability [4]. The research of Spizberg and Cupach divided intercultural communicative competence more detailed, they believed that intercultural communicative competence covers seven kinds of competence: basic competence, social competence, social skills, interpersonal competence, language skills, communication skills and relationship skills [5]. As we all know that

language is a tool for human beings to transmit information. Learners need to use this tool effectively and appropriately, so as to achieve the purpose of accurately understanding the other party of communication and conveying their own ideas. Meanwhile, efficient social skills are considered as an important aid to achieve this goal. To sum up the above points, intercultural communication competence is the mastery of cultural and communication knowledge, the ability to apply this knowledge, psychological fearlessness and showing an attitude of tolerance and appreciation to different cultures [6].

English teaching education in universities has become more comprehensive and thorough based on the innovation and emphasis on foreign language education. More and more students are choosing English teaching for their majors and lifelong careers. Many university courses for these prospective English teachers focus most of their attention on how to train them to teach the basics of the language. There are many advanced educational concepts and methods, however the emphasis on the intercultural communication knowledge and competence of these future teachers is obviously insufficient. These future foreign language teachers are tasked with cultivating students' intercultural communicative competence, but what about their own intercultural knowledge reserve and intercultural communicative competence? Whether it has a strong sense of cross-cultural communication, so that it can be competent for the cultivation of students' cross-cultural awareness and cultural introduction in the future.

The intercultural communicative competence of students who major English education affects their personal world outlook, values and way of thinking. On the other hand, it will affect the improvement of the intercultural communicative competence of the students they teach in the future. In order to achieve that each generation has strong intercultural communication ability, these prospective teachers need to have that in advance. There are many studies on the issue of intercultural competence of in-service teachers, and scholars have proposed different strategies and suggestions. But the attention of these prospective teachers of English education is far from enough. This paper conducts a survey on Kazakhstan university students to evaluate their intercultural communication skills, as well as to understand their learning means and views. The researcher hopes that the universities pay more attention to the intercultural competence of students, especially the students majoring in English education. According to Fangyan, one of the most important ways to develop intercultural communication skills is overseas experience or training [7]. Universities are supposed to provide students more opportunities to study and internship in overseas universities since personally experience is the most direct way to improve abilities. Additionally, through combined with the way of opening novel courses and organizing related

activities, it can not only attract students' attention to this topic, but also enhance the interest and motivation of learning intercultural knowledge.

### **Materials and methods**

Questionnaire and interview are the methods of this research. The researcher analyzed the current situation of intercultural communication competence of postgraduates majoring in Two Foreign Languages in Eurasian National University from three aspects: knowledge, awareness and skills of intercultural communicative competence. To find out about their access, views, advice and how the university is offering relevant courses.

Through the investigation of the postgraduate students majoring in Two Foreign Languages in Eurasian National University and various aspects related to intercultural communication, this paper analyzes students' intercultural communication ability and the problems existing in learning intercultural related courses. The fundamental purpose is to improve both students' and teachers' understanding of intercultural communication. The researcher put forward suggestions and training measures for English education students to solve the current problems encountered in intercultural aspects to expect universities would pay attention to and improve students' intercultural ability and awareness.

The subjects of this research are the second-year postgraduate students majoring in Two Foreign Languages at Eurasian National University. The questionnaire for this study was compiled by the author and is divided into five parts. The first part has 30 multiple-choice questions. It mainly tests students' intercultural communication knowledge, awareness and skills to comprehensively evaluate their intercultural communication ability. Students are assessed on intercultural communication competence by agreeing or disagreeing with the questions. The second part is one multiple-choice question, mainly to investigate the ways of learners to acquire intercultural competence. The third part is one question on understanding the situation of intercultural courses in the universities where the respondents study and their views on these courses. The fourth part is a multiple-choice question, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how students view the significance of mastering intercultural communication ability on themselves. The final part is a multiple-choice question in which students choose what support they would like the university to provide to help them promote intercultural competence.

This questionnaire was distributed online to the students by the researcher for a total of 3 days. They were required to fill it out carefully and truthfully. A total of 30 replies were received, of which 30 were valid replies, and the effective rate reached 100 %. The researcher conducted interviews with the students after collected the questionnaires. It aims to understand the intercultural communication

experience and cases they encountered in their daily life, study and work to gain insight into their feelings in cross-cultural situations.

### **Results and discussion**

#### 1) Assessment of intercultural communication competence

Through analyzing the answers of 30 questions, it shows that postgraduates majoring in English education have basic intercultural communication ability. The specific analysis are: first, the respondents have sufficient intercultural knowledge reserves on English-speaking countries and a better understanding of foreign customs. However, the lack of understanding of the history, geography, religion, politic and economy of English-speaking countries requires them to improve; second, the respondents have a certain awareness of intercultural communication. They are willing to contact and understand different cultures. But half of the students are more inclined to their own culture, and their cultural self-confidence is relatively strong. Another problem is that they fear to communicate with foreign languages; third, the respondents have some basic intercultural communication skills. Specifically, they have strong interpersonal skills, but there is a little lack of body language expression. The result also shows that respondents are generally tolerant, but not very willing to change themselves to cater to the communicator.

#### 2) Question one: ways to acquire intercultural communication competence

About respondents' access to intercultural knowledge. 90 % of them learn about foreign cultures through books, movies and music. Half of the respondents have participated in relevant courses and training. One-third of the students improve their intercultural communication ability through experience aboard and frequent communication with foreigners. Very few of them have experienced intercultural simulation games. Additionally, 2 respondents among them participate in relevant seminars or read and analyze some cross-cultural cases.

#### 3) Question two: current situation of intercultural courses in universities

Intercultural course in universities is one of the important ways for students to improve their intercultural communication ability. 50 % of the respondents are very clear about the offering of relevant courses in their faculty. They think that the courses offered are helpful and interesting. 33 % of the respondents were not clear about the course offerings. A further 15 % said universities did not offer cross-cultural courses or they did not think these courses were practically helpful.

#### 4) Question three: perspectives on the intercultural communication competence

83 % of the respondents believe that intercultural communication competence will help them communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, which is the biggest benefit. 76 % said that this ability will help them teach English in the future. At the same time, it helps them understand themselves and

their own national culture. 46 % of respondents consider intercultural competence as a beneficial factor in career choice and development. In addition, only 36 % believe that intercultural communication competence can improve their interest in English learning and teaching. In a word, respondents consider that intercultural communication competence help to understand foreign cultures and facilitate communication.

5) Question four: Advice for universities to improve support

Respondents were asked what support they would like the university to give to improve their intercultural communication ability. More than 80 % believe that universities should provide more opportunities for overseas study and internships. At the same time, universities should organize various activities for interaction between the students majoring English education and the international students. Half of the respondents think that it would be helpful if universities offer novel and interesting courses and that foreign teachers should be hired. 43 % also hope that universities often hold lectures or seminars related to intercultural communication to give them a more professional understanding of interculturality. In short, everyone has the will to increase their intercultural knowledge and improve their intercultural communication skills.

Through the evaluation of the intercultural communication ability of the students. It can be seen that the ability of each person is uneven. This is due to the different experiences of the respondents. Their intercultural competence is far from enough. Nowadays, with the help of the Internet, students have been exposed to a variety of intercultural knowledge, and they understand the culture of many English-speaking countries. However, they lack of the understanding of professional knowledge about foreign countries, such as geography, history, politic and economy. Through this research, it can be found that the respondents are very clear about the benefits of intercultural communication for their professional and personal development. But their method of acquiring and improving intercultural communication skills is single and traditional. When they are asked about expectations for university to help them improve their intercultural communication ability, the researcher found that students felt that university is the institution that would give them the most support. In reality, the resources and methods currently provided by universities are still limited, which can not meet the demands of most students.

The researcher believes that improving the intercultural communication competence of prospective teachers of English majors requires the support of universities and the efforts of students themselves. Then the goal of efficient improvement could be achieved. The researchers have the following suggestions about how to acquire intercultural knowledge and improve the skills:



Universities need to provide various opportunities for overseas study or internships. In order to create conditions for them to practice their intercultural conversation skills, also to increase the interaction between students majoring English education and foreign university students. According to Byram, the British higher education community believes that practical experience is the only way to acquire high-level communicative competence, especially intercultural communicative competence [8]. The best way to improve intercultural communication ability is to practice in a real environment. The practical experience is the most direct stimulation of the five senses. This is also a move in line with the trend of globalization, which directly promotes the exchange between domestic and foreign cultures. For postgraduate students, this is a direct way to supplement geographic, historical, political and economical knowledge of English-speaking countries.

Universities should create opportunities for group study and collaboration with international students of their universities. Authentic practice is the best way to improve communication competence. Kurnia Ningsih pointed that building the competence is not enough by providing students with knowledge and skills only, however the students should get the experience of using the language they learn in order to enhance their ability in intercultural and interlingual communication [9]. At the same time, it is also an opportunity for international students to understand the culture of the country they study in. These prospective teachers can also deeply reflect on their own cultural characteristics through intercultural conversation, including self-analysis and self-knowledge. In the future, they will learn quickly and easily the strengths and weaknesses of their students’.

Teachers need to explore the application of intercultural simulation games. According to Eglè Gerulaitienė, simulation games involve knowledge (about own/ other cultures, geography, modes of behaviour), activity, emotions and social aspects. When universities fail to create opportunities of practical experience. Intercultural simulation games provide authentic situations for training intercultural competence. The main aim of such simulation games is to help learners learn how to act in various intercultural contexts, recognize identities of various cultures and specifics of intercultural interaction, experience cultural diversity and benefits and difficulties brought by it by playing the game, feeling the specifics of imagined cultures and experiencing possible situations of cultural clash [10]. Another problem for teachers is that there are few types or forms of intercultural simulation games. Mostly they are designed for business students. Therefore, teachers need to explore more possibilities of this model and design suitable simulation games for education-major students.

Students can select films and books on the subject of interculturalism as case studies and discuss with foreigners to exchange views. Because books, movies, music are still the main way for students to acquire intercultural knowledge, doing such case analysis helps them to form a system of intercultural knowledge. Meanwhile, students also can compare them with domestic movies and books.

### Conclusions

Nowadays, the education in many countries is undergoing rapid changes and development. The society has higher requirements for students majoring English education, so they would face more and more challenges [11]. If students want to become qualified educators and cultural communicators, they must improve their intercultural communication competence. Universities should attach importance to the intercultural cultivation of students and provide them with opportunities through various means. Teachers should explore practical and innovative ways to teach them about intercultural communication, such as intercultural simulation games. The learner's own efforts are also essential. Students should overcome the fear of difficulties and have an inclusive mentality to have more interaction with people from different cultures. At the same time, they should gain intercultural knowledge through widely absorbed from books and films. Students should actively participate in various courses to learn intercultural communication skills. The most important thing is that learners should put these knowledge and skills into practice and gain experience. Only through the joint efforts and collaboration of these three parties, these prospective English teachers would become qualified foreign language educators and intercultural educators.

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## **АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДЫҢ МАМАНДЫҒЫНДА ОҚУ СТУДЕНТТЕРІНІҢ МӘДЕНИЕТ АРАЛЫҚ БАЙЛАНЫС ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІГІНІҢ МАҢЫЗЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУЫ**

*Қазіргі таңда ағылшын тілінде білім беру студенттерден тыңдау, сөйлеу, оқу және жазу дағдыларын меңгеруді талап етіп қана қоймайды, сонымен қатар мәдениетаралық байланыс құзыреттілігі*

*де маңызды бөлікке айналды. Алайда, университет студенттердің мәдениетаралық байланыс құзіреттілігіне айтарлықтай көңіл бөліп, қолдау көрсетіп жатыр ма, соны ойлауымыз керек. Ағылшын тілі мамандығы бойынша оқитын студенттердің мәдениетаралық байланыс біркелкі емес және оны жетілдіру жолы салыстырмалы түрде қарапайым. Зерттеу жұмысы Еуразия ұлттық университетінің екі шет тілі мамандығының студенттеріне сауалнама түрінде жүргізілді. Бұл жұмыста студенттердің мәдениетаралық байланыс құзыреттілігі бес аспекті бойынша талданады: мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік дәрежесі, мәдениетаралық байланысты меңгеру тәсілі, университетте мәдениетаралық курстардың құрылуы, мәдениетаралық құзыреттілікті қабылдау және университеттік қолдауды қабылдау. Сауалнама нәтижелері студенттердің қабілеттері мен деңгейлерінің әртүрлі екенін, олардың мәдениетаралық байланысты меңгеруге жеткілікті көңіл бөлмейтінін көрсетеді. Университет, студенттер мен оқытушылар мәдениетаралық байланыстың оқу мәселесін шешуге күш салуы қажет. Зерттеуші қазіргі жағдайды және бар проблемаларды зерттеп, ой елегінен өткізеді және сәйкес қарсы шаралар мен анықтамалық ұсыныстарды ұсынады.*

*Кілтті сөздер: мәдениетаралық байланыс құзыреттілік; шет тілін оқыту; көзқарас; назар; симуляциялық ойын.*

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### **ЗНАЧЕНИЕ И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНО-КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ У СТУДЕНТОВ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТИ «ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА»**

*В настоящее время обучение английскому языку требует от учащихся не только овладения навыками аудирования, разговорной речи, чтения и письма, но также неотъемлемой частью стала компетенция в области межкультурного общения. Тем не менее, мы должны подумать о том, уделяет ли университет достаточно внимания и поддерживает межкультурную коммуникативную способность студентов. Межкультурная коммуникация студентов,*

*обучающихся на английском языке, носит неравномерный характер, а пути совершенствования относительно просты. Исследование проводилось в форме анкетирования для студентов факультета двух иностранных языков Евразийского национального университета. В этой статье анализируется межкультурная коммуникативная компетентность студентов с пяти аспектов: степень межкультурной компетентности, способ изучения межкультурной коммуникации, создание межкультурных курсов в университете, восприятие межкультурной компетентности и восприятие университетской поддержки. Результаты анкетирования показывают, что у учащихся разные способности и уровень, и они не уделяют должного внимания обучению межкультурной коммуникации. Университету, студентам и преподавателям необходимо приложить усилия для решения проблемы обучения межкультурной коммуникации. Исследователь изучает и думает о текущей ситуации и существующих проблемах и выдвигает соответствующие контрмеры и предложения для справки.*

*Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникативная компетенция, обучение иностранному языку, подход, внимание, игра-симулятор.*

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