

2.4 Formation of undergraduate students' intercultural communicative competence

Introduction. Recent events regarding Ukraine's EU candidacy have demonstrated the importance of reconsidering the role of intercultural communicative competence formation, especially in the process of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching in the course of future professionals' training.

Contemporary socio-economic and cultural trends of the Ukrainian social development, accession of Ukraine to the European educational system state new problems and challenges for future professionals. In particular, a foreign language proficiency is one of the prerequisites for successful professional communication of future specialists. Knowledge of a foreign language enhances the competitiveness and mobility of future professionals, giving them the opportunity to feel more confident in the job market, which is constantly placing new requirements for the specialists.

The phenomenon of culture and communication in their inextricable connection was considered in the works of philosophers L. Wittenstein, Y. Habermas, H. Gadamer, I. Kant, F. Nietzsche, I. Fichte, Z. Freud, F. Schleiermacher, O. Spengler, and others in the XVII–XX c. The concept of intercultural communication appeared in the middle of the 20th century, and it is associated with the names of such scientists as M. Byram, E. Hall, K. Klakhon, A. Kreber, R. Porter, D. Trager, and L. Samovar. Western researchers K. Berger, S. Huntington, E. Hirsch, E. Hall, G. Hofstede, and S. Dahl developed further intercultural communication theories in an attempt to explain this phenomenon from various angles [113].

Recently, the attention of researchers to the topic of intercultural communication has significantly increased in Ukraine and is gaining popularity among native researchers. V. Andrushchenko, N. Borysko, N. Vysotska, O. Hrytsenko, L. Holovanchyk, O. Hryva, L. Hubersky, V. Yevtukh, O. Kraskovska, L. Kuznetsova, I. Lytovchenko, O. Ogienko, A. Polupan, O. Tarnopolsky, A. Sbrueva, H. Sotska, and others raise various aspects of the problem in their studies.

Thus, the researchers consider intercultural communication as a necessary condition for successful integration into the political society, which allows effective participation in the inter-ethnic process of communication in the realities of the globalised world.

The analysis of these publications reveals that there is a wide spectrum of scientific research devoted to the issue of intercultural communication competency development. However, the problem of developing undergraduate students' intercultural communicative competence has not been studied thoroughly and requires further investigation.

Main body. Because of continuing advancements in politics and economics on a global level, as well as the dramatic shifts brought on by the emergence of virtual cultures, our world and societies are changing. This is going to result in an increase in the number of individuals who live in, and commute between, many cultures and communities in both the actual world and the virtual world. Higher education institutions are now aware that they must meet these emerging social requirements and prepare graduates who can work both as global professionals and mindful citizens as a result of the changing global environment.

The word “communication” is descended from the Latin noun *communicatio*, which meant a sharing or imparting. From the root *communis* (common, public), it has no relation to terms such as *union* or *unity*, but rather is linked to the Latin *munus* (duty, gift), and thus has relatives in such terms as *common*, *immune*, *mad*, *mean*, *meaning*, *municipal*, *mutual*, and German terms such as *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Meinung* (opinion). Its root senses have to do with change, exchange, and goods possessed by more than one person; the Latin verb *communicare* means to make common [114, p.12].

Thus, “communication” can refer to the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts or information with others through an accepted code of symbols. Though we frequently think of communication as talking, there is much more to it than just words. Our eyes, emotions on our faces, hand gestures, body language, and movements are all communication tools that contribute significantly to our speech. The need for communication is determined ultimately by the need for joint participation of people

in the production of material goods. And in the sphere of spiritual life, the central place is occupied by the individual's need to acquire social experience, to assimilate to cultural values, to master the principles and norms of behaviour in society and a specific social environment, and all this is impossible without contacts with other people.

D. Hymes (1971) coined the concept of “communicative competence” in the middle of the 1960s, and since then it has gained popularity among educators, academics, and other linguists. This concept was developed in opposition to N. Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence. Earlier before this, in 1965, N. Chomsky introduced the words “competence” (linguistic competence) and “performance”. These terms have theoretical differences: competence may be viewed as a presumptive underlying ability, whereas performance can be seen as the overt presentation of that ability. This suggests that “communicative competence” refers to the basic criteria of skills and knowledge required for communication.

Communicative competence refers to an individual's ability to convey effectively their opinions, thoughts, and feelings. It involves the knowledge of language and an awareness about how to use the language appropriately in various settings and contexts.

Many competency models have been proposed in applied linguistics since the concept of communicative competence was introduced. It is common to distinguish such models, as: D. Hymes' model (1967, 1972), M. Canale and M. Swain's model (1980), M. Canale's model (1983), L. Bachman's model (1990), M. Celce-Murcia, Dornyei and Thurrell's model (1995), A. Palmer's model (1996), and W. Littlewood's model (2011). Although all these researchers designed their models in different ways, they all shared four major aspects: strategic competence, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence (covering both discourse and functional/actional competence), and sociocultural competence (including sociolinguistic competence).

Several critical assessments of theoretical frameworks of communicative ability in foreign language instruction have occurred during the last few decades. So far, the study has revealed that different models represent distinct viewpoints on the concept

of communicative competence. Nonetheless, the many competence models created in the early 1980s shared the four main structural components listed below: strategic, linguistic, pragmatic and intercultural competencies (see Figure 1). These components are always linked; they are not discrete “components” and cannot be detached from one another.

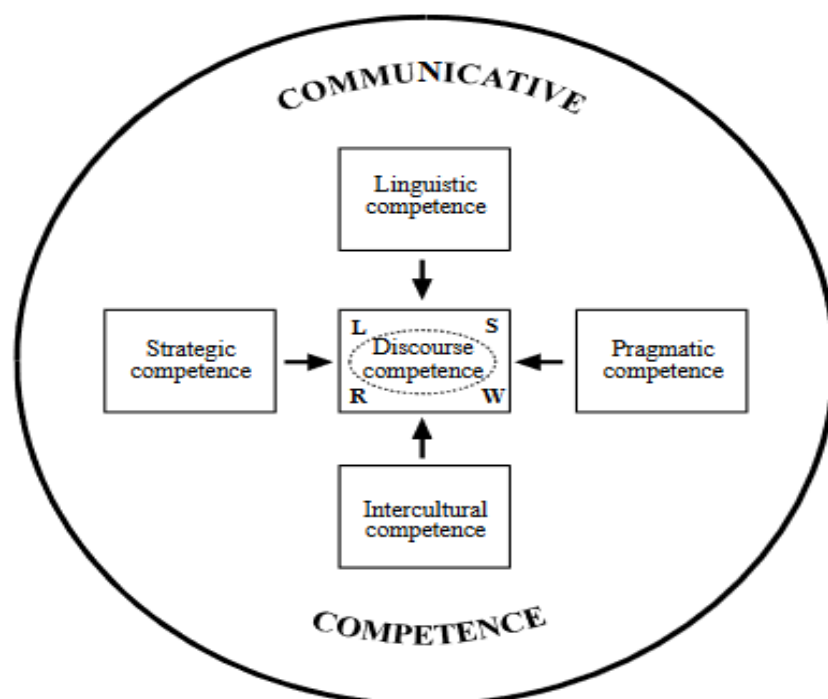


Figure 1: Components of communicative competence¹
(Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006a: 16).

Discourse competence is defined as the selection and sequencing of utterances or sentences to achieve a cohesive and coherent spoken or written text given a particular purpose and situational context. *Linguistic competence* refers to all the elements of the linguistic system, such as aspects concerning phonology, grammar and vocabulary, which are needed to interpret or produce a spoken or written text. *Pragmatic competence* concerns the knowledge of the function or illocutionary force implied in the utterance that is intended to be understood or produced, as well as the contextual factors that affect its appropriacy. *Intercultural competence* refers to the knowledge of how to interpret and produce a spoken or written piece of discourse within a particular sociocultural context. Therefore, it involves knowledge of cultural factors such as the rules of behaviour that exist in the target language community as well as cross-cultural awareness, including differences and similarities in cross-cultural

communication. Finally, *strategic competence* is conceptualized as knowledge of both learning and communication strategies [115, p. 16].

The traditional model of communicative competence still has several drawbacks. Primarily, it focuses on the native speaker as a model. In 1994, M. Byram and G. Zarate suggested that the intercultural speaker should replace the native speaker as the learner of a foreign language. The idea is that foreign language learners are individuals who bring with them to their learning experience their sociocultural identity as members of their native culture, and even if they have acquired advanced levels of proficiency, what is conventionally called “native speaker fluency”, they are nonetheless “mediators” between two cultures [116, p.93].

The intercultural speaker can manage communication and interaction between people with different cultural identities and languages, and he may also take another perspective, which allows him to bring different interpretations of reality into the interaction.

That is why it is important to realize that intercultural competence is much broader than foreign language communicative competence. Undoubtedly, the language, which acts as a bridge of mutual understanding and interaction between representatives of different lingual-ethnic communities, plays a huge role in the implementation of successful intercultural communication [117, p. 205].

There are many different definitions of intercultural competencies. UNESCO’s 2013 publication entitled *Intercultural Competencies: Conceptual and Operational Framework* examined some of the emerging themes within intercultural competencies literature from different regions of the world. Based on that publication, the definition of intercultural competencies was broadly defined as adequate knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required for interacting with others from different cultures [118, p.19].

D. Deardorff’s definition (2009) of intercultural competence, as the first research-based definition and framework for intercultural competence, can be used as

a starting point as this definition refers to behavioural outcomes, highlights agreed upon essential elements of intercultural competence, and captures some of the complexity of what constitutes intercultural competence. Her study defined intercultural competence as behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations as well as delineating agreed-upon aspects of such competence, i.e. specific intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes, and combines these with relational/interactional aspects, i.e the intention being to achieve one's goals to some degree and also allowing others to achieve their goals to some degree. The intercultural competence elements in this framework can be used to create more concrete learning outcomes within specific contexts [119, p.72].

The term “intercultural communicative competence” broadens the concept of “communicative competence” to include “intercultural competence”, where “inter” may refer to changes that affect how speakers interact as well as new knowledge that results from these changes. It may also refer to learning new cultural elements or values as well as re-evaluating ones that are already known. This process implies both self-awareness and others-awareness. Intercultural competence, which encompasses communication and a broader grasp of the world, is a word used to define the capacity to operate across cultures with awareness and comprehension of cultures on a general level.

According to K. Haburajova, “First study of intercultural communication has originated in the US in 1946 by establishing the Foreign Service Act by Foreign Service Institute, resident in Washington. It provides language and anthropological training for foreign diplomats. The courses prepare American diplomats and other professionals to develop their professional skills. It helps them to build their relations to other countries and cultures. Lastly it helps them to promote the capabilities of US foreign affair community” [120].

In the 1950s, the term intercultural emerged as a response to the need to increase dialogue and cooperation between members of different nations. “Intercultural communication” credit is often given to American anthropologist E. Hall, who used it for the first time in his book “The Silent Language” in 1959. He broadened the

anthropological viewpoint on culture, which included communication and defined culture as a communication process. Intercultural communication is considered as an interaction among people of different cultures. Moreover, the scientist pioneered the discovery of high- and low-context cultures [121, p.62].

The idea of preparing young people to live in a multicultural society is recognized as one of the fundamental goals of any educational institution in most documents of the United Nations, UNESCO, and Council of Europe. According to the Council of Europe (2018) “intercultural dialogue” may be defined as “an open exchange of views, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, between individuals or groups who perceive themselves as having different cultural affiliations from each other” [122, p. 31]. This entails an ability to accept cultural differences between our interlocutors and ourselves.

Intercultural communication is a process of mutual communication and interaction between representatives of different cultures. This is a kind of subject-subject interaction in which bearers of various cultures exchange information, experience, abilities, and skills [123, p. 273].

Thus, intercultural communication is the interaction of two or more people from different cultures. It should be viewed as a multifunctional phenomenon that includes knowledge of the norms and principles of communicative behaviour in another sociocultural environment, as well as the ability to interpret existing differences in the context of intercultural relations; the formation of specific qualities; and, finally, empathy and self-esteem capacity. It is education and, most importantly, language. At the same time, education is considered the foundation for strengthening social subjects’ ability to engage in intercultural interaction based on democratic, equal-rights, and equal-opportunity values.

Each culture is the combination of behaviours and beliefs shared by members of a group that distinguishes them from other groups, and thus one culture stands out when compared to another with distinct traditions. However, cultures are so diverse that to foreigners, each group appears to be a hierarchical chain of progressively smaller groups whose members are all too mindful of differences among themselves. Cultures

are hardly ever the focus of discussions about intercultural competencies since cultures exist solely in the people who develop and demonstrate them. As a result, members of cultural groups may better serve as the centre of attention.

Intercultural competence is the ability to understand other people's behaviour, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Being interculturally competent, which is one of the most in-demand abilities in the global market, helps to avoid misunderstandings and intercultural conflicts and enables efficient cooperation between people from different cultures.

The analysis of resources has revealed the growing interest of researchers in the given issue in the last two decades of the XXth century, which resulted in the development of numerous models of intercultural competence. E. Reid profoundly analyses them, describes various types of intercultural competence models in her study. According to E. Reid, the intercultural models can be divided into the following types: *casual path*, *compositional*, *co-orientational*, *adaptational*, and *developmental* [124, p.44]. On the grounds of E. Reid's study, we have created table 1 that presents characteristics of each type of intercultural communicative competence models and provides examples of models.

Table 1.

Types of intercultural communicative competence models

Type of a model	Characteristics	Example of a model
Casual path	They are represented as a theoretically linear system and tend to produce variables downstream, which are influenced by moderating and mediating variables, which in turn influence the variables at the upstream level.	<i>The Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence</i> by Arasaratnam (2005)
Compositional	These models identify competency components without establishing relationships between them. They provide a list of key features, attributes, and abilities that are considered as the beneficial for successful intercultural interactions.	Deardorff's (2009) <i>Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence</i>
Co-orientational	These models are concerned with conceptualizing the interactional achievement of intercultural understanding (perceptual accuracy, empathy, clarity, and overlap of meaning systems). They are focused primarily on communicative mutuality and shared meanings.	<i>Intercultural Competence Model</i> by Fantini (1995) <i>Intercultural Competence Model</i> by Byram (1997)

Continuation of Table 1.

Adaptational	Adaptation models either envision multiple interactants in the process, or emphasize the interdependence of multiple interactants by modelling the process of mutual adjustment.	<i>Attitude Acculturation Model</i> by Berry's (1998)
Developmental	Developmental models are concerned with the stages of progression or maturity in acquiring intercultural competence.	<i>Model of Intercultural Maturity</i> by King and Baxter Magolda (2005) the <i>U Curve Hypothesis Model</i> by Lysgaard's (1995), the extended <i>W Model of Acculturation and Re-acculturation</i> by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) the <i>Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity</i> (DMIS) by Bennett (1993)

M. Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence is perhaps the most significant model of intercultural competence in the field of foreign language teaching methodology. This framework consists of five components, which indicate to a set of skills, attitudes, and behaviours that intercultural speakers must develop in order to interact successfully with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the model is designed on a concept of language learning as a communicative, interactive, and meaningful activity (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Byram's model of intercultural communication competence [125]

	Skills interpret and relate (<i>savoir comprendre</i>)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (<i>savoirs</i>)	Education political education critical cultural awareness (<i>savoir s'engager</i>)	Attitudes relativizing self valuing other (<i>savoir être</i>)
	Skills discover and/or interact (<i>savoir apprendre/faire</i>)	

M. Byram combined intercultural competence with communicative competence to create intercultural communicative competence. He also extended the 'savoirs' from the initial four to five in the model of intercultural communicative competence for teaching and assessing. Although emerging from the discipline of languages, these concepts are applicable beyond that field:

1. Knowing ('Savoirs') – knowledge of aspects of culture, beliefs and reference points which are familiar to cultural natives;
2. Being or empathising ('Savoirtre') – understanding and dealing with cultural difference with curiosity, openness and without ethnocentrism;
3. Learning ('Savoir apprendre') – interpreting how others live, think, feel and communicate;
4. Understanding ('Savoir comprendre') – gaining insight into cultural meanings, beliefs and practices in comparison with one's own culture;
5. Engaging ('Savoir s'engager') – making informed critical evaluations of aspects of one's own and other cultures [125].

In adding the fifth 'savoir', M. Byram (1997) asserts that 'the inclusion in Intercultural Communicative Competence of savoir (s'engager/critical cultural awareness) as an educational aim for foreign language teaching is crucial [118, p.6].

Many academics believe that developing intercultural competence is a developmental process (L. Beamer, 1992; M. Bennett, 1986; M. Hammer, M. Bennett, & R. Wiseman, 2003). That is, people can learn things that contribute to intercultural competence with time, experiences, and conscious thought. Evidence also shows that collaborative learning promotes intercultural competency development (F. Helm, 2009; H. Zhang, 2012). [126].

L. Holubnycha, I. Kostikova, and T. Soroka et.al. distinguish two different approaches in the process of foreign language teaching. "The first approach is based on teaching country, regional studies, a discipline that is traditionally associated with the study of any foreign language, namely, history, literature, geography, economics, art, etc. of the target language country. The second approach is philological one; the main object is not a country, but the background knowledge of native speakers. These approaches differ in classes, as country, regional studies are not always associated with language learning or with it at all. It means that they can be presented in the native language to the audience, and may be available for people who do not learn a foreign language. As for the philological approach, it is possible only within the framework of

studying a foreign language, which serves as a source of information about the history and culture of a language country” [117, p. 207].

Many modern universities in Ukraine expand their campuses with overseas students in an effort to improve their students’ intercultural understanding, awareness, and abilities to function in this multilingual world. Student mobility, domestic internationalisation, and curriculum internationalisation are the three most important techniques for the development of intercultural competency. Learning about other cultures promotes avoiding negative preconceptions and individual prejudices regarding other groups, as well as contributing to better awareness of various views within the society in which we live. As we interact with others, cultural variety facilitates our ability to recognise and appreciate “ways of being” that are not always similar to our own, enabling us to build bridges for mutual trust, respect, and understanding. Furthermore, when people from other cultures provide language skills, innovative ideas, the latest knowledge, and unique experiences, this variety makes our country a more exciting place to live.

On a practical level, this suggests that undergraduates are required to be able to interpret and act simultaneously both inside and outside of a local environment. They must be competent to collaborate in a way that is sensitive to local culture while making moral and ethical decisions that are grounded on a thorough grasp of culture.

Since English has become an international lingua franca, its usage is no longer limited to interacting with people whose mother tongue is not English but is being used increasingly to communicate with people from many different cultures. Thus, the role of English as a foreign language in these circumstances is not only that of a collaborative communication platform; in these contexts, English works as a way of negotiating meaning across cultures as well as negotiating meaning between cultures. The specificity of intercultural competence development in Ukrainian universities is that teaching foreign languages is carried out outside the real language environment, far from the real native culture. Teachers of English are not native speakers, but they are the only communicators representing the target country's culture and language to students, and they acknowledge them with foreign customs, traditions, and beliefs.

In order to achieve the effectiveness of intercultural competence development, L. Holubnycha, I. Kostikova, and T. Soroka et al. point out the following components: 1) language and culture knowledge, competences, and skills; 2) sufficient background knowledge development about the country culture of a target language; and 3) the development of universal soft skills such as tolerance, a sense of responsibility for one's actions, the ability to empathise, understand, and accept a foreign culture, the ability and desire to understand the difference and unity of one's culture and the country culture of a target language, a sense of adequate and friendly perception of a foreign language and its realities. [117, p. 210].

Intercultural communication should become a compulsory discipline in future professionals' training rather than being as a component of foreign language teaching because foreign language teaching focuses mainly on the development of four basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Foreign languages teaching involves application of certain classroom activities that include an intercultural approach. Due to such activities as reading on social and cultural topics with further discussions and comparing foreign and native traditions and customs; listening to audio recordings and watching videos with accompanying assignments; role-playing, gaming, project work, and surveys, etc., the undergraduate students' outlook is expanding, and they begin to realise the existence of cultural differences and learn to respect them. A variety of similar activities are used for intercultural training: lectures, discussions, self-assessment instruments, case studies, simulation role-plays and videos, etc. As a result, it appears that teaching intercultural communicative competence is quite appropriate through English language teaching activities. Furthermore, since intercultural communicative competence education entails developing practical skills and attitudes, they cannot be formed by lectures alone, they must be developed through dialogues and interactive activities.

The interactive activities develop dialogic speech and promote interaction between interlocutors and their mutual understanding through the problem solving that is important to each student. These technologies also include information and communication technologies, project technologies, cooperative learning (working in

pairs or small groups), creating presentations, situational learning, language portfolio technologies, gaming activities, mind mapping, etc. The educational process has been significantly activated as a result of such technology and students' desire to get the required skills.

To sum up, intercultural communication competence is currently an urgent problem in English Language Teaching since undergraduate students are expected to communicate in English with representatives from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Developing intercultural communication ability involves resolving not just a language barrier but, more importantly, a cultural barrier. Intercultural competence is much broader than foreign language communicative competence. Undoubtedly, foreign languages (particularly English) act as bridges of mutual understanding and interaction between representatives of different lingual and ethnic communities and play a huge role in the implementation of successful intercultural communication. Although foreign languages teaching involves application of certain classroom activities that include an intercultural approach, intercultural communication should become a compulsory discipline in future professionals' training. The development of intercultural communicative competence is regarded as a component of English language teaching that can be acquired through application of various interactive activities and cooperative learning.