PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS
OF INTERCULTURAL STUDENT COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

Ludmila DARII

Universitatea de Stat din Moldova

The article presents some theoretical approaches and praxiological aspects regarding the development of intercultural competence and some psycho-pedagogical conditions for the development of intercultural competence of future engineer students.

Keywords: intercultural competence, multicultural community, intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, cultural pluralism, tolerance, professional ethics, development, socialization, etc.

CONDIŢII PSIHOPEDAGOGICE ALE DEZVOLTĂRII COMPETENŢEI INTERCULTURALE
LA STUDENŢI

În articol sunt prezentate unele abordări teoretice şi aspecte praxiologice privind dezvoltarea competenţei interculturale şi unele condiţii psihopedagogice ale dezvoltării competenţei interculturale la studenţi viitori ingineri.

Cuvinte-cheie: competenţă interculturală, comunitate multiculturală, dialog intercultural, diversitate culturală, pluralism cultural, toleranţă, etică profesională, dezvoltare, socilaizare etc.

Introduction

The integration of the Republic of Moldova into the world community, the expansion of international relations and the development of global information networks nowadays require professionals working in any sector of the national economy to respect the principle of international politeness and tolerance, which implies respect for other cultures and represents the partner state, as well as the willingness and ability to effectively interact in a multicultural environment. Departure from these rules may be detrimental to the deal; to political, economic and other ties and prestige.

Effective intercultural interaction contributes to successful intercultural adaptation of a person, which involves achieving social and psychological integration with another culture without losing its own wealth.

In the postmodern context, intercultural competence is necessary and timely for the citizen of the country, in Europe or elsewhere, since the globalization process is booming.

More or less aware of this phenomenon, contemporary youth is to be carefully guided in order to acquire extensive and functional knowledge of national and universal culture in the broadest sense of the word.

They will try multiple experiences of formative learning to acquire skills and, at the same time, to be able to form correct attitudes, to manifest openness and availability of communication and civilized interaction with every man on the planet, including the one next door, to can co-operate with him to solve common problems [1, p.8].

Theoretical approaches to the development of intercultural competence

Solving the problem of the formation, development and improvement of intercultural competence required an analysis of a number of studies in this area.

Questions of intercultural approaches in general and of communication culture in the ethnic sphere in particular are reflected in the works of native and foreign researchers: Bezede R., Cozma T., Cucoş C., Creţu C., Goraş-Postică V., Neculau A., Nedelcu A., Silistraru N., ituoitu L., Plugaru, L., Perregaux, Ch., Perotti, A., Rey, M., etc.

Many researchers ambiguously interpret the concept of intercultural competence. Multiculturalism is a reality of the existence at the same time and in space horizon of groups of individuals coming from or referring to several cultures that assert their specific notes in isolation, avoiding, as a rule, contamination. Multiculturalism and pluriculturalism are having a predominant static dimension; In a multicultural approach, interactions are not excluded, but they are not implicit in the concept [2, p.153].

This explains why multiculturalism, which considers enough juxtaposition of cultures, leaves free racial practices like apartheid.

Interculturality is conceived as a concept with a wider content than the ones previously presented, thanks to the inter prefix which refers to "interaction, exchange, openness, reciprocity, solidarity" [ibidem, p.152].

The same author defines the term culture: "the recognition of values, life styles, symbolic representations to which human beings, individuals or societies relate in their interaction with each other and in the understanding of the world, the recognition of their importance, the recognition of interactions that interact simultaneously registers of the same culture and between different cultures in time and space ".

Interculturation is explained by Denoux as follows: "For individuals and groups of two or more cultural ensembles, claiming from or referring to different cultures, we call intercultural the processes through which, in the interactions they develop, it is committed, implicitly or explicitly, the cultural difference they tend to metabolize. " Thus, the intercultural concept has a dynamic interactional connotation; it leads to exchange, reciprocity, invites to decentralization, to find some forms of dialogue [3].

Intercultural describes what occurs when members of two or more different cultural groups (of whatever size, at whatever level) interact or influence one another in some fashion, whether in person or through various mediated forms. Included in a broad definition of the term would be international political or economic interactions, when members from two or countries interact or influence one another in some fashion.

A further complication: no human belongs to only a single culture – everyone has multiple identities, multiple cultural affiliations, whether or not everyone else is aware of all the shadow selves standing behind the self relevant to, and thus made visible in, any specific interaction. While multiple selves each play significant roles in different contexts or at different stages of life, they may also exist simultaneously.

An extended family, neighbors in the same apartment complex, work colleagues, people who play a particular sport, pursue a particular hobby, practice a particular religion, or those whose parents came from the same geographic location: all these clusters develop into subcultures or co-cultures that is, they all have their own ways of being in the world, their own expectations, traditions, and goals [4, p.11-12].

So even what appears to be intracultural communication (that is, communication between members of the same cultural group) frequently requires substantial intercultural competences of participants.

Enrolling in the area of civic competences, along with personal and interpersonal relationships, intercultural competence includes all forms of behavior that enable each person to effectively partake in social and professional life, being directly linked to individual and collective welfare.

These competences are aimed at democratic citizenship, the use of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to promote inclusiveness, justice and sustainable development, respecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As stated in the recent normative acts, the person must:
- actively cope with the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the Moldovan society, in order to report constructively and positively to this diversity;
- show respect for their and others' rights, regardless of their ethnicity, language, culture, religion, gender, age or social status;
- respect the social and cultural beliefs of others, rejecting any kind of intolerance, extremism and racism;
- demonstrate responsibility for oneself and others, for society and the environment;
- exercise in an effective and responsible manner their own rights, respecting the rights of others;
- appreciate diversity; demonstrate tolerance and inclusive attitude; (respect for personal dignity, the fight against prejudice and discrimination of any kind, against poverty and marginalization, the promotion of gender equality, etc.) [5].

Intercultural competence includes the following structural components:

1. Knowledge, as a fundamental part of competence, includes: general culture; socio-cultural knowledge; intercultural awareness.

2. Skills and manners are materialized in: social, intercultural practical skills.

3. Existential competences consist of: attitudes (position in relation to cultural differences), motivations (desire and need to communicate); values (ethics and morals), beliefs, cognitive styles, personality traits.

4. Learning capacity manifests itself in learning skills and heuristic / discovery skills (processing and understanding of information, etc.)

5. Communication skills consist of: linguistic skills; sociolinguistics; and pragmatic competence, which is manifested in discursive and functional competence (the two qualitative factors that determine functional success are: fluency and precision) [6].

Analysis of the specialized literature allows identifying indicators of cultural diversity in the professional sphere of a multicultural environment, which include: individualism, collectivism, interpersonal and group relationships in the professional environment, ethical and professional codes based on the philosophy of the company, principles, values, standards of conduct, business (corporate a) culture, gender, high (low) level of uncertainty avoidance, etc. [6].

In this article, under the intercultural competence, we understand:
- on sociocultural and psychological side, personality traits, expressed in the totality of objective repre-sentations and knowledge about a particular ethnic culture, realized through skills, skills and behavioral patterns that promote effective intercultural understanding and interaction;
- on professional side, as one of the basic general professional competencies that ensure professional mobility, competitiveness and social security of a specialist.

Thus, we can conclude that intercultural competence has both external (as a social phenomenon, consists in stabilizing inter-ethnic relations and taking into account ethnic characteristics, interests of the people, in striving for intercultural dialogue); and internal orientation (national, linguistic, religious, racial identity, personal conscious motivation for effective intercultural interaction).

The analysis of various approaches for determining the criteria of intercultural competence allows us to identify the main levels of development of this competence in:

a) the sociocultural and psychological areas: high, medium and low levels;

b) professional field: primary, functional and professional.

One of the intercultural competence indicators of the development is the positive dynamics of qualitative personality changes.

Universities have an important role to play in developing this competence. Doing so can help equip graduates for living and working in the 21st century. The development of students' intercultural competence does not start from scratch. They come to the university already with a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language and possess, to varying degrees, intercultural competence, formed as a result of targeted schooling and the whole process of socialization.

Analysis and data processing

In order to confirm the relevance of the topic, we have studied: the structure, components of intercultural competence, the specific features of its manifestation in the professional sphere of a multicultural environment, as well as a number of techniques developed by national and foreign authors aimed at the study of intercultural competence.

In this article, we propose to consider some of the results of our experiment. We used five types of adapted questionnaires:
- to determine the level of development of general intercultural competence, presented in the form of a test with a choice of answer;
- to determine the level of development of intercultural competence in the professional sphere, presented in the form of a test with a choice of answer;
- to identify barriers in the intercultural interaction of students of academic groups in a social partnership;
- to identify barriers among students who received the first experience of intercultural contacts, as a result of interactions with representatives of other cultures in different territories under the project mobilitatea academică.
- to identify difficulties for information technology professionals practicing from 1 to 3 years in a professional multicultural environment

The respondents of the pedagogical experiment were students of the Faculty of Physics and Engineering at Moldova State University, studying the specialty information technologies, in the amount of 100 people, of them: 87 third-year full-time students of 2018 and 2019 years of study (age: 22-25 years old); as well as 23 students of the fourth year of 2018 part-time students (the average age of respondents is 23 years old).

That even in cases when students demonstrate a relatively high level of linguistic component; have a normal and high communication skills, their existing level of intercultural competence is clearly insufficient for effective intercultural interaction.

As discussed above, intercultural competence is a complex of knowledge, skills and personal qualities necessary for the implementation of effective intercultural interaction in a multicultural environment, based on the preservation of their own cultural identity.

Thus, intercultural competence as an objective-subjective phenomenon is manifested in the readiness and ability of an individual to demonstrate these aspects.

Within this article, we will give examples of some results of a survey of students demonstrating the level of intercultural competence:

- knowledge, understanding of the ethnocultural traditions of its people 90,0%;
- observance and maintenance of the ethnocultural traditions of their people 75,0%;
- possession of ethnospecific abilities and skills of their people 65,0%;
- knowledge and understanding of the values, attitudes, characteristics characteristic of a particular ethnic culture and their representatives 32,0%;
- readiness and ability to study various ethnocultures in order to establish a comfortable existence in a multi-ethnic environment, to overcome the narrow horizons, to comprehend the mutual influence of cultures 77,0%;
- readiness and ability to search for information, acquire knowledge about ethnic cultures, using various databases, differentiate them from the point of view of significance and reliability, apply them to solve problems in the field of inter-ethnic understanding and interaction 77,0%;
- willingness and ability to comprehend social and related ethnocultural processes, by analyzing and systematizing knowledge about ethnic cultures, finding and recognizing in them common and different (specific) 68,0%;
- readiness and ability to engage in interethnic interaction in the form of active and coordinated cooperation 77,0%;
- willingness and ability to demonstrate patterns of behavior, apply mechanisms, techniques and strategies that promote effective inter-ethnic understanding and interaction 51,0%;
- willingness and ability, regardless of ethnicity, to come to constructive cooperation and dialogue with colleagues, employees of the administration, technical staff, business partners and customers 55,0%;
- readiness and ability of an individual to maintain an atmosphere of favorable psychological climate in a multicultural environment 55,0%;
- knowledge and understanding of the consequences of intercultural contacts 42,0%;
- readiness and ability to effectively use the mechanisms, techniques and strategies necessary to ensure the effectiveness of intercultural adaptation 35,0%;
- knowledge and understanding of international legal documents in the field of interethnic relations 48,0%;
- willingness and ability to overcome ethnocentrism, ethnic, racial and confessional prejudice, intolerance in communication and behavior 72,0%;
- readiness and ability to determine the objective ethnocultural characteristics of the participants of intercultural interaction (not to transfer the shortcomings and negative actions of some representatives of the nationality to specific people) 63,0%;
- willingness and ability to self (foster) mutual ethnic tolerance and respect for ethno-cultural pluralism and correct their own behavior and attitudes 55,0%;
- 82,0% native, 95,0% state and international (foreign) languages skills for effective communication 62,0%, etc;
- readiness and ability to observe a complex combination of national traditions, customs and rules of generally accepted international etiquette 62,0%;
- willingness and ability to show tolerance in cases of a significant influx of migrants into the country 72,0%, in the academic group 77,0% and / or in the workforce 55,0%;
- readiness and ability to analyze conflict situations that have arisen on a national basis and be able to resolve them 35,0%;
- the readiness and ability of the individual to communicate with representatives of different countries, different political views, religious beliefs and rituals, national traditions and psychology, lifestyles and culture (this aspect requires not only knowledge of foreign languages, but also a high level of speech development the process of communication is free to transmit and perceive information; understanding

non-verbal language of communication, the ability to come into contact with people, taking into account their age, socio-cultural, social role out and status characteristics) 47%;
- readiness and ability to make decisions and perform professional tasks in the context of a multicultural environment 45%;
- readiness and ability of an individual to demonstrate openness, loyalty, responsibility when interacting with partners in a multicultural environment 75%.

It should be noted that earlier cultural differences more often acted as a barrier to joint activities, but today, competent managers turn this specificity into a source of additional resources, for example, they increase the competitiveness of their organization. On the other hand, ignorance of cultural specificity can be the cause of conflicts and problems.

According to the results of the study, a number of reasons for the occurrence of barriers in the intercultural interaction of students of academic groups in a social partnership having a number of reasons: 8% for religious students, 4% for religious groups, and 4% for social groups; insufficient level of proficiency in an international foreign language – 62%; psychological aspects: isolation – 49%, self-doubt – 40%; shyness – 30%; insufficient self-control behavior and volitional self-regulation of the state – 67%; dependence on external circumstances and assessments – 60%, etc.

In order to identify topical problems arising in the process of intercultural communication, a conversation and questioning was conducted. 6 students received their first experience of intercultural contacts, as a result of interactions with representatives of other cultures from different territories according to the academic mobility project [7].

The questionnaire contained ten questions with a set of ready-made answers: on the causes of the psychological difficulties experienced; on specific barriers arising in the framework of intercultural interaction.

Here are just some examples of answers from 6 students who indicated difficulties:
- linguistic and semantic nature, the presence of dialects, slang (66,6%);
- non-verbal communication in the intercultural environment: due to the peculiarities of paralinguistic characteristics; body language, gestures, etc. (66,6%);
- difficulties in adopting other behaviors and personal characteristics of partners (33,3%);
- psychological stress and fatigue, not controlled by a person (83,3%);
- lack of immersion experience in another academic cultural environment (66,6%);
- stereotyping in the process of intercultural contacts (83,3%);
- collision with a different worldview, attitude etc. (50%).

During the conversation, 12 young information technology professionals practicing from 2 to 5 years in a multicultural environment noted that socio-psychological unpreparedness, inability to be effective in intercultural interaction causes serious damage to professional activity, and pointed out the following difficulties:
- wrong attitudes, stereotyping 34,2%;
- information discrepancy between the positions of subjects of interaction 66,8%;
- non-coincidence of norms, values, and peculiarities of colleagues' worldview 44,6%,

As a result of surveys, a frequency of a number of motivational, intellectual, psychological, emotional, socio-cultural barriers is observed.

Thus, we can identify a number of factors affecting the effectiveness of intercultural interaction: cultural, social and psychological.

Proceeding from the above, it becomes necessary to resolve the following objectively existing contradictions between the urgent need to train future engineers for effective interaction in the professional sphere of the multicultural environment and existing training practices that do not fully provide such training.

Practical approaches to the development of intercultural competence

In order to master the intercultural competence of a modern specialist, who is inclined to enter the multicultural business space, it is necessary to have an idea of the main theories of intercultural interaction explaining the difference in behavior, lifestyle, business (corporate) cultures of different national communities etc.

Development of the students' intercultural competencies in student engineering specialty in the subject "Professional ethics", in the field of educational processes, includes organic theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural interactions; effective didactic tools were applied, taking into account the general cultural training of students and their individual assistance; compliance with the psychological and pedagogical

conditions that ensure the implementation of the educational process, focused on the development of students' intellectual competence.

Modern approaches and methods of forming professional competencies in the modern context are considered in a number of works by domestic scientists: Dandara O., Goraş-Postică V., Guţu Vl., Lîsenco S., Slifos L., etc.

The concept of the development of students' integrational competence is based on the following methodological approaches: ethno-pedagogical, axiological, humanistic approaches; and principles: a positive attitude to multicultural diversity, cultural conformity, continuity and consistency of studying cultures, interdisciplinarity and variability, multilingualism, completeness of the impact at the cognitive, emotional and behavioral levels [8].

A prerequisite for the effectiveness of the educational process is to rely on the knowledge, skills, abilities and internal logic of a person's development, his own strength. A person is considered as a product of socio-historical development and a carrier of a certain culture, however, it recognizes the uniqueness of each person, his freedom, the right to respect.

Within the subject "Professional ethics", the module "Intercultural interaction in the professional sphere" was proposed, designed for 8 auditorial hours of direct contact and 32 hours for performing independent extracurricular work, as well as aspects related to intercultural interaction in a professional environment. We have proposed the following topics for discussion: Basics, factors and manifestations of intercultural interaction; Polycultural business space; The specifics of the business (corporate) culture of representatives of various national communities; Self-development and improvement of intercultural competence, etc.

Themes, content and didactic material were developed taking into account the individual and age characteristics of students, the level of their general cultural and vocational training, motivation and interests regarding this subject.

The basic resources of intercultural education are:
- own cultural experience (opportunities are created to present and know others, the experiences of trained people are used, as the objective is to create emotional support for each);
- the use of known concepts (updating the previously learned ones, carrying out the transfer, reporting of known concepts to new situations);
- exploiting extra muros situations (positive attitude towards all the circumstances in which intercultural competence can be manifested or lack thereof: trips, excursions, visits, etc.), an immediate response to conflicts, using them for education;
- students' interests (real learning opportunities, flexible teaching structures with highly sensitive teaching staff to cultural diversity, observation and responsiveness to promote values associated with ethnic diversity, new and challenging experiences);
- Written or oral documents (historical, religious, philosophical, literary, etc. of different cultures, understanding different cultures and, therefore, the model of the world in which different people live, students being able to relate their personal experience);
- games and sports (they are considered to be important means of socializing in all cultures, involve the collaboration of educational actors, involve standards, cultivate attitudes and values) [9].

In the learning process, we have organized special forms of interaction, which include the student in the position of the active subject study activities with the use of interactive methodological trainings:

a) students have acquired necessary knowledge and skills, in which they have actively participated in lectures, seminars, training, mini-conferences and other social events;

(b) students have acquired knowledge and experience in family relationships, in labor relations, mediating interactions with collegues, in relations with other social institutions, such as mass media, etc.)

Conclusions

According to the aggregate indicator, at the final stage it was established:

a) in the sociocultural and psychological field: 60% of the students surveyed have an average level of intercultural competence (initially 70%); 8% low (14%), and finally 32% high (16%);

b) in the professional field: 36% of students showed a professional level of development of intercultural competence (initially – 8,0%), 58% – the functional level (62,0%), 6,0% – the primary level (30,0%).

The obtained results showed a positive dynamics in the development of students' intercultural competence, fact which indicates the effectiveness of the proposed module, within the framework of the academic subject "Professional Ethics".

During the experiment, evidence was obtained that the use of the complex of didactic tools developed by us entails the interconnected development of various components of multicultural competence, which leads to its overall growth.

The didactic materials developed by us can be applied by other faculties in order to develop students' intercultural competence.

Our findings do not pretend to an exhaustive solution to all problems associated with the development of such a complex integrative personality characteristics as intercultural competence.

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Date despre autor:
Ludmila DARII, doctor în pedagogie, conferenţiar universitar, Facultatea de Psihologie, Ştiinţe ale Educaţiei, Sociologie şi Asistenţă Socială, Universitatea de Stat din Moldova.
E-mail: ldarii@mail.ru

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