

# Developing Students' Intercultural Competence at the Tertiary Level

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**Abstract:** The paper provides developing students' intercultural competence as an actual world problem. As a key role in this process belongs to higher education, the mentioned phenomenon is considered at English classes. The goal of the paper is to allocate the stages of developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic higher education. The study describes the authors' positive experience of developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic students at universities. During more than 15 years the authors have been observing nearly 2000 students. The methods of observation, analysis have been applied as well as the selection of the most successful ones to develop intercultural competence. The methodology and results of the work are the authors' own contribution. As a result, four stages of the process of developing students' intercultural competence are highlighted. They are based on the curriculum material logic mastering professional English. They are increasing motivation; acquiring subject-professional and cultural-specific knowledge; developing different intercultural competence skills; as well as developing some skills of independent usage in solving complex issues. The conclusion is drawn that intercultural competence facilitates the strengthening interdisciplinary relations, ensuring steady students' interest in overcoming foreign language barriers, need awareness in professional activities, tolerant attitude towards representatives of another foreign languages and cultures.

**Keywords:** *Intercultural competence; the English language; student; target culture; native culture.*

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## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Intercultural competence as a necessary requirement for international students*

Nowadays the world is facing new challenges related to mutual understanding, cooperation, and agreement in the context of globalization. A new generation of young people, who will live, work and develop our future, are supposed to take part in the implementation of the mentioned values for understanding the educational reality. So, while creating our future world, we should inculcate certain values to young people from the first steps of educational influence to make the effects of globalization positive.

Among students' different competences in the context of tertiary education intercultural competence is one of multimodal. It helps students to become more knowledgeable and flexible towards other cultures all over the world. It helps to develop students' positive attributes of flexibility, curiosity, openness and acceptance of diversity. It shows the international relevance of the obtained competence, so the results and findings should be applicable for tertiary education in a global arena. Intercultural competence is important for students because they see themselves working in international environments, know and understand different cultural boundaries, navigate well among different cultures, knowing which values and behavior patterns will assist them in their future international workplaces.

One of the objectives of higher education systems is to train a highly qualified international professional, who will be adapted for common labour market despite the deconstruction of values. Such a professional has to be provided with intercultural competence, which is essential in multicultural, multiethnic and polylinguistic environment as a kind of cultural matrix, and, no doubt, it will facilitate in solving common world objectives.

Intercultural competence is important as teaching students becomes more and more international as “an immediate consequence of the recent European integration and as a general consequence of the broader phenomenon of globalization” (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 22). No doubt, “in times of overwhelming globalization, fostering intercultural competence has become one of the most important missions of higher education institutions across the world” (Sain, Kužnin, & Roje, 2017, p. 55).

Moreover, the European Council has put forward and supports actively the concept of European education that is based on the idea of “common European home”. Its theory is found on the fact that Europe is a community with common origins and spiritual values. Accordingly, the

European outlook is based on the knowledge of European heritage, common historical path for two millennia including language, culture and ethics in the context of globalization.

The reality of modern globalized world is that more and more young people tend to take advantage of intercultural competence in various international educational programmes, employment or study prospects, which in most cases require profound knowledge of a foreign language. The language proficiency is recognized to be the original instrument for this purpose.

### ***1.2. The importance of developing intercultural competence while English teaching***

Considerable changes have occurred in the foreign languages teaching aim. The problem of developing intercultural competence while English teaching is very urgent especially in terms of higher education. It reflects the researchers' growing interest towards various aspects of it.

Now it is not just the transmission of the linguistic knowledge and skills, and even assimilation of encyclopaedic region knowledge for geographic and historical comprehension. Actually, that is developing students' skills to participate in international communication, what should become the central idea of foreign languages training.

However, as for foreign languages training it is considered that not only a communicative competence has to be developed by language teachers. Intercultural competence should be developed as well. In fact, it is very important nowadays, because a diverse mix of peoples, languages, cultures has reached unprecedented level, and as usual we have faced the problem of patience education to other culture, awakening interest and respect for them, overcoming a feeling of irritation of excess, deficiency or otherness of other cultures.

### ***1.3. Complexity of developing intercultural competence***

There are different thoughts about the empirical, ideological and methodological dimensions of the globalization, pluralization, localization of English. That is what has caused the overall emphasis on intercultural communication. "In the current world, in which everything goes global, intercultural communication is a "must"... In the context of the recent European integration, we are no longer constrained by state boundaries and thus we have become part of an international network." (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 23).

So, developing intercultural competence is of vital importance, as it will help to achieve mutual understanding in the communication process with representatives of different cultures.

Thus, there is no doubt that the idea of the need of intercultural competence development is extremely vital, as learning to communicate in a foreign language involves mastering some socio-cultural knowledge and skills, which are inalienable parts of practical foreign language proficiency.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### ***2.1. Intercultural competence in the academic practice***

Various aspects of intercultural competence have been explored in the scope of scholars' scientific research all over the world: in Australia (Zou, & Shek-Noble, 2014); Romania (Ciolăneanu, 2007; Chipper, 2013); Spain (Keshabyan-Ivanova, 2016); Croatia (Sain et al, 2017); Latvia (Luka, 2007); Poland (Sobkowiak, 2015); Ukraine (Aleksandrova, 2016); Georgia (Malazonia et al, 2017).

The nature and structure of intercultural competence have been highlighted by M. Byram (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey 2002), S. Leiba-O'Sullivan (Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999), and others. The problem of tolerance within intercultural communication was regarded by D. Buttjes (Buttjes, 1990; Buttjes & Byram, 1991), R. Clouet (Clouet, 2006), G. Hofstede (Hofstede, 2001), C. Kramersch (Kramersch, 1993), J. Shirley (Shirley, 2016) and others. Some aspects of the methodology of developing intercultural competence are reflected in the works of W. Gudykunst (Gudykunst, 2003), M. Warschauer (Warschauer, 1996).

However, clear stages to develop students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic specialties at higher education while teaching professional English has not been researched yet. The problem still is not considered as comprehensive. The necessity of developing students' intercultural competence and the lack of stages description in non-linguistic higher education determine the relevance of the stated paper.

Since we have been highly interested in the problems of developing different competences for a long time we have conducted different investigations in this field (Holubnycha, 2016; Kostikova et al, 2019). The original contribution lies in clarified and detailed stages description of intercultural competence that appeared due to more than 15 years of authors' experience, so we have filled the gaps in existing researches. In this study we shift the focus to the stages of developing intercultural competence for non-linguistic students at university English classes, so it is an added

advantage to the previous researches. Moreover, we have distinguished developing intercultural competence observing nearly 2000 students.

## ***2.2. The purpose of the research***

The purpose of the paper is to allocate the stages of developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic higher education. It was observed by the authors during the experience of teaching English in Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs, H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University at Law Faculty, more than fifteen years.

## **3. Methods**

### ***3.1. Research methodology***

In line with goal of the paper, the following methods of the study have been used:

1) Analysis and synthesis of pedagogical, psychological and linguistic literature on the research subject. They were used for the contemplation of theoretical ground of developing intercultural competence, namely: clearing up its definition, identification of its components which are necessary for developing the named phenomena, detection of the grounds that would help in the stated process.

2) Studying and generalizing pedagogical experience in teaching English with the aim to develop intercultural competence. They were used for the systematization of positive practice and ***adoption of effective solutions*** of developing students' intercultural competence at English classes in different universities.

3) Analysis of teaching and learning kits about the English language. They were used for developing the authors' structure of developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic higher education.

### ***3.2. Research participants and procedure***

This study describes the authors' methods of positive experience of developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic universities. During more than 15 years the authors have been observing nearly 2000 students of deferent universities (Ukraine). The authors have been researching the structure of developing intercultural competence with those students at English lessons. Therefore, the methods of observation, analysis have been applied in our classes, and selection of the most successful ones,

which really helped to develop intercultural competence, have also been used.

## 4. Results

### *4.1. Intercultural Competence: from Theory to Practice*

Analyzing the problem we consider it is necessary to recall that scientists define intercultural competence as an ability to adequate mutual understanding of two communicants who belong to different national cultures. W. Gudykunst, researching the notion of intercultural competence, allocates such its components as “knowledge, motivation and the ability to communicate adequately and effectively with representatives of other cultures” (Gudykunst, 2003).

Intercultural competence is quite a complex concept defined as the learners' ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality. (Byram et al, 2002). Intercultural competence is “about understanding and interacting with people belonging to different cultures” (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 24).

In order to interact effectively representatives of different cultures have to learn to overcome the lack of understanding, and to develop intercultural competence. Analysis of scientific and methodical literature on the problem along with our personal experience allowed us to develop a structure of methods of developing intercultural competence, which consists of some stages. We offer four stages based on the grounds, such as ensuring students' positive motivation to master intercultural competence; individual-oriented approach to the developing the stated phenomena; possession of intercultural competence by foreign languages teachers.

Intercultural competence components are knowledge, skills and attitudes, complemented by the values one holds because of one's belonging to a number of social groups. These values are part of one's social identities (Byram et al, 2002). Following M. Byram in defining intercultural competence components, an “intercultural speaker” (Byram, 1997) is open to other cultures, accepts the others and is ready and curious to discover other people's set of values and beliefs, he has the ability to look at themselves from an outsider's perspective, an ability which is called “to decentre”.

Intercultural competence has become “one of the most desirable sets of competences for those who would like to see themselves working in international environments. Students need to be aware of cultural

boundaries, and the role of instructors in this process is crucial: to provide cultural information is not enough anymore and they need to guide their students' learning so that learners can competently navigate the L2 culture, knowing which values and behavior patterns of the target culture will assist them in their future workplaces" (Sain et al, 2017, p. 55).

Personal experiences on a daily basis and study of the scientific achievements of researchers have shown that the developing students' intercultural competence for non-linguistic higher education at foreign language classes should be implemented progressively. We agree that "foreign language teaching is seen as going beyond linguistic performance and verbal communication by also comprising intercultural abilities and skills." (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 23). Therefore, based on the logic of the program material mastering English, we have singled out four stages of the mentioned process.

#### ***4.2. The first stage***

We determined the aim of the first stage as the importance of motivation of students' intercultural competence. It should be noted that in our study we examine those motivation aspects which are related to the successful developing intercultural competence.

It is known that the motivational component is characterized by the system of dominant motifs which express a conscious students' attitude to the purpose and process of obtaining knowledge for their own professional development. The higher is the motivation, the more likely is the possibility of practical application of knowledge and skills acquired during the training.

Under these ideas the proposed structure of developing intercultural competence should motivate students to mastering actively on cultural knowledge and to answer the question "Why should I study the culture of a partner's country, what is its professional significance for me?" This approach facilitates to developing and strengthening a cognitive motive. No doubt, "language is the essential component of intercultural education through which awareness is raised and various cultural and linguistic values are conveyed." (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 23)

On the one hand, students are interested in the subject, on the other hand, in the method of obtaining knowledge, including independent forms of learning activities, which often become creative and experimental in nature. The goal of developing intercultural competence can be realized when students recognize functional significance of intercultural knowledge, the real possibility of applying the acquired information in professional activity. Therefore, first of all, we seek to form a stable motivation in parallel

study of a foreign language and culture in order to create positive attitudes in the process of mastering intercultural competence.

Our experience has shown that in order to interest the students the teachers should pick up the relevant material, containing the intercultural problem. It may be authentic texts, in which the examples of issues, arising in the professional work, are given (Simonok, 2011).

We believe, students ought to understand that those problems arose as a result of ignorance of the national-cultural partners' characteristics. Another example may be misunderstandings and even rupture of important business, meetings, and contracts. Practicing teachers know that such texts with intercultural problems, unfortunately, are rarely found in textbooks and manuals; they should be searched and selected in special sources. For this purpose the teachers can use professionally meaningful situations – case studies – to cause a problem, cases which can be solved from within students themselves (Holubnycha, 2016).

Some practitioners advise to acquaint students with conceptual apparatus of the researched phenomena. Totally agreeing with the scholar, we suppose that it is worth working on theoretical aspects in parallel with developing positive motivation. So, we consider it to be important to introduce and explain students the notions “intercultural competence”, “intercultural communication”, their structure (key components), and functions.

If the information is correctly selected students come to realize the concept “intercultural competence” and its role in professional work. This knowledge fosters the development of a desire to learn a partner's language and culture. There is a wish to overcome the foreign language barrier, to avoid mistakes of intercultural character. In this way, students' positive motivation for mastering intercultural competence is ensured, which is one of the ground in the process of its development.

#### ***4.3. The second stage***

Researchers have noted that besides knowledge of a foreign language system, intercultural competence involves the own culture and culture of other nation expertise, ability to perceive and interpret the phenomena of other culture from the point of view of its representatives, to understand and perceive other value system, to communicate with native speakers depending on a situation, norms, code of conduct customs and cultural traditions in comparison with the mother tongue and culture.

So, the purpose of the second stage of developing intercultural competence is to acquire subject-professional and cultural-specific

knowledge, to get acquaintance with national communication styles and their characteristics. It is important also to form students' strategic and comparative skills as ability to compare adequately our own culture with a communicative partner's culture as a vital necessity for professional relations in the multinational world.

Thus, at this stage, the main means of developing intercultural competence are authentic materials (printed, audio-, and video-), demonstrating those specialties, the feasibility of which was substantiated by many scientists.

Appropriately by the authentic task they mean the tasks based on highly relevant material for discussion in a particular students' group (Warschauer, 1996). In most cases contemporary social and cultural problems can be discussed. Through this discussion and comparison of participants' opinions in the group, students come to a better understanding of not only interlocutor's culture, but also of themselves and their identity.

Unfortunately, it is known that in some kits for training students of non-linguistic higher education only some of professional communication features and behaviour standards in different countries, linguistic clichés and appeal formulas, greetings, etc., serve as a separate unit as social English, but does not reproduce the full picture of partner's background and cultural orientation what causes cultural shock during the conversation regardless of the language proficiency level.

In order to overcome or prevent cultural shock in their future work students in the training process will need to acquire certain skills. According to G. Hofstede, they are the following: ability to show respect for negotiating partners; ability not to condemn; ability to understand the subjectivity of their own knowledge, ideas and perceptions of the situation; ability to express sympathy and understanding; ability to be flexible in negotiation; tolerance in situations of problems and uncertainty (Hofstede, 2001).

It should be noted that original foreign language teaching aids have greater potential and diversity of authentic text and illustrative material. Therefore, teachers often use such study guides of British publishing houses as Oxford, Cambridge, Longman and others in training students at universities.

However, the problem is that university instructors do not have the opportunity (it depends on different conditions) to work with such textbooks at the same time, therefore sometimes we have to create authors' manuals for both work with students of our (legal) specialties during classes

and their self-training. The manuals mostly are based on the authentic texts (Simonok, 2011).

As we have noted earlier one more important phase in the process of developing intercultural competence is that much attention should be paid to the comparative aspect, the discovery of language and intercultural similarities and differences, and the dialogue of cultures based on the comparability principle.

According to C. Kramersch (1993) we have to establish a “sphere of interculturality (between the target culture and the native culture)” and teach culture as distinctions. It is known that scientists researched parameters of cultural differences in modern societies.

For example, G. Hofstede highlighted the following parameters: “degree of authority in the company by different officials; emotional characteristics (male/female) of representatives’ behaviour of different societies, regardless of gender; the programmed line by the society of staff behaviour in critical and uncertain situations of communication and negotiation conduct; attitude to doing business within the concepts of “collectivism – individualism” both in decision-making and in the expression of personal initiative; the mood of employees for short-term or long-term results of both their own professional activities and the results of cooperation with foreign partners” (Hofstede, 2001).

The application of comparative technologies is important as they allow a critical understanding of the different culture phenomena, developing cultural awareness and replenish cultural experience. This approach involves a system of challenges for comparing two cultures, comparing and analyzing various processes occurring in two societies.

By doing so, students not only get acquainted with lifestyle fragments of another country representatives, but also are forced to use cultural phenomena for comparative analysis. It allows them to understand their own culture deeper, to come up with an adequate assessment of the target culture phenomena, leaving them the right to be different from phenomena in their home culture.

As the cultural space, within which students make the comparison, is reduced to a conceptual system of native speakers reflecting the national historical experience of the people, it is advisable to speak about the comparison of non-social systems, but business etiquette, customs, traditions, holidays, business rules and so on.

#### ***4.4. The third stage***

The purpose of the third stage is to develop skills of the intercultural competence and to master the mechanisms of language behaviour through the system of creative tasks. Therefore, the achieving this goal led to the development of training exercises for the purpose of working out language patterns.

It should be noted that, on the one hand, such a system should take into account the selection of required exercises that meet the development of skills using intercultural material, as well as a certain sequence of these exercises, their stable implementation in all types of speech activity. On the other hand, the exercises with the national and cultural background should correspond to the methodological criteria, namely: communicative, student oriented, linguistic, speaking, oral and written.

In the process of developing intercultural competence this is done through learning a foreign language. It is essential to note such its aspect as stereotyped formulas of speech etiquette, since it is the speech etiquette that is an integral part of any people culture. It is a decisive element of respect expression for a communicative partner as well. The linguistic etiquette was deposited in the language, speech behaviour, constant formulas, and communication stereotypes. A person's linguistic etiquette is the level of manifestation of his/her culture. Therefore, the development of English speech etiquette should be a high priority among the target components in the structure of foreign language classes. Moreover, the formation of foreign speech etiquette should be provided *in an environment* which *resembles reality*.

Certainly, the most important feature of professional behavior of business people, their ability to communicate is business etiquette; the main rule is to respect a human being. The behaviour culture in business communication is based on verbal etiquette rules. It is linked inextricably with linguistic culture.

In turn, the language etiquette rules by their nature are country-specific national and are an integral part of the target country's culture, its specifics, and the reflection of the national communication mode. They are implemented in a system of stable formulas and expressed in the society accepted situations of the "polite" contact of communication subjects. Unfortunately, this aspect of professional behaviour is not reflected in any textbook, so, we consider it to be necessary to develop teaching methods for training typical forms of linguistic behaviour.

#### ***4.5. The fourth stage***

The fourth stage of developing intercultural competence provides for the mastering skills of the independent usage of intercultural knowledge in solving complex issues. At this stage we usually apply exercises that make students to compile their expressions completely independently both in the content and means. Some exercises involve the forming skills for self-interpretation of intercultural phenomena, commenting and solving intercultural issues in communicative situations.

Unfortunately, some programs of modern universities do not give students of non-linguistic specialties the opportunity to devote much attention to develop intercultural competence. However, in the course of our practice, we found the most appropriate methods that will help in intercultural training. We have to note that some of them were proposed for the same purpose by different researchers. For example, some methods were presented by J. Shirley (Shirley, 2016).

They are the following: 1) cultural assimilator – familiarizing students with the real situations of doing business with foreign partners and multi-dimensional analysis for the learned cultures situations, which can be problematic, included conflict due to cultural differences; 2) method of contrasts – acquaint students with behaviour (including speech), opposite to that adopted in their native culture in a particular situation of business communication; 3) self-reference criterion – teaching students to make independent comparison of the speech, behaviour and cultural peculiarities of their native culture with the foreign language of the communication parties, as well as the ability to think as the representatives of the foreign language culture in solving any problems in business.

The fourth method of particular situations (area simulation) – creation of real communicative situations with people of other culture, situations can be set by a teacher in a certain scenario. The fifth cultural identity model – students are trained to discuss videos with real-world business situations, as well as through interactive role and business games. The sixth method is the projects of intercultural issues that can be prepared through scientific literature or materials from the Internet, as well as on the basis of the students' own experience after being in a different culture and so on.

It should be noted that possessing cross-cultural competence implies not only the students' ability to analyze the intercultural situations of business communication, but also the experience of creating their models that will help them in the future to develop and improve independently their intercultural competence in a new environment.

Therefore, in developing the exercises of this stage, it was the only solution to focus on the use of such interactive teaching methods as work in small groups, discussions, case studies, method of analysis of critical incidents, simulation, presentation, screenplay, role and business games, etc. Some of these methods are quite elaborate in the relevant scientific and practical literature, but in the context of the research, we pay attention to their intercultural potential which is really great.

However, to tell the truth, in universities (in Ukraine) interactive teaching methods are used rather cautiously and discreetly. Some scholars suppose that the principal obstacle to their mass implementation is objective in the post-Soviet space and is based on the constant mental and psychological characteristics (Aleksandrova, 2016).

We agree with the statement partially as we believe that the young generation, presented by the modern students, has rather different mental and psychological characteristics than the predecessors, their teachers. Our students are ready to be trained with the help of interactive teaching methods and they are teachers who change their mentality and apply up to date teaching methods. In addition teachers usually keep up with the times.

Another (resurrected) method, which has been mentioned earlier and works effectively at this stage, is a project method. However, it is possible to dedicate only a small amount of the lesson time to checking the prepared task. Thus, in order for students to present the results of their research, it would be more useful to carry out some out-of-class activities, such as student conferences, intellectual quizzes and “round tables”, which are regularly held to facilitate the development of intercultural competence.

For example, at the annual “round table” devoted to the European Day of Foreign Languages students get acquainted with the European folk culture, make presentations individually and give talks about different European traditions and languages, comparing European customs with the native ones. We want them to understand and accept one of the important slogans of the European Union: “We are equal because we are different.”

Another out-of-class event, which assists in developing intercultural competence, is intellectual quiz “brain ring”. Our students are proposed to discuss and answer a lot of logical questions, which are related to knowledge of the target (English or American) culture. Students, who take part in a quiz, usually note it as very dynamic, cheerful and cognitive. Moreover, students can try, practice and show their intercultural competence.

In order to strengthen the socio-cultural part during intercultural competence developing some researchers recommend using at foreign language sessions learning resources that can open the cultures of the world

to students (Aleksandrova, 2016). Namely they propose the use of Web quests through which search activities are performed in Internet resources; audio or video recordings of lexical and grammatical material that the student can download to his or her own computer for self-study; electronic diaries.

We totally agree with the scholars as those materials let students cooperate and communicate online to conduct meetings, trainings, conferences with representatives of different cultures. So, students can understand each other better and develop intercultural communication skills. Additional sources of intercultural information are literature, mass media, the Internet and films.

There is no doubt that while developing any competence we need to measure its level (Kostikova et al, 2019). Intercultural competence is not an exception. For this purpose M. Byram offers examples of forms or questionnaires for self-assessment of this competence by students. We use them with our students and think they are very helpful.

Form: "Record of My Intercultural Experience":

A. "Interest in other people's way of life". (Example: I am interested in everyday life experience of other people especially those that are not widely represented in the media.)

B. "Ability to change the perspective". (Example: I think I could understand other cultures better, looking at them from different points of view and looking at my culture from their angles.)

C. "Ability to cope with living in a different culture". (Example: I will be able to cope with the various emotions that may occur whilst living in another country (euphoria, home sickness, physical and mental discomfort)).

D. "Knowledge about another country and culture". (Example: I know how to start a conversation and support another culture).

E. "Knowledge of intercultural communication". (Example: I know how to solve misunderstandings that might be a result of people's lack of understanding another culture features) (Byram, 2002).

The assessment gives new impetus to students in their search for knowledge of other cultures, helps them to understand, that this knowledge might be required in different circumstances.

## 5. Discussion

The analysis of modern scholars' works about developing intercultural competence shows that it is a complex concept with some

components (Byram, 1997; Byram et al, 2002). There are different views about the stated phenomena (Ciolăneanu, 2007; Sain et al, 2017).

We agree that “intercultural communication is also one of the main concerns of the Council of Europe, that is to act towards promoting cultural and linguistic diversity as part of its policy regarding the building of European identity” (Ciolăneanu, 2007, p. 23).

In Z. F. Sain’s paper the qualitative survey data to measure the mentioned competence is presented in four categories: “motivation, strategy, knowledge and behavior. Results show that students report higher competences in the areas of motivation and strategy, compared to knowledge and behavior” (Sain et al, 2017, p. 55).

S. Chiper insists that “more than a work-related skill intercultural communication can be envisioned as a life skill which allows one to function effectively in his or her day-to-day activities” (Chiper, 2013). The problem of the mentioned definition, process, categories, stages has shown that the scientists try to solve it with different ways through various subjects.

In particular the scientists consider different abilities and skills (Ciolăneanu, 2007); knowledge, motivation and communicative ability (Gudykunst, 2003); sets of competences, cultural boundaries, values and behavior patterns (Sain et al, 2017) while teaching English. In other words, our study confirms other scholars’ conclusions about the problem of a complex concept of developing intercultural competence.

## 6. Conclusions

Thus, developing students’ intercultural competence in foreign languages classes for non-linguistic universities in higher education can be performed with four stages, which are based on the logic of the program material mastering English and should be realized progressively. It is vital as knowledge of another country culture is not only one of the important prerequisites for ensuring intercultural communication skills and achieving mutual understanding, but also it contributes to the development of a person’s general erudition.

Moreover, socio-cultural knowledge *helps to gain a better* understanding of the foreign environment, and later the multicultural environment that students might face in their future career, as the developed intercultural competence is a prerequisite for a successful cultures dialogue. In addition, intercultural competence has an integrative character. In essence, it is the result of student’s developed personality in the learning process. As developing intercultural competence is the best performed on a

foreign language material, its course for future professionals should contain a large amount of national culture knowledge, business etiquette, and traditions, that is, all kinds of speech activities should be carried out in a broad social context.

In conclusion we can assert that compliance with such a step-by-step algorithm for the interaction of students' professional training and the expansion of their foreign language intercultural competence facilitates the strengthening interdisciplinary relations, ensuring steady students' interest in developing intercultural competence, overcoming foreign language barriers, need awareness to take into account intercultural differences in future professional activities, tolerant attitude towards representatives of another foreign language and culture.

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