

## РОЗДІЛ IV. ПРОБЛЕМИ ПЕДАГОГІКИ ВИЩОЇ ШКОЛИ

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### DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN BUSINESS ENGLISH CLASSES

*To successfully function in international business environments, students should be equipped with knowledge and skills of how to efficiently cooperate with representatives of other cultures. The present study aims to address the development of intercultural communicative competence in foreign language classes. The authors assert that the definition of «intercultural communicative competence» requires a more standard approach. This research is relevant since the literature review revealed a need for more research to explain the ways of developing intercultural communicative competence in Business English classes. The paper elaborates on the issue of developing intercultural communicative competence among non-language major students in Business English classes. The paper's primary focus is the course program of The Business English elective course targeting fourth-year students majoring in international relations, social communications, and regional studies at West Ukrainian National University. The course seeks to integrate the development of intercultural communicative competence into foreign language classes by employing interactive activities, such as role-playing games, group projects, problem-solving, group discussions, presentations, and participation in a final training session. The authors emphasize the importance of individual work for effective mastery of the material and developing intercultural communicative competence in classes. The authors apply the elements of the «flipped classroom» teaching principle, wherein students are expected to study a significant part of the material outside of class to apply the knowledge and develop intercultural communicative competence in the classroom. The prospects for further research include studying students' perceptions of the efficiency of various intercultural communicative competence development activities and investigating the impact of intercultural communicative competence on graduates' employment.*

**Key words:** *intercultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, Business English, role play, discussion, group project, solving dilemmas, presentation, training session, flipped classroom.*

**Introduction.** At a global level, intercultural communication competence has become an imperative prerequisite for shaping professional profiles and images. In addition to traditional professional or hard skills, its acquisition has become essential to succeed in today's culturally diverse business environment and an objective requirement of the modern labour market. Therefore, in light of the expansion of

globalization, students should learn to use communication more appropriately and effectively (Akdere et al., 2021). Beyond reasonable doubt, intercultural communicative competence helps individuals effectively interact in multicultural business environments.

Increasingly, researchers argue the importance of integrating intercultural communicative competence development into foreign language classes. This is especially crucial for Business English classes, where students should learn business vocabulary and develop skills to communicate successfully in diverse cultural settings. To address this need, Business English classes should aim to improve students' intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, this paper will explain the suggested ways to develop intercultural communicative competence in Business English classes.

**Analysis of relevant research.** Scholars argue that culture should be considered the fifth language skill (Shahed, 2013). To date, various researchers and educational practitioners have emphasised the significance of culture in language learning. For instance, Juan and Flor (2008) posited that the primary goal of foreign language instruction is to improve students' communicative competence, which means the ability «to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately in the target language and culture» (Juan & Flor, 2008, p.157). Similarly, Ojo (2019) stressed the «importance of integrating intercultural learning into the curriculum.» These works resonate with the research of Dolmaci and Sezgin (2021), who discussed the importance of culture for developing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). The researchers compared the emphasis on culture-related concepts introduced in 2001, 2018, and 2020 of CEFR versions and maintained that intercultural competence contributes to the achievement of mutual understanding for efficient communication with the representatives of other cultures (Dolmaci & Sezgin, 2021).

It is crucial to keep in mind that the definition of intercultural competence can vary slightly depending on the perspective of different scholars. Some scholars, such as Juan and Flor (2008), state that «intercultural competence refers to the knowledge of how to interpret and produce a spoken or written piece of discourse within a particular socio-cultural context (Juan & Flor, 2008, p.161). Others like Ojo (2019) shared a viewpoint, stating that «intercultural competence seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act,

communicate, and perceive the world around them.» Deardorff (2014) took a broader approach and explained that intercultural competence means the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to interact successfully with others from different backgrounds (Deardorff, 2014, p.1). Similarly, according to Fantini (2005), it is the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.

Scholars express different views on the relationship between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. While some researchers hold the view that intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence are two similar notions (Fantini, 2005, p.1), others argue that intercultural competence provides a foundation for intercultural communicative competence (Wilberschied, 2015, p.2). Byram (1997a) distinguished between the two («intercultural competence» and «intercultural communicative competence»), stating that «the relationship between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence is one of degrees of complexity and the ability to deal with a wider range of situations of contact in the latter than in the former.» (Byram, 1997a, p.71) According to the researcher (Byram, 1997b), in terms of intercultural competence «individuals have the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in interpreting, relating and discovering, i.e. of overcoming cultural difference and enjoying intercultural contact.» (Byram, 1997b, p.70) Conversely, intercultural communicative competence presupposes the ability «to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language» and the ability «to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins» (Byram, 1997b, p.71).

To date, the definition of intercultural communicative competence has not been standardized, as various scholars have proposed different definitions. For instance, Byram argued that intercultural communicative competence is “the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries in a foreign language” (1997a) Concurrently, Wilberschied (2015) provided the definition of intercultural communicative competence as of a «cluster of capabilities that will become even more essential, not only to negotiate borders of many dimensions as globalization proceeds

but also to enhance the ability to maneuver one's way in a world that changes by the minute.» Gutiérrez-Santiuste and Ritacco-Real (2023) described intercultural communicative competence as «the individual's ability to effectively and appropriately develop communication and behaviour, when interacting in an intercultural context» (Gutiérrez-Santiuste & Ritacco-Real, 2023, p.13885).

Recent studies have attempted to address how language instructors include and integrate cultural elements in teaching English to speakers of other languages (Nagy, 2018; Purba & Hemat, 2011; Yakovenko, 2015; Salim, 2017; Bouzlama & Bouhass, 2018; Zhu & YuShuang, 2016; Yurtsever & Dilara, 2021). In particular, scholars Katerina Tatzali and Eleftheria Beazidou (2023) focused on the research of practices for developing intercultural communication competences in early English language lessons. They concluded that various teaching methods, techniques and learning activities can be adapted to promote intercultural learning in early English language teaching (Tatzali & Beazidou, 2023). Similarly, Nechayuk (2016) concluded that the key to successful language learning is integrating culture into the language learning process through adaptation to a foreign language's cultural environment. Smakova and Paulsrud (2020) also agreed on the significance of intercultural communicative competence for foreign language education.

Further studies discuss and explain the necessity of intercultural communicative competence development in foreign language classrooms. As posited by Tümen-Akyıldız and Ahmed (2021), to encourage learners' awareness of intercultural information and communication, instructors should possess knowledge of intercultural communicative competence and ways to integrate different activities and tasks designed for its development (Tümen-Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021, p.800). In fact, according to Caon-Parsons and Dimmell (2020) research, intercultural communicative competence is an important element of teaching foreign languages; the researchers designed a program for intercultural competency development, which is included in all language courses of the University of Adelaide English Language Centre. Other researchers, such as Ohienko (2022) and Pustovoichenko (2018), also postulated that professional foreign language training is aimed at achieving professional foreign language communicative competence. Overall, researchers posited that foreign language teaching is intertwined with culture and intercultural communicative competence (Tümen-Akyıldız, 2021).

Hence, recent studies indicate that recognizing the cultural dimension as a critical component in teaching and learning a foreign language has become a considerable trend (Atay et al, 2009; Bodnar, 2012; Zadunaiska & Kost, 2019; Bahlai et al., 2019). The research of Kovács (2017) concludes that language teachers must always be mediators between cultures, the primary sources of the target culture for their students. This opinion resonates with Aguilar's research, which inferred that intercultural communicative competence is a valuable skill that prepares individuals to act as language and cultural mediators in the face of growing multilingualism and multiculturalism (Kovács, 2017, p.75).

On the one hand, an analysis of the scholarly publications revealed a significant body of research devoted to integrating intercultural competence development in teaching English as a foreign language. However, on the other hand, the analysis also showed that there is a dearth of research to explicate the development of intercultural communicative competence in the context of Business English classrooms. This area presents an opportunity for further study and understanding of which activities for intercultural communicative competence development can be effectively integrated into Business English language teaching.

Thus, the **study aims** to analyze methods of developing intercultural competence of bachelor students of non-linguistic specialties in terms of Business English classes.

**Research methods** used for this paper are analysis of scholarly sources, pedagogical and methodological literature, comparison, systematization, generalization, modelling, observation, and generalization of pedagogical experience.

**Results.** A Business English course, as an element of the university curriculum at West Ukrainian National University, has been designed to meet the needs of the modern labour market by fostering intercultural communicative skills and competences. This elective course is designed for the fourth year students of international relations, social communications and regional studies. Students have to complete a two-year English language course as a prerequisite. In addition to training listening, reading, writing and speaking skills within the framework of the Business English, the course aims to equip students with the requisite skills to communicate proficiently in international business environments.

Through the course, intercultural communicative competence development is ensured via a range of activities, including role-playing,

group projects, solving dilemmas, group discussions, presentations, and participation in a final training session.

Within the Business English course, a strong emphasis is placed on individual work, with students being assigned homework that includes watching TED Talks videos on intercultural communication issues followed by an in-class discussion. Furthermore, for some home assignments, the students are suggested to solve dilemmas that are based on business situations in the international business environment and present the solutions in class.

During the term, students are also expected to write three essays on the following topics: *How Language Can Bring Us Together*, *The Importance of Cultural Awareness in the International Business Environment*, and *Breaking down Barriers with Intercultural Communication*. In addition to developing writing skills, such assignments ensure students` self-directed learning and increase intercultural awareness.

Regarding course planning, role-plays are applied for the topics of «Workplace Culture in International Companies» and «Intercultural Business Negotiations». These role plays are designed to provide students with a practical understanding of how to apply the intercultural communication knowledge. Additionally, group projects to enhance intercultural communicative competence development are employed for two topics «Globalisation and Culture» and «Gender Equality Across Business Cultures». Notably, projects are deemed an effective means to improve intercultural competence (Lytovchenko, 2015).

A considerable part of the students` self-preparation and individual work is allotted to completing the Individual Task, constituting 20% of the final grade.

Students receive a set of instructions and assignments for the Individual Task at the beginning of the semester; they must complete it over the course of the semester. Students should deliver a 10-minute presentation based on the following situation: «You are a resident of \_\_\_(please choose a country from the list). Present to a group of businesspeople who wish to do business in your country but need to learn more about the business culture, customs, and etiquette. In your presentation, you should talk about the peculiarities of proximity, interruptions, greetings and saying goodbye, eye contact, gift-giving, dining etiquette, punctuality, dress etiquette, and business cards.» In addition, students have to prepare a glossary with potentially unknown

words or phrases, which includes 10-15 lexemes, and compose a quiz that they present at the end of their presentation to encourage students' active listening.

This assignment aims to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence, awareness of other cultures, and ability to speak about them using the English language.

Upon completion of the course, students participate in a training session where they should demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquired during the course. Intercultural communicative competence is among the expected outcomes. The training session is a two-hour class consisting of four stages. The primary objective of the introductory stage is to provide students with an understanding of the training session's subject matter. At the next stage, students get guidelines and instructions and are subdivided into groups of 3 to 5 students. For the main part, groups work on the assignments and prepare to present the solutions. The assignments comprise business situations (for instance, a business meeting of an international team or a specific part of an international business negotiation). Groups must analyze these situations, devise a solution and present a short role-play. To comply with the role-play guideline, students are instructed to use the essential vocabulary and demonstrate knowledge of intercultural communication. The final stage of the training session involves a discussion of the outcomes of completed tasks between groups, with an exchange of views and suggestions for other feasible options. The expected outcomes of this training session are to develop students' ability to communicate in intercultural settings and improve English language skills.

It is pertinent to highlight that in terms of this course the flipped classroom approach is adopted for many assignments and activities described above. According to Brewer and Movahedazarhouli (2018), the flipped classroom mode entails students exploring materials and gaining foundational knowledge outside of class and then actively applying it in the classroom. The majority of the planned assignments need thorough preparation at home, which enhances students' individual work on the topics and allows more effective interaction with an instructor and group mates.

**Conclusions.** The researchers have increasingly understood that intercultural communicative competence enables students to communicate effectively in an international setting. Though scholars have yet to agree on a standardized definition of intercultural communicative competence and it needs to be unified.

There is a bulk of research on the need and effectiveness of integrating intercultural communicative competence development into foreign language classrooms; however, analysis of the scholarly publications shows a need for more research on developing intercultural communicative competence in Business English classrooms. An elective Business English course at West Ukrainian University for the students of international relations, social communications and regional studies was designed to integrate the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. Through the course, intercultural communicative competence development is ensured by engaging students in the following activities: role-playing, group projects, solving dilemmas, group discussions, presentations and participation in a final training session. In order to develop intercultural communicative competence more effectively, students are encouraged to take charge of their learning journey. This involves being proactive in class participation, focusing on studying and striving for self-directed learning. In this respect, for many assignments, flipped classroom elements are applied since students are supposed to cope with reading, listening or video activities at home and come to class with the solutions, decisions or answers. This allows them to perform practical in-class activities more effectively and, consequently, focus on the development of skills and intercultural communicative competence.

**The prospects of further research.** This research solely encompasses some of the scope of the issue at hand. More research can be conducted on the students' perception of the efficiency of the activities used to develop intercultural communicative competence and the impact of intercultural communicative competence on students' employability.

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

**Вергун Лариса, Батрин Наталія.** Розвиток міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності на заняттях з ділової англійської мови.

Метою статті є аналіз шляхів розвитку міжкультурної компетентності студентів-бакалаврів немовних спеціальностей на заняттях з ділової англійської мови. Методи дослідження: теоретичні - аналіз наукових джерел, педагогічної літератури та навчально-методичної літератури, порівняння, систематизація, узагальнення, емпіричні – спостереження, узагальнення педагогічного досвіду.

Розглянуто проблему визначення терміну «міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність» і зазначено, що це питання потребує уніфікації. На основі огляду літератури зроблено висновок про те, що аналіз наукових досліджень вказує на потребу в додаткових розвідках щодо розвитку міжкультурної комунікативної компетенції на заняттях з ділової англійської мови. Представлено розробку вибіркового курсу «Ділова англійська мова» для студентів четвертого курсу спеціальності міжнародні відносини, соціальні комунікації та регіональні студії у Західноукраїнському національному університеті. Курс розроблений з метою інтеграції розвитку міжкультурної комунікативної компетенції студентів в заняття з іноземної мови. Під час вивчення курсу забезпечується розвиток міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності шляхом залучення студентів до таких видів діяльності, як рольові ігри, групові проекти, вирішення дилем, групові дискусії, презентації та участь у фінальному тренінгу. Звертається увага на важливості індивідуальної роботи студентів для ефективного опанування матеріалу і розвитку міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності на заняттях. Важливий акцент зроблено на використанні такого принципу навчання, як перевернутий клас (*flipped classroom*). Передбачається, що студенти вивчають значну частину матеріалу в позаурочний час для того, щоб активно застосовують

здобуті знання на заняттях і розвивати міжкультурну комунікативну компетентність. Визначено перспективи подальших наукових розвідок, що полягають у дослідженні сприйняття студентами ефективності форм діяльності, що використовується для розвитку міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності, а також рівень впливу сформованості міжкультурної комунікативної компетентності на працевлаштування випускників.

**Ключові слова:** міжкультурна компетентність, міжкультурна комунікативна компетентність, ділова англійська мова, рольова гра, дискусія, груповий проєкт, вирішення дилем, презентація, тренінг, «перевернутий клас».

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## **ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНО-КОМУНІКАЦІЙНИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ ДЛЯ ФОРМУВАННЯ ФАХОВОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ ТЕХНІКІВ-ЕЛЕКТРИКІВ У КОЛЕДЖІ**

У зв'язку з розробленням та застосуванням сучасних інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій (далі – ІКТ) у всіх сферах діяльності науки, техніки, освіти та промисловості на сучасному етапі розвитку країни підготовка майбутніх фахівців, здатних використовувати свої знання на виробництві із застосуванням цих технологій є першочерговим завданням для викладачів фахової передвищої освіти. Підготовка конкурентоспроможного технік-електрика, адаптованого до життя та професійної діяльності, вимагає від викладача коледжу застосування відповідних інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій для ефективного формування фахової компетентності майбутнього фахівця.

Мета статті – дослідження потенціалу використання інформаційно-комунікаційних технологій для формування фахової компетентності майбутніх техніків-електриків у коледжі. Розглянуто методіку комплексного використання ІКТ у процесі вивчення електротехнічних дисциплін для ефективного формування фахової компетентності майбутнього фахівця.

Доведено, що використання мультимедійних лекцій та практичних занять (віртуальних лабораторій) дає змогу підвищити ефективність та якість навчання, а також надає можливість у більшому обсязі надати пояснення навчального матеріалу для студентів, підвищити їх інтерес до електротехнічних дисциплін. Таким чином, явні переваги застосування ІКТ, мультимедійних технологій в організації освітнього процесу не викликають сумніву. Саме застосування ІКТ володіє вагомим потенціалом у формуванні фахової компетентності майбутніх техніків-електриків, які після закінчення навчання у коледжі надалі будуть використовувати свої знання на виробництві із застосуванням нових інформаційних технологій.

**Ключові слова:** професійна підготовка; технік-електрик; фахова компетентність; мультимедійні технології; коледж.