Introduction of Intercultural Communication Studies into the Curriculum of Pedagogical University

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Abstract: The article looks into the problem of introducing intercultural communication studies into the curriculum of the future teachers’ professional training. The relevance of the research is proved by the strong need to prepare today’s youth for reaching mutual understanding and avoiding barriers in communication. The purpose of the research is to design the course of intercultural communication studies for introducing into the curriculum of future primary school teachers’ training, based on the theoretical analysis of the content and structure of intercultural communication competence and the pedagogical university students’ level of the development of intercultural communication. The methods which are applied in the research are theoretical methods for analysing the literature, modelling for substantiating the course content, and empirical methods for assessing the level of the development of the students’ intercultural communication competence.

The designed course covers the main topics, aimed at gaining cultural knowledge and developing intercultural skills, behaviour abilities, and attitude. The methods of course construction are defined. Four methodological approaches to intercultural communication studies are substantiated (competency-based approach, inductive approach, social scientific approach, interpretive approach). The effectiveness of the course is proved through measuring the level of language skills, assessed by Standardised test Cambridge English First, and behaviour abilities, assessed by some direct and indirect methods.

Keywords: *intercultural communication; training course; future teachers; intercultural communication competence; assessment; direct and indirect methods.*

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1. Introduction

Over recent years, the role of intercultural communication has increased in the world. The cause of this is the development of the world economy, the progress in the sphere of telecommunication and technologies, the increasing role of travelling, as well the immigration for looking for new working places. The search for a new job plays an important part and it is the most essential motivation that makes young people learn foreign languages and develop intercultural communication skills.

We strongly believe that tertiary institutions should analyse and improve the curricula of training future specialists. This is particularly true for the countries which have experienced an economic, financial, and social crisis, so the education of a global citizen is an urgent need for giving people an opportunity to interact with employers, co-workers, as well to master a certain amount of knowledge to be competitive at the world labour market. The purpose of the research presented in the article is to justify theoretically the issue of implementing intercultural communication into the process of future specialists' training and to provide the test case of the university course for bachelor students in order to develop their intercultural communication competence.

The research aims at introducing intercultural communication studies into the curriculum of the pedagogical university in the east of Ukraine which is located in the anti-terrorist operation zone and where there is a strong need to prepare today's youth for reaching mutual understanding and avoiding barriers in communication. It is intended to be realised at the department of primary school teachers' training as these teachers will work with children soon, influencing the education of the young generation representatives, and developing their global citizenship. The research focuses on promoting the integration of young people into the world community, as well as enhancing a tendency towards a high quality of life.

The courses "Cultural Studies", "Social Studies" and "Higher Education and Bologna process" are taught at the faculty, they partially enhance the integration of Ukraine into the world community. But there is also a strong need to create inter-disciplinary studies that contribute to supporting Ukraine in ensuring a stable, prosperous, and democratic future for all its citizens.

In the 21st century, the language of interpersonal communication is the language of social consciousness, an individual's general culture, the culture of international cooperation, and the culture of society. At the time

of globalization, Ukraine strives to the cooperation and mutual enrichment in the social, economic, political, cultural, and scientific spheres.

2. Literature Review

The concept of intercultural communication is thoroughly studied by scientists. The generally accepted definition of the concept is made by Allwood (1985), Ting-Toomey (2015), Gudykunst et al. (2005), and Shuter (2012). According to Beskorsa (2018), the general idea for the definitions is that intercultural communication is the interaction (the process of sharing information) of individuals with different cultural backgrounds.

The concept of intercultural communication has been explored by several theorists, researchers, and educators. Traditionally, intercultural communication builds on the intercultural understanding that implies behaviour and communication. According to the research made by Hill (2006), Canado and Garcia (2007), the intercultural understanding contains the cognitive and affective component. The cognitive component comprises knowledge about one's own culture and other cultures. The affective component of intercultural understanding is defined as (1) intercultural sensitivity by Chen (1989) and Starosta (1998) and as (2) the subjective experience of cultural difference by Bennett (1993). Gao and Qin (2014) study intercultural communication, based on the ability to have strong intercultural awareness of diverse cultural environment. They think that to achieve the students' intercultural awareness and to enhance foreign language communication skills, the course of intercultural communication should be introduced into the curriculum of higher education institutions. In their research Gao and Qin (2014) substantiate the requirements for intercultural communication courses which include the use of a practice-based approach to developing students' intercultural communication ability.

Ukrainian scientists Kendzor (2016), Bakhov, and Motsar (2015) assert that the structure of intercultural communication includes such a quality as the openness to perceiving other cultures that is essential for broadening the polyculture outlook. They don't equal intercultural communication to foreign language learning but stress the importance of cultural studies as a condition of a personality's self-development in the sociocultural context. Kendzor (2016) and Bakhov & Motsar (2015) also pay special attention to the interrelationship between culture and education, as well as the cultural framework for developing modern educational systems and models.

Canale and Swain (1980) prove that intercultural communication is closely connected to communication competence that is the main focus of teaching any language and that contains social and cultural factors that involve motivation, attitude, tolerance, and empathy as main components of intercultural communication. Havrilova and Iaburova (2017) consider intercultural communication in terms of language studies. In our research, we focus on teaching English as a means of intercultural and international communication, organizing interdisciplinary studies to overcome the conditional barriers in society.

According to Ting-Toomey and Dorjee (2015), intercultural communication can be conceptualised as the process of exchanging meanings among the representatives of different cultural communities in an interactive way. So, the bilateral nature of intercultural communication implies using both verbal and non-verbal symbols.

The researchers Canale and Swain claim that language skills influence verbal communication greatly (1981). They assert that the concept of multiculturalism is closely connected to developing communicative competence, as well as socio-cultural factors (motivation, attitudes, tolerance, and empathy) that have a great influence on developing intercultural communication competence. American scientists Banks (2001) is the first who stresses the necessity to develop a multicultural learning environment that includes the following components: the content of academic disciplines, methods of assessment, and the style and forms of interaction of learning environment participants. All these components should be transformed and adapted to the requirements which the society makes on the education system.

Apart from language mastery, Gudykunst et al. (2005), Andersen et al., (2002), and Ting-Toomey & Dorjee (2015) emphasize that the communication style is also of great importance. It is thought to include functionality and expressiveness. Nonverbal aspects of intercultural communication are believed to be implemented through the person's body or tone of voice. Thus, Andersen et al. (2002) characterise the main codes of nonverbal communication and distinguish kinesics, oculusics, vocalics, paralinguistics, olfactics, proxemics, and chronemics. Bennett (2008) claims that language learning is not sufficient for intercultural communication learning. Ting-Toomey (2015) asserts that efficient verbal and nonverbal communication demands the development of flexible adaptive interaction skills. These skills are well summarised by the researchers Dasli and Díaz (2013) who explore how to study, research, and teach intercultural communication critically.

Intercultural communication learning is usually developed and designed based on different models, such as DMIS (Bennett, 1993), the intercultural development inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003), and the cross-cultural adaptability inventory (CCAI) (Kelley & Meyers, 1995). Mendenhall, Stahl, Ehnert, Oddou, Osland, and Kuhlmann (2004) prove that the most common methods of intercultural training are lectures, culture assimilators, and group discussions.

Pusch emphasizes the use of computers in intercultural training (2004). Lee (2018) describes the way of changing English education curricula through integrating computer-mediated intercultural communication into it. The scientist highlights both positive aspects of using computer-based approaches to developing communicative competence and challenges that educators face up to while teaching English as a foreign language. The most applicable computer-mediated tools for developing intercultural communication competence are social networking sites and web conferencing tools for arranging e-discussions that concern differences and similarities in cultures.

Therefore, it is very urgent to introduce intercultural communication studies into teacher training curriculum as teachers' primary objective is to coordinate students' value development through the academic discipline content and learning methods applied. At the same time, the study of foreign languages focuses on language acquisition, the development of language skills, and a deep mastery of the cultural characteristics of the country whose language is being studied. The development of teachers' intercultural communication competence contributes to the expansion of students' horizons, their polyphonic perception of the world, and fosters a tolerant attitude towards other cultures that give an opportunity to socialize in globalised world and interact in different spheres of public life with representatives of different peoples and cultures.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the article is to design the course of intercultural communication studies for introducing into the curriculum of future primary school teachers' training.

The following objectives are defined according to the purpose: to theoretically substantiate the content and structure of the course of intercultural communication studies, based on the theoretical analysis of specific features of intercultural communication competence, its structure,

and the pedagogical university students' level of the development of intercultural communication.

The main theoretical methods of the research include:

- methods of analysis and generalization of scientific literature that highlights the features of developing pedagogical university students' intercultural competence, the definition of intercultural competence and its structure;

- method of modelling that allows to design and structure the course of intercultural communication studies.

The research is also based on empirical methods:

- testing (Standardised test Cambridge English First) that is aimed at defining the students' level of language skills as the development of intercultural competence depends on foreign language acquisition as it builds the knowledge basis for further development of intercultural competence;

- indirect methods that include questionnaires for investigating the students' awareness of the development of intercultural competence and the necessity to introduce the intercultural communication studies;

- direct methods that involve the role-plays that make it possible to observe and evaluate students' behaviour abilities.

Standardised test Cambridge English First is aimed at assessing the language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening and is targeted at the interests and experiences of the students. FCE test provides us with information about the student's performance: a score on the Cambridge English Scale for each skill (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) and for Use of English; a score on the Cambridge English Scale for the overall exam; a grade (A, B, C, Level B1) for the overall exam; and a CEFR level for the overall exam.

Among the indirect methods of intercultural communication skills assessment, we choose the questionnaire "Development of Intercultural Competence" that is aimed at investigating the stages of awareness of intercultural competence development. We ask students about people whom they know with different levels of cultural sensitivity and students should consider the ways how to become more intercultural. The next stage of the questionnaire is to arrange attitudes to different cultures in the most logical way. The attitudes which are proposed to students are the following:

- Becoming enthusiastic about cultural variety – What great potential!

- Beginning to work on the study of other cultures – There's a lot to find out.

- Developing an interest in other cultures – This isn't as strange as I thought.
- Empathising – I see why they act like that.
- Learning by making mistakes – Oops, that was a bit of a disaster.
- Monocultural approach – Everybody's the same.
- Realisation that most behaviour is culturally conditioned – There's probably a reason for this.
- Recognition of different types of culture – There are national and regional differences and corporate and professional cultures.
- Recognition of possible dangers – This could cause problems.
- Recognition of difference – There's something different about these people (Utey, 2004).

For assessment of intercultural communication skills, direct methods are implemented. As an example of a direct method, a role-play has been developed and implemented to ensure that the students would achieve the course objectives. The task of the role play is the following: having a certain social role, students should work in pairs, each of them has five minutes to speak on the subject (e.g. Nurture, Education, Work, Nationality), the partner is listening and answering the occasional questions. Then students should give feedback, summarizing, and saying what they found interesting. The students also should comment if they were aware of some strong impacts of one of the factors mentioned in the activity on their life. The results of assessing students' behaviour abilities are represented in table 2.

Eighty-two Bachelor students of State Higher Education Institution "Donbas State Pedagogical University" (Sloviansk, Ukraine), who studied at the Faculty of Primary, Technological and Vocational Education for obtaining the speciality of primary school teachers, participated in the research. The students were selected, based on the year of study at the university and the speciality "Primary Education" (they were the two-year students who had already studied the courses of a foreign language for professional purposes, culture studies) and might be aware of the relevance of developing intercultural competence. The research was conducted in natural conditions while studying the practical course of the English language and the experimental introduction of intercultural communication studies. The participation of students was voluntary.

The theoretical and empirical research was implemented by three lecturers of the Department of Primary Education Theory and Practice, one lecturer of Higher School Pedagogy, and one lecturer of the Department of the German and Slavic linguistics who had the experience of teaching

foreign languages and culture studies of 13–23 years. The research was conducted during the academic year 2018–2019.

As the research concerns the empirical study of the human subject, it was based on such ethical issues of intercultural pedagogy as democracy and tolerance. Intercultural communication requires the enhancement of democracy culture for engaging the people with different ethnicity, linguistic or national background in the interaction, as well as the development of the qualities that are characteristic for democracy culture: impartiality, the desire to express and listen to other people's opinions, the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and to perceive others' arguments.

4. Results and discussion

Before discussing the main content of the course, we offer to describe the integrative structure of intercultural communication that is regarded as the framework for connecting the core items in understanding intercultural communication competence. Intercultural communication competence has been defined in the works of intercultural communication theorists as “a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Intercultural communication competence is considered to contain different components whose number and content depend on communicative strategy and the models that are put forward. We agree with Deardorff (2006) who claims that intercultural communication competence consists of three major components, namely knowledge, attitudes, and skills (see Figure 1).

Fig. 1. Structure of intercultural communication competence

Source: Authors' own conception

Each of these structural components is highlighted in the content of the course implemented. The course “Intercultural Communication” contains seven topics that are taught using an inductive teaching approach which means that the teacher presents rules and behaviour patterns by the use of certain examples and communication activities so that the students can gain knowledge. No teacher can have or anticipate all the knowledge which students might need while communicating. Many teachers have not had the opportunity to behave in different situations of culture. The main teacher’s task while teaching the course is to provide the effective development of knowledge and skills. Skills are as important as knowledge that is why the teacher must pay more attention to their development. The importance of skill development is proved by the research of Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) who assert that intercultural speakers must be aware of how misunderstanding can arise and how they can eliminate it, they need the attitude of decentring and skill of comparing, interpreting, and relating which are thought to be crucial. The values of intercultural communication are the basis for instilling a sense of respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction.

There are the topics and their content, included in the course:

1. *Verbal – non-verbal communication across cultures.*

The topic presents an overview of the diversity of verbal and non-verbal means in different cultures. The intercultural communication activities are focused on both studying cross-cultural communication, styles paying special attention to the use of language/verbal and nonverbal communication styles, and practicing the range of dialogues, face, interaction norms, politeness, and different cultural values on speech and expressiveness.

2. Interpersonal and intergroup communication and relationships.

The topic presents the activities for developing psychological, communicative, relational, nonverbal, contextual, and discourse strategies to conduct interpersonal and intergroup relationships. The main purpose is to develop skills of conscious decisions as to what we need to do in a certain situation in order to interact effectively, as well as empirical skills of intergroup interaction in different contexts.

3. Exploring intercultural communication problems in different spheres of society (health care, business, media, education).

The topic focuses on revealing how communication takes place between people of diverse cultural backgrounds in different spheres of society and developing skills to adapt to different cultures that are essential for facilitating international communication and avoiding communicative barriers.

4. Digital communication across cultures.

The topic is aimed at showing how to communicate successfully with an international audience using digital tools and online texts in English, including Blogs, Corporate Videos, Fanvids, Websites, and Video-Chats.

5. European cultures: communication and context of intercultural communication.

The topic delineates the scope of the current development of intercultural communication as a field of study and identifies the main issues with related subfields in intercultural communication. It contributes to understanding human communication as a process with a varied degree of mediation, as well as a key conceptualization matter to clarify the affinity and distinction between the key terms of culture and cultures.

6. Historic and theoretical aspects of intercultural scientific research in different countries.

The topic presents a brief history of intercultural communication and conducting an in-depth analysis of why the contemporary world has such a cultural and language diversity, integration knowledge of communication structures and processes.

7. Ethnocentrism and intercultural communication in European countries.

The topic is aimed at examining the impact of intercultural communication sensitivity on overcoming ethnocentrism. It reveals the relationships between ethnocentrism, intercultural communication apprehension, engaging students in intercultural dialogue. It contributes to developing an ability to overcome barriers in communication, as well as forming a set of attitudes and actions that are created as a way to interpret the world.

The methodology of the construction of the course, which contributes to the development of intercultural communication competence, includes three stages:

1. The introductory stage provides implementation by the university teaching staff the detailed analysis of the available information on intercultural communication studies with a particular focus on searching for the appropriate teaching methods and techniques according to the best European practices.

2. The realization stage provides:

- conducting a series of lectures, seminars of the course aimed at developing cross-cultural interactive dialogue for students at SHEI “Donbas State Pedagogical University”;

- conducting the series of lectures, seminars of the course focused on the theory and practice of intercultural communication.

3. The evaluation and dissemination stage provides summing up the results of the implementation of the course and evaluation of gained results. The dissemination is carried out through media, scientific publications, and reports at national and international conferences.

The activities involved in achieving the objectives of the introduction of the course are based on competency-based teaching. The components of the competency include specific intercultural communication knowledge and skills that can be applied to new and complex situations and can be useful for a student’s whole lifetime.

The course involves lectures and seminars based on guided reading, case studies, simulations, critical dialogue, peer tutoring, practical research assignments, language study, and student-led presentations. All classes are student-centered with a focus on the students’ life and learning experience. There are four methodological approaches to intercultural communication study which emphasizes democratic values:

- competency-based approach is crucial for defining the learning content regarding current social needs, as well this approach aims at the

results of learning activities that are considered to be not only the amount of information acquainted but also the ability to act in certain situations of intercultural interaction;

- inductive method implies the structuring of topics and methods in the intercultural communication studies, starting with practice-based ones, which focus on students' life and cognitive experience, and proceeding to the theory-based ones, which contribute to achieving their deeper understanding of history, categories, approaches, principles, concepts, and trends of intercultural communication;

- social-scientific approach involves quantitative data collection and study approaches such as surveys and projects. Intercultural communication is considered to be patterns of interaction, so the different communication situation from different spheres of life are created to explain and understand these patterns;

- interpretive methods that involve qualitative data collection and study approaches such as interviews and observation. Intercultural communication is created through interaction (brain-storming; incident sessions; think, pair and share), and we are looking for its understanding by exploring the perspectives of people who participate as members of cultural communities.

To check the correctness of the topics designed and methods of construction of the course, empirical research was implemented. According to the structure of intercultural communication competence, we chose the language skills and behaviour abilities as criteria for assessing the competence as they are the most general, encompassing, and conceptually useful components of intercultural communication competence. The empirical research was conducted at the beginning of the academic year to define the initial level of the development of students' intercultural communication competence and at the end of the academic year to register the changes in its development.

The criteria for describing language skills are four language activities: reading, writing, speaking and listening at B2 level (CEFRL). Those persons who show Level B2 are independent users of the English language, they have the necessary fluency and confidence to communicate without effort with native speakers. We use the descriptors for reading, writing, speaking, and listening given in the CEFRL.

The assessment results of investigating students' level of language skills are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Standardised test results for differences in means of language activities

Language activity		Listening		Reading		Writing		Speaking	
Level		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	Before	13	15.8	19	23.2	17	20.7	14	17.1
	After	20	24.4	28	34.1	26	31.7	22	26.8
Medium	Before	26	31.8	31	37.8	28	34.1	29	35.3
	After	37	45.1	43	52.4	38	46.3	41	50.0
Low	Before	43	52.4	32	39.0	37	45.2	39	47.6
	After	25	30.5	11	13.5	18	22.0	19	23.2

Source: Authors' own conception

It is clear from this table that there is a significant difference in the total level of language skills which has increased after the introduction of the course. There is an essential improvement of both reading (+14,6% of students with medium level) and speaking (+14,7% of students with medium level) skills. It can be explained by the fact that the main emphasis was made on involving students in communicative activities which implied communicative situations of intercultural interaction. The gained results are similar to those that are described in the research of Baker (2016) who emphasizes the role of learning English as lingua franca for developing intercultural communication competence. Though Baker (2016) suggests, taking into account the complexity of the relationships, that the teachers should implement a variety of communicative practices in language classes that involves cultural characterizations.

So, behaviour abilities, which embody in communication practices, require distinguishing the following criteria:

- dialogical criteria which are characterised as cooperation, coherence, empathy, confirmation, relaxed readiness, perspective reflection, present orientation, genuineness, and egalitarianism;
- efficiency that applies to the idea that achieving the aim may include less or more effort and time-consuming activities;
- effectiveness which is the extent to which preferred outcomes are achieved;

– adaptability pertains to the ability of an individual to change his or her actions, course, or manner of doing things in order to suit new circumstances;

– appropriateness which is the extent to which behaviour meets the standards of legitimacy or acceptability in a context (Spitzberg, 2003).

Direct and indirect methods are used for assessing behaviour abilities of the students. Indirect methods typically do not include any actual reference skills, nor do they appear in the context of the assessment. Direct methods, on the other hand, trigger the performance of explicit skills, which are then further evaluated in the process.

Indirect methods include projective, interview, and questionnaires. Projective methods, such as sentence-completion tasks, present ambiguous stimuli to a subject, to which the subject reacts or provides an interpretation, and these reactions are then interpreted according to some scheme designed to assess the social competence of the subject. Interview methods deal with the verbally presented questions about the subject's social interaction. Interview methods are usually applied when there is background or personal information that would be difficult to obtain through behavioural observation or without the subject's individual familiarity with the Questionnaires refer to the presentation of items the subject applies to himself or herself (Spitzberg, 2003; Ishutina, 2016).

Direct methods reveal a pattern of behaviour that serves as a guide for further assessment and evaluation. In role-play methods, a subject is presented with one or more simulated versions of an interaction situation. The situations are generally developed and selected on the basis of the non-compliance to the particular areas of the skill of concern to the assessors. The subject's performance is subsequently rated by self, by the confederate, or observers, and the recorded behaviour from the scenarios can subsequently be coded and rated.

Ranking the students' attitudes to different cultures by conducting the questionnaire, we have obtained the following results: the most popular statement is "Everybody's the same really" (24 students, 28.8%). This proves that the monocultural approach prevails. The statement "This isn't as strange as I thought" which is chosen by 14 students (16.8%) confirms students' interest in other cultures. It is to be noticed the fact that, the students recognise different types of culture, choosing the statement "There are national and regional differences, and corporate and professional cultures" (11 participants, 13.2%). Some young people admit that cultural differences could cause problems (4 students, 4.8%) (see Figure 2). Analysing and comparing the hierarchies of the answers we can state that the

students are interested in studying the other cultures, they tolerate the cultural diversity although they admit national and regional differences.

Fig. 2. The results of assessing students' awareness of intercultural competence development

Source: Authors' own conception

We can observe the increase of behaviour abilities according to the defined criteria (dialogical criteria, efficiency, effectiveness, adaptability, and appropriateness). We suppose that the significant improvement of indicators of adaptability (+15,8% of students with high level) and appropriateness (+10,9% of students with high level) criteria is caused by accumulating skills of using language means and communicative strategies according to the context of intercultural interaction (Table 2). The high percentages obtained for the dialogical criteria (+8,5% of students with high level and +11% of students with medium level) show, on the one hand, students' readiness for cooperation, coherence, empathy, and confirmation, and, on the other hand, the course effectiveness in developing perspective reflection, present orientation, genuineness, and egalitarianism of the students.

Table 2. Results of assessing students' behaviour abilities

Behaviour abilities		Dialogical criteria		Efficiency		Effectiveness		Adaptability		Appropriateness	
Level		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	Before	15	18.3	18	21.9	19	23.2	16	19.5	15	18.3
	After	22	26.8	27	32.9	28	34.1	29	35.3	24	29.2
Medium	Before	31	37.8	35	42.8	32	39.0	27	32.9	26	31.7
	After	40	48.9	44	53.6	41	50.0	38	46.4	40	48.9
Low	Before	36	43.9	29	35.3	31	37.8	39	47.6	41	50.0
	After	20	24.3	11	13.5	13	15.9	15	18.3	18	21.9

Source: Authors' own conception

This study, similar to other studies that are devoted to developing intercultural competence, proves that cultural knowledge is not sufficient for forming and improving intercultural competence. Similar to the study of Deardorff (2006), we distinguish three main components of intercultural communication competence: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Bennett (2008) and Pusch (2004) argues that language learning doesn't lead to intercultural communication. Considering their studies, this study has been aimed at designing and implementing the course of intercultural communication that combines language learning and developing behaviour to interact with people who are the representatives of other cultures.

Mendenhall (2004) suggests that intercultural communication training contributes to accumulating knowledge, but not to changing behaviour. However, Mendenhall asserts that intercultural training should be improved so that the behaviour and attitudes can be also properly developed. This study of intercultural training has shown considerable positive changes among the students in both knowledge and behaviour. This has occurred due to the instructional methods used while teaching culture. Compared to other studies that have emphasized the effectiveness of lectures, culture assimilators, and class discussions, we have increased the number of methods for training. Special attention has been paid to role-play

as it has helped to model the real communication situations that can arise in indifferent cultures.

There are alternative approaches to assessment that can be used in different studies. For example, Jacobson, Sleicher, and Maureen (1999) propose the portfolio assessment of communication skills with its extensive discussion about interpersonal skills. O'Neil, Allred, Dennis (1997), and Holsbrink-Engels (1997) describe a computer-based or digital program for social skills assessment. In our study, similar to other studies we distinguish direct and indirect methods for assessing as the most appropriate for assessing intercultural competence (Spitzberg, 2003).

5. Conclusions

It is a relevant educational issue – the development of intercultural competence, as the society becomes multicultural, the process of globalization continues, and new challenges arise. To be successful, today's graduates should be creative, competitive, flexible, ready for reaching mutual understanding, and avoiding barriers in communication. The development of intercultural communication competence among teachers in our studies is gained through the introduction of intercultural communication courses into the curriculum of professional training. The content of intercultural training is based on the structure of intercultural communication, which contains knowledge, intercultural skills, behavior abilities, and attitude. While developing intercultural communication competence, special attention should be paid to skills and behaviour abilities, as speakers should be aware of the reasons why misunderstanding in communication can arise and how to eliminate it. By comparing ideas, events, and communicative situations of different cultures, students become embedded and get a critical awareness of themselves, their values, attitudes, and ones of other people. The course is interdisciplinary as it combines language and culture learning and provides new knowledge, skills, and experiences. The study reveals a set of methods that are used for developing and assessing intercultural competence. The course introduced can also be used as a guide for the intercultural training of specialists in different spheres.

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