

# Methodological Basis of the Process of Preparing Students for Intercultural Interaction

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**Abstract.** *The intercultural orientation of modern social thought is implemented in educational policy, considering a modern university graduate as a person, not just possessing specific competences and knowledge, but also capable of cooperating and constructive multicultural dialogue, interacting with people of different cultures and knowing the system of socially significant world values. The enormous potential for this lies in the methodology of the content and language integrated learning, which is seen as an integral component of the educational process in the context of the implementation of modern documents in the field of higher education. In modern pedagogical science, considerable experience has been accumulated in preparing students of different specialties for intercultural interaction, forming and developing the tolerance, intercultural communicative competences, educating the younger generations in a multicultural world. Nevertheless, the issue of preparing students of non-linguistic faculties for intercultural interaction in the context of the content and language integrated environment remains poorly developed today. So the main aim of our research is to consider the basic concepts of the process of preparing students of non-language faculties for intercultural interaction for determining the degree of their readiness for the adequate intercultural dialogue.*

**Keywords** – *intercultural interaction, integrated learning, content and language integrated environment, student, non-language faculty*.\*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Historical documentation on the problem in question [39, 40] confirmed the objective significance of its research for modern pedagogy. In our article we shall describe the current state of this issue based on the consideration and definition of the conceptual and categorical framework and the analysis of theoretical concepts that are strategically important for the following development of the studied questions.

Yakovlev and Yakovleva believe that working with concepts that make up the conceptual and categorical framework of a pedagogical concept, implies: 1) targeted study of terms, 2) carrying out etymological analysis, 3) carrying out contextual analysis, 4) standardization of the author's terminological system [41].

Adhering to these provisions, we present the conceptual and categorical framework of the research. The multidimensionality of the phenomenon being studied requires the inclusion of basic and complex concepts in its structure. We consider the concepts of "student non-language faculties", "interaction", "culture", "environment", "training" as basic ones. The concepts of "intercultural interaction", "intercultural interaction of students", "content and language integrated environment", "training students of non-language faculties for intercultural interaction in conditions of content and language integrated environment" are complex. However, the essence of these concepts in preparing the students of non-language faculties for intercultural interaction is not yet considered.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Let us consider the selected concepts in more detail in accordance with the above provisions.

“Culture” is a fundamental term of anthropology, sociology, philosophy, ethnology, linguistics, and many other areas of knowledge, which interpret it differently [45]. At the moment there are several hundred different definitions of this term. The variety of concepts of culture determines the desire of researchers to systematize them. One of the most common classifications belongs to A. Kröber and K. Klakhon [8], who identified six types of definitions of culture (descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural and genetic ones). Here are some interpretations of this concept, identified in the framework of certain areas of its study:

- axiological, where culture is a set of values, arranged in a certain hierarchical sequence in accordance with the prevailing social trends (N.Z. Chavchavadze, G. Rickert, P. Sorokin, L.N. Stolovich) [5; 30; 32; 33];
- informational-semiotic, in which culture is a symbolic system, a set of cultural codes (Yu.M. Lotman, L. White) [21; 39; 40];
- anthropological, within which culture is a self-valuable system of artifacts, beliefs, and creeds of members of a certain community (R. Benedict, B. Malinovsky) [3; 22];
- sociological, where culture is the arrangement of social life, expressed in the activities of its members and their development (A. Conte, M. Weber) [7].

“The School of the Dialogue of Cultures” (M.M. Bakhtin, V.S. Bibler,) [16] is significant for the understanding of the culture within the framework of our research. Here, culture is a peaceful and equal dialogue, in which cultures mutually enrich one another, while maintaining their unity. Such an understanding of culture is also reflected in the ideas on cultural relativism by M. Herskovits, on the dialogue of cultural worlds by G.S. Pomeranets [16], and on the polylogue of cultures by O.N. Astafyeva [16]. We will also mention an understanding of culture, indicated in the Intercultural Diary of the Council of Europe, and similar to the ideas of intercultural dialogue: culture is “something belonging to a specific national, ethnic or religious community”, as well as “a dynamic process depending on the personal choice of its participants” [16, p.10].

### III. METHODS AND RESEARCH MATERIAL

To achieve the research aim, theoretical scientific methods are used: comparative, system, and structural types of analysis, synthesis, and pedagogical modelling. Pedagogical papers and pedagogical system in Russia, exemplified with teaching foreign languages to the students of non-language faculties is the empirical material in this paper.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summarizing the above, we note that, in our understanding, culture is a symbolic system of values, traditions, principles of arranging the activity of a community, expressed in the world view and behaviour of its members. Let us turn to the concept of “interaction”, which in psychology is interpreted as “the process of direct

or indirect influence of objects (subjects) on each other, generating their mutual conditionality and connection” [10].

In turn, the Great Soviet Encyclopedia considers interaction as a philosophical category, reflecting the processes of the influence of objects on each other, their mutual conditionality and the generation of one object by another. In fact, it is a universal form of movement, development, which determines the existence and structural arrangement of any material system [13].

In pedagogy, it is acceptable to talk about pedagogical interaction, as a process taking place between the teacher and the student in the course of educational work, and aimed at developing the child’s personality. The concept in question was pedagogically rethought in the works by V.A. Sukhomlinsky, V.I. Zagvyazinsky, L.A. Levshina, H.I. Liimetsa, etc. who identified several components in pedagogical interaction - didactic, educational, and social-pedagogical interactions [4]. It is noteworthy that the interaction in pedagogy appears as a developing process, contributing to the formation of the student’s personality.

Based on these points of view, in our study, by interaction, we mean interaction between objects, accompanied by a reciprocal influence, contributing to the formation and development of personality.

Before defining the concept of “intercultural interaction” and describing its content, we are faced with the task of finding out which features of this concept are socially significant in the context of students’ professional training. This training process is based on the analysis of the academic and methodological literature and normative educational documents of the Russian Federation, and the international documents defining the contemporary educational space.

The analysis of the state regulatory documents concerning education of the Russian Federation shows that in the modern educational system much attention is paid to the formation of human resource capital; to the development of talents, skills, culture; to the process of ensuring Russia’s long-term competitiveness in the global economy. According to the National Doctrine of Education [25], the social order of the state in education is aimed at educating a person who is “up-to-date” educated, moral, and ready to make decisions independently in a choice situation. The innovations, enshrined in the Law of the Russian Federation “On Education” [11], allow universities to introduce subject-language integrated content in the educational process and, accordingly, prepare their students for effective intercultural interaction.

Although at first glance the semantic meaning of the concept of “intercultural interaction” is obvious, meaning communication between people from different cultures, there are different points of view and approaches to its definition. If we refer to linguistic experts this term means the adequate mutual understanding of two participants of a communicative act belonging to different national cultures [37].

G.A. Avanesova notes: “The interaction of cultures is a special kind of direct relations and connections that are formed between at least two cultures, as well as those influences, mutual changes that appear in the course of these relations [Avanesova, cited in 45], pp. 70-71]. In turn, S.A. Lebedev considers intercultural interaction as “the contact of two or more cultural traditions (canons, styles), in the course of which the counterparties have a significant mutual influence on each other” [20, p. 120].

Analysis of the theory of intercultural communication and interaction as the goal of education and upbringing of the younger generations indicates first, the availability of a wide range of pedagogical opportunities for intercultural learning; second, the complex structure of the concept of intercultural interaction. The theory of intercultural communication and interaction is the main question in the works by E.V. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov; A.P. Sadokhin, T.G. Grushevitskaya, V.D. Popkova; S.G. Ter-Minasova, I.E. Klyukanova, J. Koester, M. Olebe and dissertation researches of V.V. Safonova, V.L. Pluzhnik, V.L. Pluzhnik, Ye.B. Bystray, T.N. Astafurova, N.L. Greidina, O.O. Zakharova and others.

On the grounds of the dynamic nature of the principles of intercultural education, we will define the intercultural realities of today based on the analysis of documents and programmes regulating modern life and education adopted by UNESCO: the UNESCO General Declaration on Cultural Diversity (November 2, 2001), the Resolution “Promoting Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace ”(December 17, 2012), Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022); the “Teaching Respect for All” Program (UNESCO, USA, Brazil), Enlightenment for the Holocaust Remembrance; UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education and Others, by the Council of Europe, such as the “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue Living Together as Equals in Dignity (May 7, 2008), “Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe”, Study for European Committee, March 2008), etc. [29].

The analysis allows to conclude that the intercultural dialogue construed as co-existence and equal interaction among different cultures and an opportunity to create the shared forms of cultural self-expression through the dialogue and mutual respect [29] is considered as the context of the third millennium life. In this period of time such phenomena as peacekeeping, mutual understanding, mutual respect, sobriety, cultural diversity, culture of peace, equality regardless of national, racial, religious, gender, social status and health opportunities are socially significant. The analysis of the above documents and academic literature gives us a fundamental basis for distinguishing the readiness for intercultural interaction as a socially significant trait of contemporary human beings.

Thus, we consider *intercultural interaction* as affective and adequate communication of people from different cultures and communities, which results in the generation of new forms of cultural landmarks and values, as well as in a

comprehensive change of principles and approaches to the implementation of international professional activities.

Preparation for the intercultural interaction of students of non-linguistic faculties requires targeted actions. Therefore, it is logical to refer to the concept of “training”.

It is noteworthy that in modern pedagogical science there are attempts to identify the concepts “formation” and “preparation”. We believe that this fact cannot be overlooked, since “formation of personality” in pedagogical literature is understood as a process of development and formation of a personality under the influence of external factors of upbringing, training, and the social environment; purposeful development of the personality or any of its sides, qualities under the influence of education and training; the process of becoming a person as a subject and object of social relations” [18, p. 161].

In our opinion, the concept of “personality formation” implies the absence of some quality or phenomenon and implies its formation. At the same time, the concept of “preparation” provides for a practical process of developing professional skills and the formation of a life position. Therefore, in our study, we will use the concept of “preparation”.

Summarizing the above, we will understand the process of gradual formation in a non-language faculty student of the professional attitudes and skills necessary for the adequate and effective implementation of intercultural interaction. Let us refer to the concept of “environment”, which is understood as a set of all objects and subjects that are not part of the system. The change in their properties affecting the system in question, as well as those objects and subjects, whose properties and behavior changes depend on the behaviour of the system [14]. In pedagogical science, the concept of a pedagogical environment is widespread, defined as a set of social, domestic, organizational, pedagogical and personal conditions of the educational activities of a pedagogical subject (students, lectures, educational institutions in general) [cited in 18, p.123].

The notion of an educational environment is defined in the literature in a similar way. It is understood as a system of influences and conditions of personality formation, as well as opportunities for its development, contained in the social and spatial-objective environment [42].

In turn, E.S. Mertens in her dissertation research defines cultural and educational environment, presenting it as a complex integrated concept, a set of educational, training- and cultural and educative conditions reflecting political and socio-economic development, national cultural and historical traditions, the state of spiritual and moral sphere of the society [24, p. 5].

By environment, we, in our study will understand the total of pedagogical conditions and factors that influence the organization of the educational process. The logic of studying the problem of research also determines the task of considering such a thing as a “content and language integrated environment”, which was first used by David Marsh in 1994 [23]. Initially, this term meant the process, in

which academic disciplines or their parts were taught in a foreign language. A dual goal was set to achieve the ultimate aims of the educational process: the study of a subject and the simultaneous study of a foreign language.

The methodology of content and language integrated learning or CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is widely and successfully practiced in many European universities and is aimed both at learning the language and the content of the subject. Content and language integrated learning is an educational approach in which certain academic courses or their sections are taught through a foreign language with a dual practical output, namely, studying the content of a particular course in combination with simultaneous improvement of a foreign language [35].

The peculiarity of a foreign language for students of non-linguistic faculties lies in the possibilities of expanding and deepening vocational training, including the active learning and research activities, as well as the forming of an integrated style of thinking. We believe that using the CLIL methodology allows us to form and develop intercultural interaction skills, a multicultural view of the world and surrounding objects from different points of view; to get acquainted with the professional terminology in a foreign language and to learn it and at the same time to improve the competences within the language being studied.

Based on the above, we will understand a **content and language integrated environment** as the process of bilingual education, in which non-language academic disciplines are taught in a foreign language.

The concept of “non-language faculty student” is also fundamentally important for our study. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia [15] describes this concept as a university student, in some countries of a secondary educational institution student. Student age is a phenomenon directly related to the development of higher education. K.D. Ushinsky [Ushinsky, cited in 1] called this age “the most decisive”, because this period is a very active time of intensive work on oneself, determining the future of a person.

L.D. Stolyarenko characterizes students as a “special social category, a specific community of people, organizationally united by the institute of higher education” [34, p.736]. According to the definition of I.A. Zimnyaya, “students include people who purposefully, systematically master knowledge and professional skills, distinguished by the highest educational level, by the most active consumption of culture and by a high level of cognitive motivation” [45, p. 384]. B.G. Ananyev believes that the period of life from 17 to 25 years is important as the final stage of personality formation and as the main stage of professionalization. According to B.G. Ananyev, by the age of 17, the personality has created optimal subjective conditions for the formation of skills of self-educational activity [1].

Thus, in this study, we will consider a **non-linguistic faculty student** as a young person receiving a higher

professional non-linguistic education with a high level of cultural and cognitive activity.

Summing up the process of establishing the author’s terminological system, we note that in our study the training of non-linguistic faculty students for intercultural interaction will be understood as a process of gradual bilingual formation of the professional attitudes and skills necessary for an adequate and effective implementation of intercultural interaction. We consider the intercultural interaction as an expediently organized, content and language integrated environment. This type of interaction results in the generation of new forms of cultural attitudes and values, as well as in a comprehensive change in principles and approaches to the implementation of international professional activities.

The description of the process of preparing students of non-linguistic faculties for intercultural interaction and the development of its effective implementation requires the realization of a theoretical and methodological analysis of the research on this topic. The search for academic literature has revealed only one research on the process of preparing students for intercultural interaction in terms of their foreign language teaching [17].

For understanding the essence of the considered formation of a student’s personality, let us also turn to the research, firstly, related to the study of problems of preparing students for intercultural interaction in the process of vocational training, and secondly, to the research dedicated to the core competences of an expert, contributing to the effective involvement of this process in the intercultural dialogue.

During the analysis of research of different levels belonging to different academic genres, and dedicated to the designated issues, we focused on the following aspects:

- peculiarities of constructing pedagogical systems, models of the formation of the personality traits in question;
- theoretical and methodological orientation of the problem consideration;
- content and methodological support of the process of their formation;
- distinguishing the pedagogical conditions for the functioning of the proposed systems.

In the designated logic, we describe the results of the performed analysis, representing the positions that can be projected onto the plane of our research.

The theoretical and methodological basis for the study of these issues is the integration of approaches, which allows for a more holistic view of the subject of study. A complex consisting of cultural, personal, activity, competence approaches is considered effective for solving the problem of preparing for intercultural interaction from various positions: personal, activity, system and cultural (E.I. Polyakova) [27], system, activity, cultural (O.A. Chekun) [6], cultural and competence (S.I. Garmeva) [12], etc. The problem of the formation of a personality in a multicultural

educational environment is studied from the position of the systemic, environmental, dialogical approaches by K.A. Tunkina [36], a complex of approaches of the first-order (environmental, axiological, culturological), second-order (personality-oriented, activity, competence), third-order (acmeological, synergistic, qualimetric, etc.) by Yudakina [43].

According to the peculiarities of our research, we consider the systemic and activity approaches as a general scientific basis; the cultural approach as a specific pedagogical strategy and the integrative approach as a practice-oriented strategy of our research. And these approaches of arranging the educational process are necessary and sufficient for us.

The description of the processes of formation of the pedagogical phenomena under consideration is carried out through models, systems, and techniques that are meaningfully different from each other. As it is shown by the analysis of models and systems for preparing for intercultural interaction, in many respects they are structurally similar, representing in general form the block-modular arrangement of the target, meaningful, procedural, technological or procedural, evaluative and effective components.

A theoretical model of the level-by-level development of students' interest in intercultural interaction is noteworthy in terms of operational representation of the process of preparing for intercultural interaction offered by E.I. Polyakova [27]. According to the author, the implementation of this model in educational practice with the account of the dynamics of the development of signs of intellectual, emotional and volitional nature, allows increasing the efficiency of development of the studied process in the educational space of higher education.

The model of pedagogical support of university students proposed by O.K. Kozlitina also deserves special attention. [19]. The developed model is aimed at training students for intercultural interaction through the formation of their core competences for intercultural interaction and reveals the content of the activity in its components: pedagogical support (organizational and pedagogical activity) and didactic support (methodological activity).

The analysis of models and systems allows us to distinguish various principles of their functioning: dialogue, diatropicity, integrity, creativity [28]; systematic, dialogical interconnection of cultures, interconnection of the emotional and the rational, the conscious and the unconscious, the purposeful and the spontaneous in the formation and functioning of value systems, the combination of reproductive and creative principles of assimilation and dissimilation of cultural values, subjectivity [2].

Methodological support of models and systems is represented by a variety of pedagogical technologies, forms and methods. Let us name the most interesting of them from the standpoint of our research. V.N. Karpenko [17] describes the productivity of conducting training on the formation of the experience of intercultural interaction in the classroom

conditions and their subsequent transfer into real practice, which allows us to consolidate the knowledge gained in the form of behavioral skills. According to O.K. Kozlitina [19], the arrangement of students' extracurricular activity through creative work in the student discussion club, meetings with native speakers, participation in festive and competitive events are also aimed at providing preventive and operational assistance to students in overcoming their intercultural difficulties. N.V. Polikasheva proposes the use of training, role-playing games, symposia, conferences as effective ways to carry out multicultural education [26].

The research determining the potential of the content and language integrated environment for the development of students substantiates a wide range of methods for its arrangement (creative / research / social projects, role-playing and business games of sociocultural and professional orientation, creative workshops, use of authentic texts in a foreign language of an integrated character, etc.), ensuring the formation of a global picture of the world by means of a foreign language, interaction of native and studied cultures in the process of learning a foreign language; possibility of self-realization, free choice, implementation of informal communication with stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the proposed models is determined by the majority of researchers in compliance with certain pedagogical conditions. Let us single out the most relevant of them to solve our problem:

- targeted activation of the motivational and value component of educational activities; the arrangement of independent work of students in the process of solving problems in the framework of intercultural-oriented learning (E.I. Polyakova) [27];
- interdisciplinary nature of education, which provides a logical relationship and professional orientation of the subjects taught in higher education (M.V. Votintseva) [38];
- arrangement of the educational process based on the provisions of the "dialogue of cultures" concept, ensuring self-development of the student's personality, its integration into the systems of the world and national cultures, knowledge of their own identity and understanding of another person (O.A. Chekun) [6];
- creating a language environment conducive to "immersion" of students in the sphere of foreign language culture; integrity of vocational language, cultural language and intercultural training, which is the basis of the content of foreign language teaching for non-language faculty students (O.A. Chekun) [6].

The necessary conditions for preparing for intercultural interaction, distinguished by different researchers [31; 9], are also called the introduction of elective courses, the introduction of original programmes, and the involvement of students in socially-oriented games with intercultural character.

Thus, the readiness of a modern non-linguistic faculty student for intercultural interaction in a global world is widely recognized. Acceptance of intercultural values, the

essence of which are peacemaking, cultural diversity, personal dignity and equality, is considered a condition for constructive participation in intercultural dialogue, a significant guideline of life in the 21st century.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis of academic and methodological literature proves the relevance of the problem of preparing non-linguistic faculty students for intercultural interaction in the context of the content and language integrated environment. Nowadays, substantial experience has been accumulated in pedagogy and related areas, which serves as the basis for solving the question posed. At the same time, the accumulated experience cannot be completely transferred to the plane of the problem in question. In this article we tried to clarify the structure and conditions of the process of intercultural interaction. The result of our work is the developed and adequate theoretical and methodological basis for our research which targets study of terms, carries out etymological and contextual analysis, standardizes the author's terminological system and is important for the following development of the studied questions.

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