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## INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AS A MODERN REQUIREMENT TO YOUNG SPECIALISTS

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Nowadays, the world has no boundaries for living and work of people. Young specialists have and take any opportunity to study or work, and probably to stay, in some other developed and prospective country. The main problem they face is poor knowledge of the language and culture of the country they are going to move to. That is why a great attention should be considered on getting knowledge of not only foreign language, but on studying cultural differences of the country, they plan to move to, and their native country. Thus, the issue of international competence is of crucial importance for everyone living in the modern world. The article is devoted to the issue of intercultural competence and argues importance of the skill for cross-cultural communication for young specialists in any branch of economy. The work considers all aspects of the concept. Particular attention is paid to six intercultural constructs, such as the attitude of openness, the attitude of curiosity, knowledge of cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldwide frameworks, skills of non-verbal and verbal communication, skill of empathy, and gives details about each of them. The research proposes intercultural dimensions, such as power of distance, uncertainty index, masculinity and femininity, long/short orientation. Within the last dimension, there is specification of such concept as high context cultures and low context cultures with the examples of each category. The work presents the idea of cross-cultural adjustment, which includes the stages of so-called honeymoon, cultural shock, adjustment and mastery. The research suggests some key success factors for people who are going to go abroad. There are interesting examples of cultural differences of countries, particularly Nordic ones.

**Key words:**

cross-cultural communication, intercultural constructs, cultural dimensions, cross-cultural adjustment.

**Анотація:**

**Добровольська Світлана, Опир Маріанна, Мироненко Наталія, Панчишин Світлана.**  
**Міжкультурна компетенція як сучасна вимога до молодих спеціалістів.**

Сьогодні у світі немає кордонів і кожен може їхати в будь-яку країну, щоб жити і працювати там. Молоді спеціалісти мають і використовують можливості, щоб навчатися і працювати чи навіть залишитися жити в іншій розвинутій і перспективній країні. Основною проблемою, з якою вони стикаються в цій ситуації, є недостатні знання мови та культури тієї країни, куди вони хочуть їхати. Ось чому необхідно приділяти важливу увагу не лише здобуттю знань іноземної мови, а й вивченню культурних відмінностей між двома країнами. Таким чином, питання міжнародної компетентності має вирішальне значення в повсякденному житті сучасного світу. Автори статті порушують питання міжкультурної компетентності, акцентують на важливості цих знань для молодих фахівців усіх спеціальностей і розглядають усі аспекти цього надзвичайно важливого в XXI столітті поняття. У статті також наведено цікаві приклади культурних особливостей різних країн, зокрема Скандинавських.

**Ключові слова:**

міжкультурна компетенція; культурна належність; вербальна і невербальна комунікація; міжкультурна адаптація.

**Анотация:**

Добровольская Светлана, Опир Марианна, Мироненко Наталья, Панчишин Светлана. Межкультурная компетенция как современное требование к молодым специалистам. Сегодня в мире нет границ, и каждый может ехать в любую страну, чтобы жить и работать там. Основной проблемой, с которой сталкиваются люди в этой ситуации, являются недостаточные знания языка и культуры той страны, куда они хотят ехать. Именно поэтому необходимо уделять важное внимание не только получению знаний иностранного языка, но и изучению культурных различий между двумя странами. Авторы статьи поднимают вопросы межкультурной компетенции, акцентируя внимание на важности этих знаний для молодых специалистов различных сфер деятельности, и подробно рассматривают шесть главных межкультурных компонентов, в частности, непредвзятое отношение, любознательность, осознание своей культурной принадлежности, осознанное отношение к особенностям другой культуры, навыки вербальной и невербальной коммуникации, восприятие точки зрения людей, принадлежащих к другой культуре. Кроме того, в статье приведены интересные примеры культурных особенностей разных стран, в частности, Скандинавских.

**Ключевые слова:**

межкультурная компетенция; культурная принадлежность; вербальная и невербальная коммуникация; межкультурная адаптация.

**Problem setting.** This article provides the basis for understanding potential problems of intercultural communication that arise in interactions between people from different cultures. The complex nature of human behavior produces many communication problems. It is for this reason that the work explore how diverse cultural orientations influence the way people perceive and interact with an increasingly culturally diverse world. The overall purpose of this article is to understand causes of intercultural conflicts in different communication settings and how to manage them effectively.

We live in the world of no boundaries for living and work of people. People, particularly young specialists, take any opportunity to study or work, and probably to stay, in some developed, prospective

country. It is not a secret that, in most cases, the problem is in poor knowledge of the language and culture of the country the person is going to move to. Of course, the more languages people know the better. However, knowing English is the first and best step, one should take. It is the language of international communication all over the world. However, it is not enough just to speak the language, way of living, culture, habits and traditions are of great, sometimes crucial importance. Being ignorant in those aspects, one risks failing in business negotiation or in personal relations.

In today's global business environment, it is essential to learn how to navigate across different cultural landscape. The person needs a set of tools to do this: he/she needs to understand how different

countries trade or do business, an insight how different cultures communicate, and a clear idea how different cultures manage people.

**Task setting.** The aim of the article is to analyze aspects of intercultural communication under the current conditions of global migration of young specialists. The work studies six intercultural constructs and describes their peculiarities. Particular attention is paid to cultural “identities”, skills of verbal and non-verbal communication and other essential issues for mastering of intercultural competences.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** Adler and Bartholomew use the terms ‘global’ and ‘transnational competence’. According to these authors, a ‘globally competent’ manager must learn about many foreign cultures, perspectives, tastes, trends, technologies and approaches to conduct business; be skillful in working with people from many cultures simultaneously; be able to adapt to living in other cultures; know how to interact with foreign colleagues as equals [1, p.551-569].

Thus, intercultural competence is increasingly important. According to the Intelligence Unit at Economist, 90% of executives in 68 countries say cross-culture management is their biggest challenge. 70% of international ventures fail because of cultural differences. 71% of employers want college graduates to be intercultural competent. Pellegrino Riccardi, a cross-cultural expert says that “Culture is a system of behavior that helps us act in an accepted or familiar way”.

**Scope of research.** What do we understand by the cross-cultural communication? It takes place when at least two different cultures are interacting and communicating with each other. It is very important especially in this context to understand the different factors that influence cross-cultural communication. The next question we can ask ourselves is also what is culture so what do we mean by culture? Thus, if we look at different manuals or if we look at what research tells us about this issue, we can use the metaphor of culture as an iceberg. Let us say the invisible parts of the iceberg are deeper under lying and they are shaping the different values and the beliefs and the norms that members of the cultures are sharing. These are the parts of collective minds, and invisible part. It is hard to grasp the notion of this part of what we call culture – this is the most visible part. We call this the behavior. Spoken and written words: language fairytales and any other objects, artifacts symbols. This is really a so-called visible part. The visible part is shaped by the underlying assumption and by the behavioral norms shared by one society.

Cross-cultural communication is the field of study that tries to help people from different cultural backgrounds communicate in similar or different

ways among themselves and how they communicate across cultures. Intercultural communication is a related field of study. During the Cold War, the economy of the United States was largely self-contained because the world was polarized into two separate and competing powers – the east and the west. However, changes and advancements in economic relationships, political systems, and technological options began to break down old cultural barriers. Business transformed from individual country capitalism to global capitalism. Thus, the study of cross-cultural communication was originally found within businesses in government by seeking to expand globally. Business began to offer language training to their employees and programs, which developed to train their employees to understand how to act when abroad. With this also come the developments of the Foreign Service Institute or FSI. Through the Foreign Service Act, the government employees received trainings and prepared for overseas posts. There began also the implementation of the worldview perspective in the curriculum of higher education. In 1974, the International Progress Organization with the support of UNESCO and under the auspices of Senegalese president Leopold Sedar Senghor held an International conference on “The cultural self-comprehension of Nations”, which called upon the United Nations member-states to organize systematic and global comparative research on the different cultures of the world, and to make all possible efforts for a more intensive training of diplomats in the field of international cultural cooperation, and to develop the cultural aspects of their foreign policy. In the past decade, there has become an increasing pressure for universities across the world to incorporate intercultural and international understanding and knowledge into the education of their students. International literacy and cross-cultural understanding have become critical to a country’s cultural, technological, economic and political health. It has become essential for universities to educate, or more importantly, transform, to function effectively and comfortably in the world characterized by close, multi-faceted relationships and permeable borders. Students must possess a certain level of global competence to understand the world they live in and how they fit into this world. This level of global competence starts at the ground level – the university and its faculty – with how they generate and transmit cross-cultural knowledge and information to students.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC and U) developed the intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Republic by teams of experts representing 100 colleges and universities from across the USA. The rubric

identifies outcomes with descriptors of increasing level of competence.

A summary of the six intercultural constructs follows:

- The attitude of openness is demonstrated when the person is open to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. One suspends judgment in valuing your interaction with them.

- The attitude of curiosity means that the person asks complex questions about cultures. One can articulate answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.

- Knowledge of cultural self-awareness means that he/she articulates insights into his/her own cultural rules, assumptions, and biases.

- Knowledge of cultural worldwide frameworks demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements, which are important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices.

- When the person has the skills of non-verbal and verbal communication, he or she can articulate a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication. One skillfully negotiates a shared understanding based on those differences.

- The skill of empathy means that people can interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of their own and more than one worldwide. They demonstrate the ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feeling of another cultural group.

What cultural diversity matters? Michael Gavin said: "Know better. Do better." We need a diversity of knowledge to cope with the problems of today and uncertainty of tomorrow.

Let us consider each of the six intercultural constructs in more details.

Intercultural openness begins with an attitude of intercultural openness. Person is open to interact with others who are culturally different, in particular

- people from a different country;
- people, having different passport than you;
- people, speaking a different language.

People suspend judgment when interacting with cultural differences.

Intercultural curiosity means people are interested in learning about other cultures. They start with a simple question and move to more complex ones. Eventually they see multiple perspectives and diverse answers based on cultural differences. Some differences we may see and some differences we may not see unless we research them.

The leading scholars and researchers of intercultural competency who developed the Association of American Colleges and Universities Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE

Rubric identify the attitude of curiosity as a key construct of intercultural competency. These same scholars articulated the developmental process of improving intercultural curiosity [5].

The development of intercultural curiosity begins by stating a minimal interest in learning more about other cultures. Next the person developing curiosity asks simple and surface questions about other cultures. These questions may be focused on language or festivals or foods.

The third step in development of curiosity is asking deeper questions about different cultures and then making the effort to seek correct answers to those questions. Questions may address diversity in gender roles, levels of hierarchy in management or the importance of relationships when doing business.

The final phase of development is reached when the person asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates the answers to those questions plus can also reflect on multiple cultural perspectives.

The idea of cultural self-awareness expects people understand their own cultural thinking, rules and biases. They can articulate your cultural identity, rules and biases, and you no longer prefer only your own cultural perspectives. Cultural self-awareness means that people are comfortable with new cultural perspectives and move from seeking sameness to seeking complexity based on cultural differences. According to Confucius, all people are the same; it's only habits that are different.

The development of intercultural self-awareness starts with minimal awareness of people's own cultural rules and biases even those shared with others in your cultural group. Person may be uncomfortable identifying cultural differences with others. He/she might not be aware of that you prefer direct communication because your cultural group prefers direct communication.

The next stage of development in self-awareness is when person identifies his/her own cultural rules and biases with a strong preference for those from his/her own cultural group. The third stage is to recognize new perspectives about cultural rules and biases. People are not looking for sameness. They are comfortable with complexities in what new perspectives offer. They may be aware of your preference for direct communication but recognize culturally different others may effectively use indirect communication.

The final stage is the ability to articulate complex insights into one's own cultural rules and biases. People are aware of how their culture shaped these and know how to recognize and respond to one's own cultural rules and biases resulting in a shift of one's self-description. Here person may adapt from only using direct communication when the need arises. The knowledge of cultural self-awareness is, at the

minimum, understanding one's own culturally determined identity, rules, and biases.

As a person develops cultural self-awareness not only can his/her articulate your own cultural identity, rules, and biases, but he/she also begins to move from strongly preferring only one's own cultural view to becoming more comfortable with new cultural perspectives. Cultural self-awareness leads people to progress from looking for sameness to seeking complexity based on cultural differences. Among the cultural "identities", one can distinguish the following, particularly

- Hobbies
- Gender
- Nationality
- Race or ethnicity
- Family background
- Abilities, talents, or disabilities
- Religion
- Educational background
- Home/neighborhood/geographic roots
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic status
- Work experience

Another constituent is revealed in cultural worldwide frameworks. Mastering the idea, person understands the elements important to members of another culture as well as history of a different culture. People get acquainted with the religion of a different culture, its economy, government. An important point is to realize if a person understands the communication styles of a different culture, holidays and practices, music and sports.

Development of the knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks begins with a surface understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, communication styles, economy, or beliefs and practices. Phase two demonstrates a partial understanding followed by the third phase of an adequate understanding. The fourth phase is demonstrating a sophisticated understanding.

Non-verbal communication is an important constituent of intercultural competence. Non-verbal communication is the process of communicating without the use of words, facial expressions, body language, gestures, postures, etc. there are such types of non-verbal communication:

1. kinetics (the communication through body language, facial expressions, gestures, postures, eye contact)
2. artifacts (you learn how the appearance of the person speaks a lot about his personality)
3. proxemics (the distance maintained by a person while communicating with another tells you a lot about the relationships)

4. chronemics (the use of time in communication tells you about how punctual and discipline the person is, or how serious the person is regarding the matter)
5. vocalics (the volume, tone of voice, which used by the sender to transmit the information)
6. haptics (the use of touching communication to express emotions and feelings)

Studies are showing that more than 90 % of all the messages that we are given are non-verbal messages. For example, when we talk about non-verbal behavior, we can talk about kinetic behavior, that means facial expressions, hand gestures, touching, body contact, eye contact, etc., and proxemic (using of space), Public Display of Affection (PDA), time, etc.

PDA – the first it is a body contact (e.g. shaking hands). So non-verbal communication/body language can be subdivided into:

- Ways of talking (e.g. pauses, stress on words)
- Posture (e.g. slouching)
- Appearance (e.g. untidiness)
- Head movements (e.g. nodding)
- Hand movements (e.g. waving)
- Eye movements (e.g. winking)
- Facial expression (e.g. frown)
- Body contact (e.g. shaking hands)
- Closeness (e.g. invading someone's space)
- Sounds (e.g. laughing)

Verbal communication is the use of words and sounds to express to another person. It can be performed in two ways: that is oral communication and written communication. Oral communication – is face-to-face communication, voice chat, video conferencing or communication with telephone or mobile phone. On the other hand, written communication entails the use of letters, documents, emails, sms, video chat platforms, social media, etc, to interact with people.

The skill of empathy. Humans have mirror neurons which allow us to have empathy with other humans or creatures. They allow us to experience the emotion without being in that situation. People like to know that they're being understood. Absence of empathy creates a communication block. Listening with an empathy means to fully concentrate on what is being said and try to see the world from other person point of view.

The culture covers so many different things. The first, when people talk about new culture most of them have to identify that there is a language barrier. For example, I am a British I go to the States or I speak with an Australian or Canadian. We speak the same language but we don't necessarily understand each other. So language can be a big barrier. When it comes to intercultural communication you will also

have the question of traditions. Thus, one should note different cultural dimensions.

Probably everybody knows Gerald Hofstede [4, p.138]. He was one of the first researchers looking at different dimensions of culture. First of all he said that there is a very important factor that is collectivism factor. That means in what way does culture value individual or collective achievement. For example, France, the UK or also the US are very individualistic countries and cultures.

The next value dimension is power distance (high or low power distance). This is how the society members accept in a quality and power. People can often see in management for example, in some cultures when we have the vertical style of management where is a pyramid of managers and hierarchies, its attitude towards hierarchy in general. There are some cultures, Latin countries, Latin America, Asian countries, where hierarchy is very established and much imposed. We talk about the vertical power distance, the vertical management pyramid. In the UK, or, for example, Australia, the most Scandinavian countries have a horizontal style of management. It's true that students who go and travel to English speaking countries will find it very disconcerting. The high and the low power distance is the question how society adopts and integrates this hierarchy.

The next dimension is uncertainty index. In some cultures, people tend to avoid uncertainty. These cultures are also risk worth. They do not like to take risks and sometimes they do not like to change as well. We can refer France, for example, to this kind of culture.

Another dimension is masculinity and femininity. Basically, we can divide up cultures according to the masculinity, where the prime concentration is success, competition. We can see it in Anglo-North American society.

On the other hand, we've got femininity cultures, where the success is well-being.

The last dimension is long/short term orientation. Some cultures value long-term orientation. That means they don't take into account what we do in fact, today, what does it mean in fact for the future. Often we refer it to the environment. For example, if we pollute today, what does it mean for forthcoming years? What does it mean for the future generation? It is considered to be that the ancient cultures have a quite long term orientation. Short term orientation is more diverse in society because value also results at the short term.

What is orientation? Communication means that there is one person or the person E, the sender is sending through a medium to another person which is the person B. What is very important in this kind of situation is that it might be some disruption. Especially, when we have two people from two

different cultures then it might be an issue with culture itself. Because when the person A says something the person E can understand it in a different way because of the length of the culture. Communication is the basis of our relationships and in the private life is also an organizational setting. So when a person goes on international assignment it is important to be able to communicate with other people in organizational context and also in your private life. Edward T. Hall was the first also talking about the context of cultures [3, p.63]. For example, when we talk about verbal communication he said that there are cultures which are of higher context cultures. The high context means that we need to read between the lines. Because what people say is not always what they mean. And they are not going to the point.

In contrast, some cultures are low context ones. That means that these are cultures that go more straight to the point so there is no need to read between the lines because people are quite direct. However, in the high context cultures it is very important to understand the context, first of all, communication, as well as to understand the second part that is the non-verbal communication. Example of high context culture – Asian, Arab world, Latin Americans, Latin population in general. Low context cultures are mostly North Americans, Scandinavians, and the British.

Moving to another country to live or to work is always a challenge. Not everyone is able to cope with the stress of living in a host country. Among the scientists engaged in investigating this issue the most outstanding is Black & Mendenhall. He describes the period of adjustment to living in a host country in a form of a curve. There are four different phases of cross-cultural adjustment according to Mendenhall [2, p.810-828].

The honeymoon stage occurs during the first week after arrival at the host country. Individuals are fascinated by the new and different culture. The first phase is characterized by so-called honeymoon. This is the phase that is characterized by curiosity and also excitement because everything and everyone is new.

When the newcomers start to cope with real conditions on daily basis, the second stage begins – culture shock stage. The stage is characterized by frustration and hostility to wards the host nation and its people. Not everyone is facing with it. After having spent a few months in another country people might face with the culture shock, which is accompanying with disappointment then also frustration.

The third stage is the adjustment stage in which the individual gradually adapts to the new norm and values of the host country and can act more appropriately than they were before. The adjustment phase is characterized by recovery. So, things are

getting better the person are learning from the new culture accepting the other culture to share the other culture beliefs, to masterpiece the language.

Finally, in the mastery stage, the individual is able to effectively function in the new culture. Mastery phase means that the person more and more understands the other culture and also is more and more adapted to the culture.

Culture shock happens when, for example, people go back to your country – reverse shock happens. People have to adapt to your own culture again. Then vice versa process.

Basically to help people who want to go abroad there are key success factors. Here they are:

- Ø Know your own culture
- Ø Show cultural empathy
- Ø Adopt new culture quickly
- Ø See diversity as an opportunity + leverage it to heighten performance
- Ø Show eagerness to work with other cultures and do not have negative stereotypes
- Ø Be geographically mobile and flexible

For better demonstration, let us consider examples of some countries with quite opposite way of living and culture. For instance, a Norwegian is described in the following way: “If you were to use a colour to describe this person, he would have to be green. He lives in isolation in his home, a place he best describes as “his” and “cosy”. However, he is not the most receptive of people when it comes to visitors.” He is somewhat primitive – but he is honest, straightforward, and all he really wants in life are the simple little pleasures like peace and quiet.

- Stop here, I want to take a photo.
- But, there is nothing here.
- Yes, but I have not seen “nothing” before.

Another funny example of a Norwegian way of thinking is:

- Have you lived in Helsinki all your life?
- Not yet.

Nordic countries use minimum word for maximum message, comparing them to other countries, for example Italians, who use a lot of words to say a little. English also use many words. For example:

*English:* Excuse me, may I just interrupt you for a second...

*Norwegian:* Du? (meaning the same). (Economy of words!)

*English:* Sorry for bumping into you like that... terribly clumsy of me...

*Norwegian:* Oi! (Oops!)

*English:* Sorry, I didn't quite catch what you just said.

*Norwegian:* Hæ? (What?)

Having experienced such misunderstandings, one understands importance of intercultural competence to communicate confidently across cultures. It's a big world for the difference and diversity. How individuals see others is influenced by your cultural perspective, and how others see you is influenced by their cultural perspective.

Conclusions. Cross-cultural communication tries to bring together such relatively unrelated areas as anthropology and established areas of communication. Its core is to establish and understand how people from different cultures communicate with each other. Its charge is also to produce some guidelines with which people from different cultures can better communicate with each other. Cross-cultural communication is a combination of many other fields. These fields include anthropology, cultural studies, psychology and communication. The field has also moved both toward the treatment of inter ethnic relations and toward the study of communication strategies used by co-cultural populations, that is, communication strategies used to deal with majority or mainstream populations.

The study of languages than one's own cannot only serve to help us understand what we as a human beings have in common, but also assist us in understanding the diversity which underlies not only our languages, but also our way of constructing and organizing knowledge, and then any different realities in which we all live and interact. Such understanding has profound implications with respect to developing a critical awareness of social relationships. Understanding social relationships and the way other cultures work is the ground work of successful globalization of business affairs.

It is important to increase intercultural communication in all aspects of human life. Business English students in particular need to be aware of cultural differences in order to develop positive business relations and to avoid frustration when dealing with business people from other cultures. Intercultural communication also helps people to increase their awareness of their own culture. One should observe similarities and differences in cultural behavior. Intercultural communication helps people to overcome potentially embarrassing problems, resulting from different conventions of behavior, politeness and gestures.

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