



DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.186rp2

Study of the level of development of intercultural communication among foreign students of medical specialties at Khoja Ahmet Yassavi International Kazakh-Turkish University

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Abstract

Relevance. Intercultural communicative competence is a priority component of the process of learning a foreign language. At the moment, the question of improving the quality of such skills among foreign students is relevant. This is due to the fact that their ability and success in using a foreign language during education depends on the level of development of their multicultural communicative competence.

Purpose. Therefore, the aim of the scientific work was to evaluate the results of the dissemination of knowledge about Kazakh culture, traditions and customs in Kazakh language classes among foreign students.

Methodology. The article uses various methods of scientific research, in particular, analysis, synthesis, survey.

Results. As a result, it was possible to characterize the level of intercultural communication of first-year foreign medical students who attended additional Kazakh language classes at Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University. It was established that their indicators were quite high. It was proven that such approach could stimulate students' interest in language learning and development of their competence. In addition, the development and spread of intercultural competence among students is positively reflected not only on their educational and professional activities, but also on personal development.

Suggested Citation:

Sheriyeva G, Suleimenova Z, Abitzhanova Z, Isayeva Z, Koshanova N. Study of the level of development of intercultural communication among foreign students of medical specialties at Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University. *Sci Herald Uzhhorod Univ Ser Phys.* 2024;(55):1862-1870. DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.186rp2

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Conclusions. This indicates that such a vector contributes to the development of a successful educational environment in a higher educational institution. The practical value of the work lies in the fact that its results can be used in the formation of methodological materials for training foreign students and developing their knowledge of the Kazakh language.

Keywords: education; traditions; nation; educational and professional training; students of higher education.

Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is one of the prerequisites for the development of the educational environment. This component can be described as the ability of individuals to appropriately express knowledge and skills in different intercultural settings. This issue is especially relevant among young people, since the emergence of intercultural connections, the improvement of personal abilities and its attitude to other cultures takes place in the senior classes at school or a higher educational institution [1; 2]. Intercultural education should be considered as a priority approach to improving communication skills among students. Today, it is important to deepen the ties between Kazakhstani and foreign students. This is caused by an increase in the share of foreigners among students in Kazakhstani universities. Based on this, it is important to form the foundations, on the basis of which it will be possible to strengthen the confidence of young people during communication, thanks to the acquisition of a deep understanding and awareness of the cultural diversity of another language [3-5]. ICC research contributes to equal opportunities for Kazakhstani and foreign students.

It should be noted that the problem of intercultural communication has long been studied in educational scientific doctrine. This is due to the fact that this phenomenon plays an important role not only in the educational sphere, but also in other spheres of society. Attention should be paid to the former, since the topic of this study covers the educational environment.

K. Risager [6] managed to describe a rather complex relationship between language and culture. She believes that this significantly affects the goals and objectives of foreign language education, since the latter should form not only linguistic, but also cultural skills of the students. In turn, A. Holliday *et al.* [7] believe that the use of appropriate forms and means for communication with representatives of different nations by students of higher education is a prerequisite for the successful development of the state's cultural fund in the future. The conclusions obtained by them should be used when describing linguistic and cultural norms and their influence on the development of the translation language. In O. Lysiuchenko *et al.* [8] work on the ICC, linguistic abilities were established and their role in the process of assessing the identity of cultural formations was revealed. This position makes it possible to examine the main approaches, on the basis of which it is possible to improve the system mechanisms of mastering the ICC. According to K. Smakova & B. Paulsrud [9], P. Yelubayeva & A. Mustafina [10] teachers of foreign languages in Kazakhstan strive to help students form and develop individual attitudes, understanding and abilities that express the level of intercultural competence. The consideration of all cultural resources necessary for the formation of educational programs, considering both their advantages and risks, is of great importance in this process.

Therefore, the purpose of the study was to establish the level of intercultural communication competence of foreign medical students at the Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University (IKTU). The tasks in the scientific work were also formed: to reveal the content of intercultural communication; describe priority approaches to its distribution and improvement; conduct a survey of students of Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University; provide recommendations on increasing the level of intercultural communication competence.

Materials and Methods

The method of analysis in the work was used during the division of the general object of scientific research into its separate components. On its basis, the concept of intercultural communication competence was examined. This process involved the study of its constituent elements, as well as distinguishing features. The analysis method was used for an in-depth study of the process of formation and improvement of the level of intercultural communication competence. The synthesis method was used to combine the objects separated during the analysis. This tool became the basis for describing the specifics of the development of intercultural communication among foreign medical students.

In addition, during the research, a survey was organized and conducted among foreign medical students of the Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University. The structure of the questionnaire, which was the main form of the survey, consisted of two parts. The first concerned the socio-demographic component, namely the origin of the participants, their age and gender. The second was aimed at obtaining information about the ICC. All survey participants were also divided into two categories, namely: control group (CG) and experimental group (EG).

The survey was conducted during the II semester of 2020-2021 and the first semester of 2021-2022 academic years. Questionnaire answers were received from 36 foreign students of the Faculty of Medicine. The survey process took place in three stages: training, experiment and final control.

Questions were subjected to preliminary descriptive analysis including Student's t-test with p-values <0.05 considered statistically significant. 100% of the control and 100% of the experimental groups responded to the completed questionnaires. In total, 36 first-year students of the medical faculty took part in the experiment. Among them, 22 respondents attended an additional Kazakh language class, they belonged to the experimental group. The other 14 students were trained in Kazakh language lessons approved by Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University and were part of the control group. As for the gender of the students, 24 of them were male and 12 were female. It is important to note that Kazakh was a foreign language for all participants of the

experiment. The origin of the respondents was from Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The research questions were as follows: “What is the level of intercultural communicative competence of medical faculty students?”; “Are there differences between the levels of formation of intercultural communicative competence of men and women among the participants?”; “Are there differences in the results of control groups and experimental groups of the Faculty of Medicine according to the level of intercultural communicative competence of the participants before the experiment?”; “Are there differences in the results of the experiment before and after the experiment in the control group?”; “Are there differences in the experimental group as a result of the experiment before and after the experiment?”; “What changes occurred between the control and experimental groups after the experiment?”. The obtained results are presented in the diagram.

Results

Intercultural communication plays an important role in the process of interaction of foreign students during the educational process, as well as outside it. The concept on which the teaching of the Kazakh language for the above-mentioned category of students of the Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University is based is the use of didactic approaches. This is expressed in the implementation of various principles related to language directions, taking into account the distinguishing features of the Kazakh language. In general, basic didactic tools lay the foundation for the educational and professional process, which is determined by their conceptual features [9]. In turn, individual subject standards are formed and fixed only in the context of the implementation of special language education. The latter consists in the development of a communicative educational environment with mandatory consideration of the peculiarities of the language, in particular Kazakh. Intercultural communication is a complex structure that includes direct educational, generative and problem-searching activities of students [12-14]. In this process, it is important to establish the principles of optimal coordination of methods of finding solutions to problems, due to the use of principles of visualization and integration of acquired speech skills. The listed methods belong to the general didactic group of tools that are basic in the process of learning the Kazakh language. A systematic approach, which involves the use of all structural and functional educational tools, is important in this process [15; 16].

The algorithm of formation and provision of intercultural communicative competence includes a set of actions, namely teaching, learning and assessment. Its implementation is possible thanks to the choice of effective approaches to the organization, conduct and analysis of students' didactic activities.

The priority of using didactic principles in the development of intercultural communication competence of foreign students is the possibility of equal observance of rules and norms. The latter relate directly to educational and professional activities, namely the methods of assimilation and analysis of educational material, as well as the characteristics of the student body, in particular the age of individuals and their level of knowledge. As a result,

the educational process acquires the features of clarity and systematicity, which provides for the proportional transfer and receipt of learning materials by students [17-19].

In order to logically combine such a contrast of foreign traditions with the national principles of teaching the Kazakh language, it is advisable to introduce and support explicit teaching. The latter consists in the development of the Kazakh national brand and image. Thus, it is necessary to spread national costumes, dishes of national cuisine and other resources that identify the Kazakh nation among other peoples. An example can be encyclopedias of Kazakh culture, which contain information about crafts and everyday life of Kazakhs, films and other works of art of national themes, broadcasts of Kazakh television. It should be emphasized that learning the Kazakh language is a complex and multi-component process. This is expressed in the lack of a single approach to the implementation of such activities, since in this language there are different styles of speaking, listening, reading and even writing.

In addition to the linguistic features of the language, the personality traits of the student play an important role in the formation of international communication. It is about their understanding, motivation and ability level [20-22]. Students are at a conscious age, and the level of their psychological development allows them to fully consciously perceive new data and information. An important role is played by epistemological growth, which is influenced by the pragmatic views of the subjects of the educational environment. Epistemological principles contribute to the implementation of conceptual assessment, which is an indispensable component of the organization of didactic activities. In Kazakhstan, didactic formation of international communication of foreign students is at the stage of development. This is evidenced by the fact that first-year students of medical schools demonstrate a satisfactory level of knowledge [23-26].

In the study, a survey was conducted to determine the specific level of development of intercultural communication competence among foreign medical students of Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University. In the process of surveying, the level of general intercultural competence of foreign students was established, which expresses their success in learning the Kazakh language, traditions, and national traits. The experimental educational process provided for the practical implementation of the skills and knowledge acquired by students in the course of professional activity.

The first question of the questionnaire concerned the level of intercultural communicative competence of medical faculty students. Average scores among the obtained results were calculated. It is important that the higher the average score was, the higher the level of intercultural communication of the student proved to be. The obtained conclusions indicate that the average score among the 4 possible was $\bar{X} = 2.50$. The obtained indicator expresses the average level of development of intercultural communicative competence of medical faculty students. This indicates the need to increase it by reforming approaches to the organization of the educational process, for example, due to the implementation of digital technologies aimed at improving and accelerating the learning of the Kazakh language by foreign students.

The next question of the research concerned the establishment of differences between the level of development of intercultural communicative competence of students by gender. For this, the t-test of independent samples was implemented. As a result, such indicators as

$t = -0.64$, $p = 0.538$ were obtained, and the average score was $\bar{X} = 2.52$ for girls and $\bar{X} = 2.49$ for boys (Table 1). It can be concluded that there is no dependence between the level of development of intercultural communicative competence of students by gender.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by gender of students

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Total med	male	24	2.4980	0.11913	0.640	0.528
	female	12	2.5238	0.11121		

Source: data obtained by the authors during the survey.

In addition, two separate groups of students were formed for the experiment, namely control and experimental. No significant differences between the level of intercultural communicative competence of the

participants of these groups were found before the experiment. In particular, the t indicator was -0.8 , and $p = 0.4$, the average score in the control group $\bar{X} = 2.44$, and in the experimental group $\bar{X} = 2.47$ (Table 2).

Table 2. The level of intercultural communicative competence of CG and EG participants before the experiment

Faculty	Groups	Number of participants	Average point	Standard deviation	t-value	P-value
Medicine	CG	14	2.4422	0.10636	-0.818	0.420
	EG	22	2.4719	0.10588		

Note: $P=0.05^*$.

Source: data obtained by the authors during the survey.

The data that expressed the potential of students in the control group before and after the study were also examined. As a result, a reliable difference between the indicators of the control group before and after the

experiment was established. Accordingly, $t = -10.55$; $p = 0.002$, the average score before $\bar{X} = 2.44$ and after $\bar{X} = 2.66$ (Table 3).

Table 3. The level of formation of intercultural communicative competence of CG participants before and after the experiment

Faculty	Groups	Number of participants	Average point	Standard deviation	T	P-value	Faculty
Medicine	CG	Before the experiment	14	2.4422	0.10636	-10.555	0.002
		After the experiment		2.6633	0.09425		

Note: $P=0.05^*$.

Source: data obtained by the authors during the survey.

The differences of the students of the experimental group, namely their indicators before and after the experiment, were considered separately. The significant differences of such numerical values should be noted, as they are $t = -14.00$ and $p = 0.003$. The average scores,

which have high values compared to the previous ones, namely before $\bar{X} = 2.54$ and after $\bar{X} = 3.79$, testify to the special effectiveness of the educational classes conducted as part of the study (Table 4).

Table 4. The degree of formation of intercultural communicative competence of EG participants before and after the experiment

Faculty	Groups	Number of participants	Average point	Standard deviation	T	P	Faculty
Medicine	EG	Before the experiment	22	2.5476	0.10365	-14.002	0.003

	After the experiment		3.7944	0.42930		
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Note: P=0.05*.

Source: data obtained by the authors during the survey.

The logical conclusion of the process of analyzing the competence of intercultural communication of foreign medical students of the Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University is the identification and description of changes between the control and experimental groups after the experiment. For this, an independent assessment of t-scores was conducted.

It is proved that the average score of the degree of formation of intercultural communication competence in the participants of the control group is $\bar{X} = 2.66$, and in the students of the experimental group $X = 3.79$. This indicates significant differences between these two groups $t = 11.91, p = 0.002$ (Table 5).

Table 5. Changes in indicators of EG and CG students

Faculty	Groups	Number of participants	Average point	t-value	P-value
Medicine	CG	14	2.66	-11.91	0.002
	EG	22	3.79		

Note: P=0.05*.

Source: data obtained by the authors during the survey.

Based on the obtained numerical data, it can be established that the level of intercultural participation of the participants of the experimental group is higher compared to the students of the control groups.

In addition to the statistical data obtained during the survey, special attention should be paid to the attitude of students to the development of intercultural communication in them. The students who were part of the experimental group noted the ease and effectiveness of studying the elements of the communication issue, which is evidenced by the number of examples given by them in the questionnaires. Despite this, both groups encountered problems at different stages of the learning process, for example, when learning how to use medical tools in the Kazakh language. The source of this problem is the lack of properly developed and widespread medical terminology in the educational programs. For this purpose, it is advisable to form a separate group of specialists, which will develop dictionaries and terminological guides of special vocabulary, for example, the names of medical instruments in the Kazakh language.

At Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, it is expedient to continue developing tools for the spread of intercultural communication among foreign students. Priority is given to approaches that consist in retraining teachers in accordance with modern requirements. This step is necessary so that they can independently find problems in the educational and professional activities of foreign students, especially in the process of learning the Kazakh language. To do so, it is advisable to use both traditional methods, such as oral classes, conducting control written forms, and modern ones. The latter include digital technologies that can facilitate visualization, as well as accelerate the learning of the Kazakh language by foreign medical students. An example of their use is the demonstration of special

informational materials with subtitles, the preparation of multimedia games for matching words with images, the development of listening and the expansion of vocabulary.

Thus, the competence of intercultural communication among foreign medical students of Khoja Ahmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University is not at a high level. Despite this, the entrants' completion of additional Kazakh language courses has a positive effect on their potential to implement such communication. This indicates the priority of this approach and the need for its development in the future.

Discussion

The training of medical personnel is a priority task of the educational environment of the state. This process is multifaceted, as it includes a wide range of tools and approaches necessary for its successful implementation. Teaching foreign students is especially difficult, as its effectiveness depends on the level of development of their intercultural communication competence. This issue is actively researched by various scientists with the aim of establishing ways to increase this level, in particular among medical students. For example, W.A. Ou & M.M. Gu [27] investigated general aspects related to the development of intercultural communication in higher education institutions. They established that the internationalization of the educational process is due to the development of dynamic migration processes, new views on transnational education. The problem of formation and consolidation of intercultural competence among students at a high level is relevant for all educational courses. At the beginning of their studies, foreign students find themselves in crisis conditions caused by the peculiarities of the new socio-cultural, linguistic and national environment. For their successful adaptation, as well as the implementation of educational and professional training of the

administration of higher educational institutions, it is necessary to promote the establishment of relations between foreign and local students [28-31]. This will help in overcoming the most common problems that international students face. Among them, insufficient knowledge of the national language, new living conditions, unawareness of national traditions and customs of the host state. In addition, personal barriers such as feelings of anxiety and alienation have a significant impact. The results obtained by the researchers confirm the opinion that during the educational process, foreign students go through complex processes of socio-cultural and legal adaptation. Such conclusions should be used in Kazakhstan, especially when developing curricula and adaptation programs for students from other countries.

K. Makhmudov [32] investigated priority methods of formation and improvement of intercultural communication competence in foreign students. He considers extra-audit activity to be the most effective. It can be implemented both in the form of additional classes and in the organization of tours and cultural program. Such measures are aimed at improving the psychological climate in the educational environment, both among foreign students and domestic applicants. In addition, it is useful to involve teachers in such activities to improve their interaction with students. This will make it possible to establish good relations, on the basis of which it will be possible to ensure the development of the educational environment. The researcher considers it expedient to organize additional classes based on informal approaches. This will contribute to the achievement of educational goals, but in informal atmosphere. As a result, it will be possible to achieve a high level of cooperation between various subjects of educational activity. The findings are consistent with the position identified in this study. This is expressed in the fact that at the International Kazakh-Turkish University, measures to develop the competence of intercultural communication of foreign medical students are organized in the form of additional classes. This contributes to the fact that students can improve their knowledge of the Kazakh language, within the framework of medical education, in conditions convenient for them, which are not in a state of crisis.

Unlike previous researchers, R. Zhumalieva & A. Muratkyzy [33], L. Mirzoyeva *et al.* [34] focused directly on the experience of Kazakhstan and the approaches of higher education institutions to the formation of diverse intercultural communication among students. They noted that the most common aspects are those aimed at combining the processes of adaptation and education of students. The researchers proposed such methods as revealing and developing the creative abilities of foreign students, related to familiarizing them with the authentic Kazakh culture. This process involves the interaction of the national characteristics of the student with the traditional approaches of Kazakhstan. In addition, the priority is the creation of comfortable conditions for foreigners, directly in the context of ensuring the functioning of a normal social and psychological environment. This is possible thanks to special tools used at the university, such as information stands with translation. The formation of intercultural communication has advantages not only for foreigners, but also for Kazakh

students. Because it involves the development of a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures and minorities. For this, researchers consider it necessary to organize group multinational events aimed at achieving common goals. Also, in their scientific work, they noted the role of such an approach as the formation of managerial skills, which is possible thanks to the involvement of foreign students in the social activities of a higher educational institution. The obtained results are intertwined with the conclusions of this study. This is expressed in the perspective of using didactic approaches, as well as combining the activities of Kazakh and foreign medical students. In this context, it is worth paying attention to the subject of general events that should be related to the medical field, for example, visiting medical institutions in Kazakhstan.

I.E. Klyukanov [35] and N. Delante [36] focused directly on one of the main principles of intercultural communication, namely the cooperation of its subjects. In their opinion, this approach allows for quick establishment of high-quality contact between students, in particular, foreigners and Kazakhs. They suggest using simulation games that are based on the didactic principle and involve the creation of special conditions in which students must make decisions independently, as well as analyze the positions of others. In medical education, this approach is quite useful, since the professional activity of these specialists is based on practical skills and abilities that must be demonstrated in crisis conditions. Therefore, they consider it expedient to organize simulation games in order to consolidate such abilities of students as social integration, justice, responsibility. It is appropriate to simulate joint medical operations and other activities involving the involvement of a group of people to achieve a common goal. In this process, it will be possible to develop not only the connection and contact between foreign and Kazakh students, but also to increase the level of their professional knowledge [37-40]. The obtained conclusions should be used during the training of medical students from other countries at the International Khoja Akhmet Yassavi International Kazakh-Turkish University. It is advisable to combine them with the didactic approaches to the formation of intercultural communication described in the study.

In the framework of the discussion, it was possible to reflect not only the theoretical, but also the practical foundations of the researched issue. The positions of the authors coincide with the results obtained in the course of this study. This allows for combining them, with the aim of successfully introducing foreign medical students to the activities and training of Khoja Akhmet Yassavi International Kazakh-Turkish University.

Conclusions

Conducting this research involved studying the procedure for the formation of the ICC in Kazakhstan, taking into account the experience of foreign students who attend additional Kazakh language classes at IKTU. As a result, data were obtained from students, the analysis of which made it possible to establish that there was significant difference between the results of the ICC levels during the experiment between CG and EG students. At the same time, it should be emphasized that there was one in the

variations in the degree of ICC of the EG participants before and after the experiment. This testifies to the effectiveness of the training sessions conducted during the research, based on didactic approaches.

The level of development of ICC is higher among students of EG, in contrast to participants of CG. The effectiveness of the development of intercultural communication among students is evidenced by the fact that, compared to the control group, the experimental group reported the presence of problems when studying the structure of communication issues. In addition, it was possible to prove that the ICC was an important component of the activities of a higher educational institution attended by the foreign students. Its successful development will allow for solving both educational and personal problems of the applicant, which they may face in the process of educational and professional training. Therefore, it is appropriate for IKTU to continue developing educational

programs based on a didactic approach in order to develop intercultural competence among its students. As a result, it will be possible to more effectively reveal the pedagogical skill of teachers, to facilitate the familiarization of foreign students with the Kazakh language, to improve student learning, and to spread national traditions, norms and culture. It is advisable to continue the research on this topic, in particular to consider in the future the ways of introducing digital technologies for teaching foreign students, forming their conscious intercultural competence.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Дослідження рівня розвитку міжкультурної комунікації серед іноземних студентів медичних спеціальностей у Міжнародному казахсько-турецькому університеті імені Ходжі Ахмеда Ясаві

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Анотація

Актуальність. Міжкультурна комунікативна компетенція є пріоритетним компонентом процесу вивчення іноземної мови. Наразі актуальним є питання підвищення якості сформованості таких навичок у студентів-іноземців. Це пов'язано з тим, що від рівня сформованості їхньої міжкультурної комунікативної компетенції залежить їхня здатність та успішність використання іноземної мови під час навчання.

Мета. Тому метою наукової роботи було оцінити результати поширення знань про казахську культуру, традиції та звичаї на заняттях з казахської мови серед іноземних студентів.

Методологія. У статті використано різні методи наукового дослідження, зокрема, аналіз, синтез, опитування.

Результати. У результаті вдалося схарактеризувати рівень міжкультурної комунікації іноземних студентів-медиків першого курсу, які відвідували додаткові заняття з казахської мови в Міжнародному казахсько-турецькому університеті імені Ходжі Ахмеда Ясаві. Встановлено, що їхні показники є досить високими. Доведено, що такий підхід може стимулювати інтерес студентів до вивчення мови та розвитку їхньої мовної компетенції. Крім того, розвиток і поширення міжкультурної компетенції серед студентів позитивно відображається не лише на їхній навчальній та професійній діяльності, але й на особистісному розвитку.

Висновки. Це свідчить про те, що такий вектор сприяє розвитку успішного освітнього середовища у вищому навчальному закладі. Практична цінність роботи полягає в тому, що її результати можуть бути використані при формуванні методичних матеріалів для навчання іноземних студентів та розвитку їхніх знань казахської мови.

Ключові слова: освіта; традиції; нація; освітньо-професійна підготовка; студенти вищих навчальних закладів.