



DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.264bs6

The role of intercultural competence in successful intercultural communication of students in foreign language learning

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Abstract

Relevance. Globalisation, migration, increasing international relations and exchanges create the need for effective communication between people from different cultures and language communities, and therefore the investigation of intercultural competence becomes a relevant issue for foreign language students.

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of intercultural competence in ensuring successful intercultural communication of students engaged in foreign language learning in higher education institutions.

Methodology. This study employed a set of methods of scientific cognition, namely analysis, systematisation, abstraction, and generalisation.

Results. As a result of the study performed, it was possible to explore aspects of successful intercultural communication in students' foreign language learning, such as mutual respect, active listening, flexibility and tolerance, language skills, intercultural literacy, common goals and interests, practice and tolerance for mistakes, and self-awareness. As a result of this paper, it was found that intercultural competence can improve students' motivation to learn a foreign language, as understanding other cultures can make learning more interesting and meaningful.

Conclusions. The study explored that technology in education and online learning can contribute to the development of intercultural competence. In addition, the study found that globalisation processes and migration affect the need for intercultural competence. Educational institutions and teachers can use the findings of this study to develop more effective foreign language teaching programmes, including components that promote the development of students' intercultural competence.

Keywords: globalisation; educational environment; communication; online learning; technology in education.

Introduction

In the world today, there are increasingly more intercultural interactions and exchanges, making

intercultural communication an integral part of everyday life. Foreign language students will interact with people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds and the

Suggested Citation:

Akylbek uulu N, Usupova N, Sartbekova N. The role of intercultural competence in successful intercultural communication of students in foreign language learning. *Sci Herald Uzhhorod Univ Ser Phys.* 2024;(55):2646-2654. DOI: 10.54919/physics/55.2024.264bs6

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ability to successfully communicate with them is essential, and therefore learning intercultural skills is important and necessary to create a more tolerant educational environment. The role of intercultural competence in intercultural communication includes many aspects such as cultural practices, language interaction, interpersonal skills and many more. However, the investigation of all these aspects requires a systematic and integrated approach, which is the problematic of this study.

In her study, S. Abduxalimova [1] emphasises the significant role of intercultural discourse in modern education, especially in teaching foreign languages. The researcher is convinced that intercultural discourse is becoming increasingly common and significant, especially in the context of foreign language learning. According to the scholar, the study of intercultural discourse contributes to a better understanding of the interaction of different cultures in the communication process. Therefore, to analyse the processes of interaction more thoroughly between cultures in the modern world, especially in the context of teaching international students, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth study of the role of intercultural competence in successful intercultural communication.

Researchers J. Luo and C.K.Y. Chan [2], define intercultural competence as a complex and multifaceted set of skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for successful interaction and communication with representatives of different cultural groups. This competence, the scholars say, includes the ability to understand and respect the diversity of cultures, to adapt to different cultural contexts, and to seek common ground and cooperation in multicultural environments. It is necessary to investigate the specific features of intercultural competence in greater detail, as well as its role in intercultural communication during students' foreign language learning.

N.O. Kasymova [3] states that modern society is in a new phase of its development, moving into the era of information society. Global processes, according to the scientist, occurring in the modern world, influence people's behaviour, their worldview, and their ideas about the world. The scholar argues that when developing their own cultural identity, most cultures of the world have an inherent tolerance and respect for other cultures. Hence, more research is required to explore intercultural competence in effective intercultural communication among students.

According to E.N. Gorbova [4], traditions and values of culture are preserved only in the presence of carriers of this culture. The desire to preserve one's cultural identity, according to the scholar, can create difficulties for the socialisation of the new generation, especially in the case of refugees and immigrants who must adapt to a new society with its own values and culture. This highlights the need for additional study of the basics of intercultural communication, especially in the context of globalisation, to better understand how best to integrate into the new society while maintaining one's identity.

In his study, I. Klyukanov [5] highlights the fundamental principles on which successful intercultural communication is based, especially in the interaction between representatives of different cultural environments. According to the researcher, the key principles include respect and openness, adaptability and flexibility, active

listening, awareness of one's own biases, cultural literacy, tolerance and constructiveness, and language competence of the person encountering a culture that is new to them. The researcher emphasises the importance of beginning to understand another culture with active listening and learning, including an interest in its history, values, and customs. There is a need to investigate this issue in greater detail to better understand and expand the knowledge base of intercultural communication.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the intercultural competence in guaranteeing effective intercultural communication of students of higher education institutions engaged in foreign language learning.

Materials and Methods

The study of the role of intercultural competence in intercultural communication of higher education students in learning a foreign language employed a set of methods, including analysis, systematisation, generalisation, and abstraction. These methods were applied to investigate multiple aspects of intercultural competence and its impact on students' intercultural communication in the context of foreign language learning.

Using the method of analysis, this study investigated the key aspects, namely mutual respect, active listening, flexibility and tolerance, language skills, intercultural literacy, shared goals and interests, practice and tolerance for mistakes and self-awareness, which underlie students' successful and profound intercultural communication in foreign language learning. Using the method of analysis, research was carried out towards understanding how intercultural competence can have a positive impact on students' motivation in the context of foreign language learning. The use of this method illuminated how knowledge and understanding of different cultural aspects can stimulate students, making the learning process more exciting and valuable. Thus, the use of the method of analysis helped to clarify how intercultural competence can serve as a powerful motivator for students, making learning more attractive and meaningful, complementing students' level of motivation, and strengthening the link between language learning and its cultural context.

The study employed a systematisation method, which allowed for a more thorough examination of various aspects related to intercultural communication, migration, and globalisation. Notably, the use of this method helped to systematise the information, highlight the key factors and dynamics within each of these aspects, which allowed for a better understanding of current trends and deeper insight into the essence of the problem of students' intercultural communication when learning a foreign language. Using the method of systematisation, it was possible to examine contemporary phenomena related to the specific features of multicultural environments in which students learn a foreign language. The application of this method also provided an in-depth understanding of the effects of globalisation, including the impact of media and technology on intercultural interaction. Thus, using the method of systematisation it was possible to cover more detailed and multifaceted aspects of intercultural communication, which highlighted the importance of intercultural competence as a tool for successful

intercultural communication of students from different cultures when learning a foreign language.

Using a synthesis method, the main nuances of the research were identified, which included highlighting the impact of intercultural competence on intercultural communication, identifying key skills and knowledge that facilitate successful interaction, and assessing the impact of globalisation and migration on the need for intercultural competence. Using a generalisation method, the role of technology in education and online learning in facilitating the development of intercultural competence was explored. The abstraction method helped to identify the main components of intercultural competence necessary for successful intercultural communication of students. The abstraction method helped to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the role of intercultural competence as well as its impact on foreign language learning.

Results

Within language education, intercultural competence plays a crucial role as it encompasses all aspects of language and speech. This means that it is not only integrated into language learning, but also affects students' ability to understand and interact with people from other cultures. Scientific units and language facts themselves become a source of enrichment of students' sociocultural knowledge. Inversely, the deeper the students are immersed in intercultural interactions, the more they learn and understand the language and the cultural characteristics associated with it. This relationship between linguistic competence and intercultural understanding acts as an essential element of the educational process, contributing to deeper and more culturally informed foreign language learning.

Foreign language students are increasingly confronted with cultural diversity and intercultural interactions in today's world. Migration and globalisation lead to the fact that students may meet people from different cultures in their learning environment and this creates the need to develop intercultural competence [6]. Students with intercultural competence usually can interact more successfully with individuals from different cultures because they have the skills to understand and adapt to different cultural backgrounds. These students can communicate successfully, respect the diversity of cultural values, and understand the nuances of cross-cultural interactions. Consequently, the development of students' intercultural competence in learning a foreign language becomes critical in the conditions of the modern world, where globalisation and migration make cultural diversity more explicit and significant. Students learning a foreign language must master not only grammar and vocabulary, but also the skills and knowledge necessary for successful communication in a multicultural environment.

In the context of language education, the importance of cultural elements and their influence on teaching materials cannot be underestimated. The introduction of cultural components into learning resources is an essential aspect that enriches and expands the understanding of language, for language is always interconnected with the sociocultural context. Providing cultural analyses in learning materials enhances students' knowledge of the culture of the country whose language is being studied and

enables them to better understand customs, values, and ways of communicating. Moreover, it is necessary to emphasise the undoubted importance of critical appreciation of the cultural elements introduced in the training manuals. The purpose of this critical appraisal is to prevent the adoption of outdated stereotypes, bias, and misunderstandings. Such a critical approach promotes profound and objective thinking about cultural characteristics and warns against accepting distorted perceptions [7]. These analyses and critical perspectives on cultural elements contribute to the development of students' intercultural competence. It enables students to interact more successfully and appropriately in multicultural environments, which promotes a greater understanding and respect for the diversity of cultures and more effective interaction in today's globalised world.

The modern educational landscape, especially in the context of foreign language learning, is undergoing considerable changes with the proliferation of online education. These changes affect not only the ways of learning, but also have an important impact on students' motivation, engagement, and language proficiency. Particular attention should be paid to analysing and evaluating how students perceive online English language learning and their readiness to use technology in the learning process. An important aspect is not only changing the format of teaching, but also revising the students' perception of the educational process. These transformations have a substantial impact on modern learning and can contribute significantly to educational development and educational outcomes [8, 9].

Students actively interact with modern innovative methods and technologies in learning a foreign language, which brings a level of dynamism and efficiency to the educational process. This includes not only accessing a variety of online resources, applications and programmes, but also understanding and making informed use of them in learning. Innovations in education and technology have a significant impact on students' motivation, keeping them actively involved in the learning process and strengthening communication with students from different countries. The use of modern technologies in teaching a foreign language opens the way to a profound understanding of foreign culture. These innovations contribute to sustainable motivation of students as they can practise their language skills and see the results. It also helps to increase students' confidence in their own language abilities, which is important in the learning process. Moreover, the use of innovative technologies creates unique opportunities for practical intercultural communication. Students can interact with native speakers and other students, which enhances their skills in interacting with people from other cultures. All these factors together contribute to more effective learning, strengthen students' motivation and develop their intercultural competence, which is still a key aspect in today's education system.

Intercultural competence can have a positive impact on students' motivation to learn a foreign language. Learning about other cultures and countries can make learning a foreign language more entertaining, as students can see the value in understanding other cultures and communicating with people from them. Intercultural competence can help students understand how language learning relates to

achieving their personal and professional goals, which can increase their motivation as they see the practical benefits of language proficiency. Intercultural awareness allows students to interact more deeply with native speakers and immerse themselves in the local culture, which can also make the learning process more engaging. Intercultural awareness can motivate students to take part in cultural activities and exchanges, which will enrich their experiences and increase their motivation to learn the language.

The role of motivation in the context of intercultural communication of students from different countries in learning a foreign language cannot be underestimated. Motivation is an integral factor that influences successful interaction between students from diverse cultures and contributes to mastering foreign language more effectively. It is worth examining in greater detail how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence and encourage students to learn a foreign language and to take an active part in intercultural communication. Intrinsic motivation is an internal stimulus that pushes students to learn a foreign language. This type of motivation can be related to personal interests, hobbies, and the desire to learn about another culture. For instance, a student may have a passion for the music, film, or literature of a particular country and want to understand them in their native language. Intrinsic

motivation is usually more resilient and promotes deeper immersion in language and culture. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is related to external factors such as academic requirements, grades, rewards, or commitment to others. For example, a student may study a foreign language because of the need to complete a syllabus or get a grade. Extrinsic motivation may be less stable, but it also plays a role in maintaining interest in language learning [10, 11]. Students' motivation also influences their readiness to engage in intercultural communication. Students who are strongly motivated to learn a language and understand another culture tend to take an active part in communication with native speakers of that language. They may be more interested in sharing cultural experiences, understanding other people's customs and values, which contributes to more successful intercultural communication. Thus, motivation is a key factor in ensuring students' successful intercultural communication when learning a foreign language. It encourages students to actively engage in learning and sharing cultural experiences, which ultimately fosters a more profound understanding and respect for the diversity of cultures.

It is necessary to investigate the features and aspects of successful intercultural communication of young people while learning a foreign language (Table 1).

Table 1. Aspects of successful intercultural communication in foreign language learning

No.	Aspects	Feature description
1	Mutual respect	Students should show respect for each other's cultural differences and characteristics. This includes respect for another country's language, customs, traditions, and beliefs.
2	Active listening	Listening to each other attentively and with understanding is a key aspect of successful intercultural communication. Students should try to understand and experience the interlocutor's point of view and cultural context.
3	Flexibility and tolerance	It is important to be flexible and tolerant of cultural differences. A willingness to adapt to a new cultural environment and an understanding that there are no "right" and "wrong" ways of doing things can contribute to successful communication.
4	Language skills	Possessing good language skills is a fundamental aspect. The ability to express oneself clearly and effectively in a foreign language helps to break down language barriers.
5	Intercultural literacy	Understanding differences in communication, including cultural practices, non-verbal cues and worldviews, is important to prevent misunderstandings.
6	Common goals and interests	Having common goals and interests can bring students closer together and promote more harmonious communication.
7	Practice and tolerance for mistakes	Students must be willing to practice and learn from their mistakes. Being open to corrections and improving communication skills plays a significant role.
8	Self-awareness	Understanding one's own cultural identity and being able to reflect on one's own beliefs and stereotypes helps to better understand how they can influence communication.

Source: compiled by the authors of this study.

Successful intercultural communication includes these aspects and requires students and faculty to be diligent and open to enriching intercultural experiences. Notably, information and digital technologies play a significant role in successful intercultural communication today, which can serve as an effective tool for improving intercultural competence. They allow students to access a variety of resources and materials related to different cultures, which enriches their knowledge and understanding. Digital technology can encourage greater student engagement in the learning process. They can independently explore cultures, interact with materials, and complete assignments, which enhances the learning of intercultural

knowledge and skills. Digital interventions can be scalable and accessible to a wide range of students, making them attractive for integration into educational programmes [12, 13]. It is important to apply digital technologies in the context of learning, considering the specific goals and needs of students. This maximises the benefits of such interventions.

The development of intercultural competence in students in higher education institutions is facilitated by the use of virtual reality (VR) technology. VR provides students with the opportunity to interact with different cultures in an immersive environment, which fosters a more profound understanding and appreciation of cultural

differences [14-16]. VR technology allows students to experience cross-cultural scenarios virtually, creating a sense of being in a different cultural environment. This helps them to develop intercultural communication skills, improve their ability to adapt and resolve intercultural conflicts. In addition, VR technology intensifies student engagement in the learning process and creates conditions for practical application of intercultural skills [17]. It also allows students to develop empathy and respect for different cultures [14, 15, 18]. Thus, the use of VR technology in education contributes to a more effective development of intercultural competence in students by providing them with innovative tools for a deeper and more practical understanding of intercultural issues.

Intercultural competence plays a fundamental role in successful intercultural communication. Students equipped with intercultural skills can interact more effectively with people from different cultures, which enhances the communicative processes of foreign language learning [19-21]. Effective mastery of intercultural competence enables students to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings that arise in intercultural communication. This helps to create more harmonious and productive intercultural relationships. Intercultural competence involves understanding and adapting to different cultural contexts. Students with these skills can cope more easily with changes in the intercultural environment and interact successfully with people from different cultures. Strengthening intercultural competence helps to increase students' motivation to learn a foreign language [22, 23]. Realising that they can apply their knowledge to real-life situations makes the learning process more valuable and stimulating. Modernisation of educational methods and the use of technologies such as online resources and virtual reality can contribute to a more effective development of intercultural competence in students.

Discussion

Many researchers address the fact that intercultural competence contributes to the understanding of differences between cultures, including specific customs, values, and communication norms. This is important when learning a foreign language as students need to be prepared to interact with people from other cultures. Students who are equipped with the appropriate skills are more effective in making contacts, resolving conflicts, and enriching their experiences while learning a foreign language [24-26]. It is worthwhile to investigate the positions of the researchers and compare with the results of this study.

L. Mockus et al. [16] argue that access to modern technologies has a considerable impact on students' motivation. The researchers concluded that the ability to use mobile devices promotes higher motivation in students, which affects their engagement and interest in the learning process. Researchers also emphasise the importance of creating accessible and user-friendly mobile applications and resources for distance learning, as they can facilitate more effective learning and increase student motivation. Comparing with the results of this study, it is worth noting that modern technologies do have a significant impact on students' motivation in the educational process, particularly when learning a foreign language.

M. Angelova and Y. Zhao [17] argue that online collaborative projects between students from different countries play a vital role in the development of English as a foreign language skill, intercultural awareness, and language competences. The researchers emphasise that such projects promote active interaction between students from different cultural contexts, leading to a better understanding of foreign cultures, improved language skills, and intercultural competence. Students involved in such projects, the researchers said, also gain English language teaching skills as they work as mentors to their English language learner peers. Thus, the researchers are convinced that online collaborative projects between students from different countries contribute to the development of multiple skills and competences, including linguistic, intercultural, and English language teaching skills. Comparing the results of this study, it is important to agree that online projects based on the use of digital technologies do stimulate the development of intercultural competence in students, especially in the context of successful intercultural communication in foreign language learning. These projects provide students with the opportunity to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, enrich their experiences and develop skills that can be highly valuable in a multicultural society [27, 28].

M. Byram [18] argues that the development of intercultural communicative competence is a more complex process than just language learning, as it includes the ability of students to effectively interact and understand representatives of other cultures, to consider differences and similarities in interaction, and to adapt their behaviour and communicative strategies depending on the context. The researcher is convinced that the development of intercultural communicative competence requires from students not only knowledge of the language, but also the ability to analyse cultural characteristics, to be aware of their own biases and stereotypes, as well as the readiness to constructively resolve conflicts and find common ground with representatives of another culture. The scholar stresses the importance of integrating the teaching of intercultural communicative competence into curricula where students can practice and apply the knowledge gained in practice. Comparing with the results of this study, it is worth noting that intercultural communicative competence is an integral part of education, and the development of this competence is becoming increasingly important in the context of modern society. Teaching students not just the language, but the ability to interact with people from different cultures, is an effective way to prepare the next generation for complex international challenges and tasks [29-31].

P. Chaya and B. Inpin [19], pay attention to the significance of using films and mobile educational technologies to improve speaking skills and intercultural communicative competence of higher education students. The researchers' study emphasises that the integration of modern technologies, specifically the use of mobile applications, into the learning process contributes to a more effective development of students' speaking skills and the ability to interact successfully with people from other cultures. Comparing with the results of this study, the increase in students' motivation during the application of

modern technologies confirms the importance of using modern teaching methods, such as mobile applications and multimedia resources, to achieve the goals related to intercultural communicative competence and language skills development [32, 33].

D.K. Deardorff [20] emphasises the importance of analysing and assessing intercultural competence in higher education. The researcher warns against a simplistic understanding of this concept and instead calls for its consideration as a complex and multifaceted aspect that includes knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes not only in the context of intercultural communication but also in the educational process. The author also highlights that intercultural competence is not limited only to foreign language proficiency, but also includes understanding and respecting different cultural practices, norms, and values. The assessment and development of intercultural competence, according to the scholar, is becoming increasingly important in modern education, especially in the context of globalisation and multinational university environments. The scholar also stresses that the assessment of intercultural competence should be multilevel and cover various aspects including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components, which allows for a more comprehensive measurement of the level of students' intercultural competence and the development of techniques for its further improvement [34; 35]. Comparing the results of this study, it is necessary to agree with the scholar's opinion that an integrated approach to intercultural competence is important and indispensable during foreign language learning and the formation of intercultural competence in successful intercultural communication of students.

M. Akdere et al. [21] argue that the use of VR technology can considerably contribute to the development of intercultural competence in students and learners. Researchers note that VR offers students the opportunity to immerse themselves in immersive intercultural scenarios where they can interact with people from other cultures, overcome cultural barriers, and develop intercultural communication skills. The researchers argue that VR provides a more realistic and in-depth experience than conventional teaching methods by allowing students to literally "transport" into the environment of another culture, allowing them to better understand and appreciate cultural sensitivities, gain adaptation skills, and develop the ability for more successful intercultural communication. Furthermore, the researchers emphasise that the use of VR in education can be particularly useful in situations where students are unable to physically travel to other countries or interact with people from other cultures. VR creates virtual cross-cultural environments that can compensate for this deficiency and enrich the educational experience [36-38]. Thus, comparing with the results of the present study, the use of VR technology can indeed considerably improve the development of intercultural competence in students by providing them with innovative and effective means to learn and practice interacting in a multicultural environment.

Comparing the results of this study with the positions of other researchers, intercultural competence plays a significant role in students' successful intercultural communication when learning a foreign language. The

mutual understanding of cultural differences, flexibility in communication, motivation, and the influence of modern technology all agree with the findings of other researchers and emphasise the importance of intercultural competence in education and intercultural interaction.

Conclusions

The study explored aspects of successful intercultural communication such as mutual respect, active listening, flexibility and tolerance, language skills, intercultural literacy, shared goals and interests, practice and tolerance for mistakes, and self-awareness. The paper also found that intercultural competence can increase students' motivation to learn a foreign language, as understanding other cultures can make learning more engaging and meaningful. The paper investigated the features of using modern technologies in education and online learning that contribute to the development of intercultural competence. The impact of globalisation processes and migration on the need to develop intercultural competence was also highlighted.

The findings of the conducted study provided a deeper insight into the key aspects necessary for successful intercultural communication, especially when students are learning a foreign language. These aspects cover mutual respect, active listening, flexibility and tolerance, language skills, intercultural literacy, shared goals and interests, practice and tolerance for mistakes, and self-awareness. Notably, the importance of respect for cultural differences and cultural heritage in intercultural communication, conscious listening and understanding of other people's points of view, which contributes to profound mutual understanding, readiness to adapt and tolerance to the diversity of cultural norms and values. In addition, integral are language skills that help the students express themselves clearly and effectively, as well as understanding of the nuances of intercultural communication, including non-verbal cues and worldviews. Sharing common goals and passions brings students closer together, while maintaining active practice and a willingness to learn from their own mistakes helps to foster intercultural dialogue among youth, during which reflection on their own cultural identities, beliefs, and stereotypes helps to better understand their impact on intercultural communication. These aspects form an integral part of successful intercultural communication and can serve as a reference point for both students and teachers seeking to improve the process.

Future researchers dealing with the topic of intercultural competence and intercultural communication in foreign language learning should pay attention to the methods and curricula that can contribute to the development of students' intercultural competence, as well as the effectiveness of various pedagogical methods and resources.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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Роль міжкультурної компетентності в успішному міжкультурному спілкуванні студентів при вивченні іноземної мови

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Анотація

Актуальність. Глобалізація, міграція, розширення міжнародних зв'язків та обмінів створюють потребу в ефективній комунікації між людьми, які належать до різних культур та мовних спільнот, а тому дослідження міжкультурної компетенції стає актуальним питанням для студентів, які вивчають іноземні мови.

Мета. Метою цього дослідження було з'ясувати роль міжкультурної компетентності у забезпеченні успішної міжкультурної комунікації студентів, які вивчають іноземну мову у вищих навчальних закладах.

Методологія. У дослідженні використано комплекс методів наукового пізнання, а саме: аналіз, систематизація, абстрагування та узагальнення.

Результати. У результаті проведеного дослідження вдалося дослідити такі аспекти успішної міжкультурної комунікації під час вивчення іноземної мови студентами, як взаємоповага, активне слухання, гнучкість і толерантність, мовні навички, міжкультурна грамотність, спільні цілі та інтереси, практика і толерантність до помилок, самосвідомість. У результаті дослідження було виявлено, що міжкультурна компетентність може покращити мотивацію студентів до вивчення іноземної мови, оскільки розуміння інших культур може зробити навчання більш цікавим та змістовним.

Висновки. Дослідження показало, що технології в освіті та онлайн-навчання можуть сприяти розвитку міжкультурної компетентності. Крім того, дослідження виявило, що процеси глобалізації та міграції впливають на потребу в міжкультурній компетентності. Освітні установи та викладачі можуть використовувати результати цього дослідження для розробки більш ефективних програм викладання іноземних мов, включаючи компоненти, що сприяють розвитку міжкультурної компетентності студентів.

Ключові слова: глобалізація; освітнє середовище; комунікація; онлайн-навчання; технології в освіті.