

## DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE TOLERANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY MULTILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* Higher education involves a complex process for the development of cognitive, social, emotional and cultural characteristics of the individual of future specialists; including forming special behavior patterns that in the future will provide competitiveness and success of employment of the university graduates. Intercultural communicative tolerance is considered to be one of the individual's significant social and professional qualities which are in demand of the modern society. The importance of intercultural communicative tolerance formation is caused not only by the processes of globalization of professional mobility in the modern world, but also the need to create comfortable coexistence of students in the university multilingual educational environment, to reduce conflicts and to prevent the clash of cultures – bearers of various systems of values and standards.

*The aim* of the research is to reveal the role of intercultural communicative tolerance in the formation of the individual as well as to present a specially designed technology as part of “Foreign Language” learning. The relevance of this research highlights the necessity to shift the emphasis in the foreign language learning process towards practical-oriented learning targeting the development of personal qualities.

*Methodology and research methods.* Methodological framework of the publication is based on the key conceptions of communication-oriented learning. In the process of designing and application of the authors' technology, experimental methods and the method of comparative analysis were used.

*Results and scientific novelty.* The authors' definition to intercultural communicative tolerance is given. The urgency of formation of values and semantic attitudes towards improvement of communicative skills and corresponding world outlook objectives among students is proved. The authors described own technology of development of intercultural communicative tolerance, which is conditioned by the internationalization processes in higher education. The features of applying the technology in the process of learning a foreign language at a university were also revealed. The approbation of new methodological tools showed significantly excessive level of interpersonal and intercultural communicative competence of students which has grown due to the technology applied.

*Practical significance* of the research is confirmed by the positive results, proving the effectiveness of applying the development technology, as well as it identifies the need to introduce similar technologies in higher education.

**Keywords:** intercultural communicative tolerance, development technology, communication-oriented learning, multilingual educational environment.

**For citation:** Beketova A. P., Kuprina T. V., Petrikova A. Development of students' intercultural communicative tolerance in the university multilingual educational environment. *The Education and Science Journal*. 2018; 2 (20): 108–124. DOI: 10.17853/1994-5639-2018-2-108-124

## **РАЗВИТИЕ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ В ПОЛИЯЗЫЧНОЙ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ СРЕДЕ ВУЗА**

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**Аннотация.** Введение. Учебный процесс в высшей школе подразумевает развитие когнитивных, социальных, эмоциональных и культурных характеристик личности будущего специалиста, в том числе освоение конструктивных моделей поведения, которые обеспечат конкурентоспособность и успешность трудоустройства выпускника вуза. Одним из социально и профессионально значимых качеств личности, востребованных сегодня в обществе, является межкультурная коммуникативная толерантность. Важность формиро-

вания у студентов данного качества обусловлена не только процессами глобализации и активизации профессиональной мобильности в современном мире, но и необходимостью создания условий комфортного сосуществования обучающихся в полиязычной образовательной среде, задачей снижения конфликтов и предупреждения столкновения представителей разных культур – носителей различных систем ценностей и норм.

*Цели публикации* – раскрыть роль межкультурной коммуникативной толерантности в становлении личности и представить технологию формирования этого качества в рамках изучения дисциплины «Иностранный язык» в вузе. Актуальность изложенного в статье исследования связана со смещением акцента в методике преподавания иностранного языка на развитие личностных качеств обучающихся.

*Методология и методики.* Методологическую базу работы составили ключевые положения концепции коммуникативно-ориентированного обучения. При разработке и апробации авторской технологии использовались опытно-экспериментальные методы и метод сравнительного анализа.

*Результаты и научная новизна.* Предложено авторское определение межкультурной коммуникативной толерантности. Обоснована сущность формирования у студентов ценностно-смысловых установок на совершенствование коммуникативных навыков и соответствующих мировоззренческих ориентиров. Описана совместно разработанная авторами технология развития межкультурной коммуникативной толерантности, главным стимулом создания которой явилась стремительно набирающая темпы интернационализация высшей школы. Продемонстрированы особенности реализации данной технологии при обучении иностранному языку в высшем учебном заведении. Апробация нового методического инструментария показала существенно выросший благодаря применению технологии уровень межличностной и межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции студентов.

*Практическая значимость.* Положительные результаты апробации авторской технологии позволяют сделать вывод о ее эффективности и возможности внедрения в практику подготовки специалистов в вузах.

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникативная толерантность, технология развития, коммуникативно-ориентированное обучение, полиязычная образовательная среда.

**Для цитирования:** Бекетова А. П., Куприна Т. В., Петрикова А. Развитие межкультурной коммуникативной толерантности студентов в полиязычной образовательной среде вуза // Образование и наука. 2018. Т. 20. № 2. С. 108–124. DOI: 10.17853/1994-5639-2018-2-108-124

## **Introduction**

Modern society is characterized by diversity and openness; therefore, the efforts of many organizations, including educational institutions, are aimed at international cooperation and developing partnerships in solving common problems. One way to implement such interactions within higher education institutions is the internationalization of the educational process by attracting foreign students to Russian universities. In this regard, the need for Russian students to speak a foreign language is insufficient. They also need to be eager to have intercultural communications based on respect of human dignity and individuality. In addition, they should be open to other cultures, able to show empathy, possess necessary skills to prevent conflicts, and to resolve them in non-violent ways.

Therefore, in order to create conditions for the effectiveness of interpersonal and intercultural communication, to prevent collisions of different value systems and norms, to reduce conflicts and enhance comfortable coexistence of students in a multilingual educational environment, it is necessary to carry out activities in higher educational institutions aimed at creating appropriate worldviews, ideals and principles, and at developing intercultural communicative tolerance, being one of the most significant social and professional qualities.

The relevance of this research highlights the necessity to shift the emphasis in the foreign language learning process from studying the structure of a language, its grammatical and lexical features, rules and norms of sentence construction towards practical-oriented learning targeting the development of personal qualities [1–2].

There is a contradiction between the requirements of the Federal State Standard of Higher Education, approved by the Russian Federation Ministry of Education and Science, regarding the need to develop students' general cultural competencies, and the insufficiently developed theoretical and methodological technologies aimed, in particular, at the development of intercultural communicative tolerance within a university.

The aim of this research is to reveal the role of intercultural communicative tolerance in the formation of the individual as well as to identify the features of the development of students' intercultural communicative tolerance in the university multilingual educational environment through foreign language learning.

## **Literature Review**

There is a great demand to be interculturally competent which is closely related to education and especially to foreign language learning. The aim of language policy is not only to teach/learn a language for communication

purposes, but also by effective intercultural communication to support understanding and tolerance, respect for different cultures and identities. In order to implement cultural aspects into foreign language teaching, we need to understand the basic terms and relationships between them [3].

However, when learning foreign languages, serious socio-cultural problems arise. Therefore, the analysis of the socio-cultural component of language education deserves special attention, and education from the socio-cultural positions seems to be the most effective model for the formation of a foreign language person as a subject of the dialogue of cultures [4].

Some researchers speak of a geo-cultural approach. It can be considered from different perspectives, including linguo-cultural ones. It suggests that modern nations are a community of people united by culture and language, rather than a common area [5].

The need to create conditions for the effectiveness of interpersonal and intercultural communication in the university multilingual educational environment and harmonization of relations becomes, in our opinion, a national problem, as it implies not only teaching a profession and obtaining the required qualifications, but also the formation of a person as a citizen<sup>1</sup>, the development of personality cognitive, social, emotional and cultural qualities, which are necessary for successful future work, self-development, and self-improvement. It also suggests integration into national and international culture, promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation both between individuals and cultures. All these can be achieved through humanitarian education, particularly a foreign language [6–8].

Considering the features of foreign-language learning, S. D. Bersirova suggests paying attention to intercultural communicative tolerance, which helps overcome barriers in professional communication and is formed in the process of reflecting the 'different' through 'familiar' [9].

Although the researcher does not define this type of tolerance, it becomes clear that through the use of the language of another culture, intercultural communicative tolerance becomes a significant social and professional quality reflecting the individual's ability to respect other cultures, traditions, values, beliefs, the absence of stereotypes and prejudices. In this regard, intercultural communicative tolerance expresses the desire for constructive communication and the achievement of mutual understanding within the framework of intercultural interaction.

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<sup>1</sup> Закон РФ «Об образовании» = The Law of the RF "About education" 2002. Available from: <http://ozpp.ru/zknd/obra/> (In Russ.)

The opposite concept of 'tolerance' is the concept of 'intolerance' associated with discrimination and prejudice which represent one of the biggest obstacles in the process of mutual activity in the multicultural society of the XX century. Despite the fact that mankind has accumulated a huge intercultural experience in the modern world there are movements that bring intolerance and misunderstanding. Thus, society and people's lives are polarized, disrespect for members of society with different social identities (national, ethnic, tribal, religious) is evident [10].

K. M. Levitan suggests that the greatest effectiveness of the development of personal qualities is achieved in the process of socialization, which produces and develops a "socially adapted personality" [11, p. 76–77]. Since life in society is impossible without socialization, the introduction of social norms of tolerance through learning the basics of tolerant behavior and communication, particularly with representatives of other cultures, becomes an indispensable condition for harmonization of social relations and must become a resulting basis for constructing a tolerant way of life.

Therefore, the development of tolerance as an attitude of the individual, possessing the skills of tolerant communication and behavior, takes place in a communicative context. In this regard, it seems to be reasonable to mention the existence of the concept 'communicative tolerance' in pedagogics and psychology.

Communicative tolerance, according to V. V. Boyko, is "a characteristic of the relationship of the individual to people, showing the extent of tolerating unpleasant or unacceptable mental states and actions of the partners of interaction" [12]. E. A. Samodelkina (Kalach) identifies communicative tolerance as a complex personal quality that manifests itself in the system of interpersonal relations and defines a special tolerant, peaceful, conflict-free, respectful, empathic, equivalent type of interaction of the individual with other people [13]. E. S. Grebenets argues that communicative tolerance, being a personality quality, is collective. Its features may indicate "the ability to self-control and self-correction, and people with the high level of communicative tolerance are compatible with different people" [14]. According to V. M. Grishuk, the process of communicative tolerance formation is viewed as a specially organized tolerant interaction, which presupposes the formation and development of a sustainable tolerant attitude of people to each other, and the inclusion of communicative tolerance in the personal value system [15].

Consequently, communicative tolerance is associated with understanding social activity, which implies willingness to implement interpersonal and intercultural communication based on respect and acceptance of differences, as well as the desire for constructive interaction in various social situations.

Intercultural communicative tolerance can be considered as a kind of tolerance that is manifested in the process of interpersonal and intercultural communication. In addition, examining it from the point of view of belonging to the intercultural communicative competence, it is defined as “a stable conscious meaningful personal quality, implying a neutral attitude to differences based on the absence of prejudices, expressed in readiness for the implementation of interpersonal and intercultural communication based on respect, understanding, recognition and acceptance of differences, accompanied by the absence of fear to express and defend one’s own point of view” [16].

Consequently, the role of intercultural communicative tolerance can not be overemphasized as it represents a significant social and professional quality needed for the formation of a personality having both the needed orientation values and communication skills.

## **Materials and Methods**

Within the framework of the research of intercultural communicative tolerance as a personal characteristic, the experimental work with diagnosing the level of formation of students’ intercultural communicative tolerance at the initial and final stages was carried out, the special development technology was used in the process of teaching a foreign language, and the level of the development of students’ intercultural communicative tolerance was revealed.

In total, 132 first year of education students of Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education “Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin” (Yekaterinburg, Russia) were involved in the research [16]. The students formed 2 groups: experimental (76 students) and control (56 students).

As part of the research, the levels of intercultural communicative tolerance formation (high, middle and low) with their distinguishing features were developed.

The high level of students’ intercultural communicative tolerance has the following characteristics: students’ knowledge of their own rights; a high degree of students’ awareness of the essential and meaningful characteristics of tolerance (having in-depth knowledge); knowledge of the specifics of conducting equal dialogue at the interpersonal and intercultural levels; awareness of the right of any person to be different and to have one’s own opinion; the formation of one’s own attitude towards the concept of ‘tolerance’; neutral or positive attitude to the personality differences; a positive attitude towards the development of tolerance as a valuable characteristic of the individual; accepting oneself as a tolerant person; a marked desire for equal dialogue; acti-

ve use of methods of tolerant interpersonal and intercultural interaction; showing positive reaction to the personality differences and expressing benevolence towards others.

The middle level of students' intercultural communicative tolerance has the following characteristics: partial students' knowledge of their own rights; lack of students' awareness of the essential and meaningful characteristics of tolerance (having perfunctory knowledge); insufficient knowledge of the specifics of conducting an equal dialogue; ambiguous attitude to the rights of other people; ambiguous attitude to the concept of 'tolerance'; negative attitude to the personality differences; ambiguous attitude towards the development of tolerance as a valuable characteristic of the individual; uncertainty in accepting oneself a tolerant personal; implicitly expressed desire for equal dialogue; inactive use of methods of tolerant interpersonal and intercultural interaction; showing negative reactions to the personality differences and expressing malevolence towards others.

The low level of students' intercultural communicative tolerance has the following characteristics: lack of students' knowledge of their own rights; a low degree of students' awareness of the essential and meaningful characteristics of tolerance (lack of in-depth knowledge); lack of students' knowledge of the specifics of conducting an equal dialogue; unwillingness to accept the human right to be different and to have one's own opinion; the lack of one's own attitude towards the concept of 'tolerance'; extremely negative attitude to the personality differences; a negative attitude towards the development of tolerance as a valuable characteristic of the individual; unwillingness to accept oneself as a tolerant person; lack of desire for equal dialogue; failure to use the methods of tolerant interpersonal and intercultural interaction; showing negative reactions to the personality differences and expressing aggression towards others.

In order to elaborate tolerance, the intercultural communicative tolerance development technology was specially designed and applied in the foreign language classes at the university.

Since the purpose of the discipline is to develop the foreign language skills at a level sufficient for everyday and business communication as well as to solve problems in different areas (communication with representatives of other countries, orientation in a modern multicultural world, obtaining information from foreign sources, satisfaction of cognitive interests in other areas, the study of the values of other countries) and the result of teaching is intercultural communicative competence formation, therefore, the foreign language



ge learning in the framework of the development technology is communication-oriented, meaning that it is carried out with the help of such communicative technologies, as group discussions, exchange of opinions, role games, problem situations, round tables, case studies, brainstorming, etc.

In addition, the greatest effectiveness of learning, in our opinion, is achieved through constant teacher monitoring activity, with the teacher having all the qualities of a tolerant person, actively demonstrating them in interaction with students, ensuring educational process regularity, maintaining a favorable psychological environment of productive joint activities, and preventing destructive conflict situations.

## **Results and Discussion**

The diagnosis of the intercultural communicative tolerance formation level at the initial and final stages of the research was carried out with the help of the following methods: group discussions and exchange of opinions about tolerance, V. V. Boyko's multifactorial questionnaire that reveals tolerant and intolerant attitudes in communication [16–18], and observation of students.

Within the framework of group discussions and exchange of opinions, the following questions were discussed:

- a) What are my and other people's rights?
- b) What does respect mean?
- c) What is tolerance?
- d) Who is a tolerant person?
- e) What is my attitude to tolerance?
- f) Do I consider myself tolerant?
- g) When do I experience negative emotions?
- h) Is tolerance important for my life?

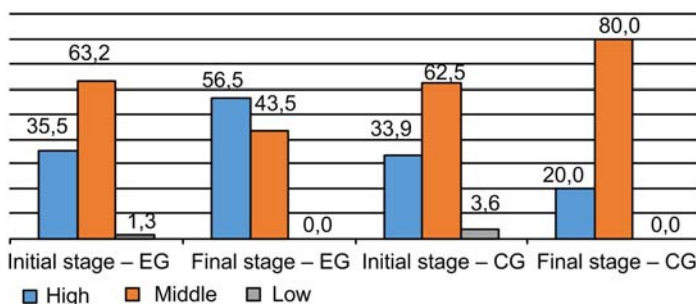
Based on the qualitative and quantitative data obtained at the initial stage of the research, the following conclusion was drawn: the level of students' intercultural communicative tolerance was insufficient and there was a need for its development. After applying the intercultural communicative development tolerance technology through communication-oriented foreign language learning, the level of formation of the tolerance was re-diagnosed. Based on the received data, the conclusion was the following: the level of students' intercultural communicative tolerance was sufficient in the experimental group, but it remained insufficient in the control group.

In order to reveal the level of the development of students' intercultural communicative tolerance in the experimental and control groups, a compara-

tive analysis of the data was carried out. The following results were received (fig. 1):

- in the experimental group (EG), there was an increase of 21% in the proportion of students having the high level of intercultural communicative tolerance, a decrease of 19.7% having the middle level, and 1.3% having the low level;

- in the control group (CG), there was an increase of 17.5% in the proportion of students having the middle level of intercultural communicative tolerance, a decrease of 13.9% having the high level, and 3.6% having the low level.



Levels of students' intercultural communicative tolerance in the experimental and control groups at the initial and final stages, %

Positive dynamics of intercultural communicative tolerance development in favor of the experimental group allows making a conclusion about the effectiveness of applying the technology.

Therefore, application of the students' intercultural communicative tolerance development technology through communication-oriented foreign language learning is aimed at achieving the following results:

- to form and consolidate deep knowledge of the concept 'tolerance', of one's own rights and the rights of other people, of conducting an equal dialogue, and developing the readiness for such dialogue;

- to form students' attitude to the concept 'tolerance' and to the rights of other people, the willingness to accept the right of any person to be different and to have their own opinion, and to form a positive or neutral attitude to differences;

- to develop the willingness to improve knowledge, skills, and to form a positive attitude towards the development of tolerance as a valuable characteristic of the individual;

- to develop the emotional-volitional willingness of students to call themselves tolerant;

- to master the methods of tolerant interpersonal and intercultural interaction based on respect, understanding, recognition and acceptance of differences, to learn to show good behavior in response to differences.

The students' intercultural communicative tolerance development technology through communication-oriented foreign language learning initiates the construction of a new education model, which, according to A. Petrikova, can help "reorganize the learning process into the development process" with the teacher not only transmitting knowledge acquired in another social context, but also developing personality in certain periods of life [19]. The researcher's consideration, in our opinion, seems to be reasonable in the context of a university multilingual educational environment.

Although, it should be noted that there is a lack of technologies aimed at student's personality qualities development due to the necessity of searching for new forms of using various technologies in the university educational process, the willingness of teachers to combine them with traditional learning methods as well as the insufficient educational activities resource support. Therefore, such technologies as the students' intercultural communicative tolerance development technology through communication-oriented foreign language learning can be useful in higher professional education, and with necessary support, they can significantly facilitate and accelerate the process of mastering a foreign language, stimulate students' activity and independence, and increase learning motivation.

As a result of the research, the tutorial "Five lessons for developing tolerance" was published and applied in the education process of the Ural Federal University (Yekaterinburg, Russia) [20].

The handbook contains texts and exercises aimed at developing tolerance in the English language classes as part of the formation of students' intercultural communicative competence. During the work on the tutorial, particular significance is given to the communication-oriented learning approach, which implies the teacher actively interacting with the students as well as the students working together with each other. The material in the tutorial is taken from authentic sources and is selected in order to maximize the students' cognitive abilities, involve them in the education process, and motivate them to the learning activity.

It should be pointed out that application of the tutorial in the education process is aimed at achieving the following results: the students acquire deep knowledge about tolerance, raise awareness of the importance and need for respectful attitude to surrounding people, and develop the skills of tolerant interpersonal and intercultural interaction. All these positively affect univer-

sity education quality, which provides the graduates with both the professional education, and significant personality qualities formation.

The practical significance of the tutorial "Five lessons for developing tolerance" is confirmed by being given a positive evaluation of the Ural Federal University Academic Council for specific scientific and applied research results and for the meaningful personal contribution of the authors to the development of science and education of the university.

It is also important to mention that the tutorial is approved and recommended to use within higher educational institutions of Armenia, Great Britain, Hungary, Russia, the Slovak Republic, the USA and Croatia as an educational source aimed at students' tolerance development in the English language classes.

## **Conclusion**

Having done the research of intercultural communicative tolerance, its role in the formation of the individual possessing the necessary social and professional qualities that can be useful in the university multilingual educational environment and in future professional activity with the aim of establishing and maintaining harmonious social relations, the following conclusions can be made:

- intercultural communicative tolerance is a sustainable conscious meaningful personal quality that shows the individual's readiness to carry out interpersonal or intercultural communication based on respect, understanding, recognition and acceptance of differences;
- the development of intercultural communicative tolerance in foreign language classes implies the experience of students to use the language of another culture in order to develop their linguistic, cultural and communicative skills;
- the results of the diagnosis at the initial stage of the research show the need for educational activities aimed at developing intercultural communicative tolerance of students within a university;
- the results obtained at the final stage of the research confirm the importance of intercultural communicative tolerance development technology, realized through communication-oriented foreign language learning.

A promising area for future research can be the application of the development technology in the basic educational program for students of language specialties. In addition, the technology can be used as an additional course for university teachers with the focus on the development of their intercultural communicative tolerance and enhancing their skills to work with an inter-

cultural audience. The developed tutorial “Five Lessons for Developing Tolerance” can be applied as an additional source aimed at further students’ intercultural communicative tolerance development within a multilingual university educational environment.

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**Вклад соавторов.** Все авторы приняли равнозначное участие в подготовке данной статьи и изложенном в ней исследовании.

Статья поступила в редакцию 25.11.2017; принята в печать 10.01.2018. Авторы прочитали и одобрили окончательный вариант рукописи.

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**Contribution of the authors:** All authors have contributed equally to writing this manuscript and to the research conducted.

Received 25.11.2017; accepted for publication 10.01.2018.

The authors have read and approved the final manuscript.