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**К ВОПРОСУ НЕОБХОДИМОСТИ УЧЕТА МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНЫХ КОМПОНЕНТОВ  
КОММУНИКАЦИИ  
В СИТУАЦИЯХ МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОГО ОБЩЕНИЯ**

*Анализируется необходимость учета межкультурных компонентов коммуникации в различных ситуациях межкультурного общения, обращение к которым позволяет подтвердить предположение о том, что формирование межкультурной компетенции обучающихся является необходимым и целесообразным в современной системе языкового профессионального образования.*

*This article examines the significance of cross-cultural awareness among young people in their international daily life. A thorough consideration of cross-cultural components provides a rationale of the expedience and the importance of cross-cultural competence for promoting a better professional development in the contemporary system of linguistic education.*

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникация, ситуации межкультурного общения, компоненты межкультурной коммуникации.

**Key words:** cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural context, cross-cultural components.

Young people today are more and more in international contexts. The reasons for this development are modern technology in communications and an increased mobility. It is nowadays natural to have daily contacts with fellows of the same age from other regions, countries and even continents, and staying in a foreign culture for a short or long period of time is no longer a surprising phenomenon. This puts new demands on preparing young people to meet unknown environments, new attitudes and new ways of communicating. When we discuss communication we often distinguish between the spoken or written modes. This distinction can however be seen in the light of a complexity when it is actually necessary to see communication as a mixture of these forms and also with more variables in mind. For instance, when a young person chats with foreign people or plays a net-based game on the Internet with other young participants, we move into difficulties when defining communication which is new and challenging. We are familiar with the distinction of written and spoken messages in the same culture, for instance in our own culture. But when it is a matter of instant communication between two persons from totally different cultures, the awareness and knowledge of cross-cultural communication can be claimed to be more relevant than knowledge of characteristics of the spoken or written modes. We must be aware that analyzing effective cross – communication is central for the understanding and we need to see all the cultural components which are present in a communication process. This can lead to the observation that it can be more central to release the right responses than to send the right messages in order to be successful in communication.

The cultural differences in communication can be immense and lead to misunderstandings. Cross-cultural communication in a foreign language is definitely a demanding task and may lead to disastrous misinterpretations and communication break-downs. At the same time, it goes without saying that there are subtle differences in the way we communicate which can be explained by factors such as the participants' gender, age, personal interests, level of education, ethnicity and social class. These factors which influence the way we speak are evidently also there in addition to the cultural ones observable in cross – cultural communication. But since a cross – cultural awareness is demanded today for young people's communication, we need to learn more about this phenomenon and thus see the different parts in it.

Young people today are in an international setting and should therefore be guided in their international encounters in order to be not only successful but also satisfied with their communication skills. To offer young people an intercultural competence should therefore be regarded to be both necessary and relevant. What is intercultural competence? Four features can be identified. Firstly, learning languages is central. Knowing a language and in addition a foreign one makes us ready for new encounters and personal developments. New ideas can be introduced and old values and norms can be questioned. Secondly, it is essential that we are able to value differences observed. Young people tend to

question well – established values and traditions. Furthermore, they also often have an interest in being with fellows from diverse backgrounds and this is an asset to be encouraged and valued. It is then vital that they have the sensitivity and the understanding that people far away see the world differently. Thirdly, in order to reach their aims in communication, young people should be expected to show warmth and attentiveness when building new relationships in a wide range of cultural contexts. Fourthly and lastly, in order to be intercultural competent young people should be receptive to new ideas and to seek to extend their understanding into new and unfamiliar fields.

The means of communication in many international contexts is one of the big languages of the world. The language of communication in cross – cultural encounters could be English, Russian, Chinese or Spanish, among others. In this international and intercultural communication in a foreign language it is worth stating that accuracy tends to be down-graded. This means that in spontaneous and fast communication, often with the help of modern technology, there is little room for detailed accuracy and correctness. Focus is on communication and understanding each other. There is thus a shift from perfect accuracy to communicative needs. In this communication, native – speaker competence is not a realistic aim, native speaker usage in e.g. English or Russian is a valuable model, but not a target. An attitude of perfectionism can be disastrous for young people who are on their way of establishing cross – cultural contacts. What we need to be aware of in international and intercultural communication, instead of correctness of forms or structures, is the subtle differences in language usage which may contribute to misunderstood feelings or attitudes. In this way, we could work towards an increased intercultural awareness as a means of working against conflicts.

In what follows, two illustrations of these subtle language differences are provided. They are significant and should be taken into account in intercultural communication irrespective of what actual language is used.

The first illustration is from the lexical level. Words can be interpreted and understood in diverse ways. They can be understood in what could be described as an “objective” way. The single word is then defined according to public and legal documentation. On the other hand, words can be understood and interpreted on a more personal, private and emotionally charged level. With this distinction in mind we may realize that just the use of a single lexical item of the same language can lead to emotional reactions not foreseen in cross-cultural communication. In the English language it has been shown that words such as *marriage*, *boy*, *pig*, *challenge*, and *examination* can be understood in highly different ways by interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds and thereby lead to misunderstandings.

The second illustration is from the discourse level. Messages can be communicated with the help of diverse styles and strategies. One such distinction is elaborate and succinct. The difference lies in the fact that we may use many or few words to express the same thing. In this respect speakers from Russia and Sweden have a tendency of having opposed perspectives. For illustration it is of interest of looking at some greetings sent at holidays which are adequate ways of maintaining bonds of friendship. This communication can today be in the written or spoken mode but irrespective of mode, there may be tremendous variation. To illustrate this difference there are two examples below:

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.*

*May the beauty and the joy of this wonderful holiday be yours to share with the people you love. My seasonal greetings to your fairy – like island and its nice people.*

These two messages are easy to understand but may be misunderstood due to the cultural backgrounds of the participants in cross – cultural communication. The former one is succinct in style but can be considered to be impersonal, strict and even unfriendly in its tone. The latter one is elaborate in style but can be understood as exaggerated, ingratiating and strange. Neither of them can be considered to be more adequate or correct but are characteristic of communication in a certain culture. They are illustrations of grounds for possible cross-cultural misunderstandings.

In a more and more globalized world, young people have certainly realized that great cultural differences exist. They are furthermore aware of the fact that there are different ways of communicating and acting. In order to adapt to social changes in the world we should thus encourage young people to develop their intercultural competence and realize that it is natural that people are different and that we can use observed cultural differences positively to achieve new and challenging goals in international and intercultural communication.

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