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Tolerance as an Integral Part of Intercultural Competence of Prospective Economists

Globalization creates a new era of integrative interaction among nations, economic and political systems and between people. Contacts between representatives of different countries are broadening which is primarily associated with the development of international cooperation, especially in economic sphere in the form of transnational companies, joint ventures, economic zones. Moreover, information, migration, cross-cultural interaction, integration and communication links are intensifying. Taking into account changes in labor demand, we should note as obvious, that in order to increase competitiveness and successful employment students majoring in economics should have both good academic background and intercultural competence and tolerance as one of its key aspects.

Social context of professional activities has become more evident and it determines important role of professional communication including intercultural one in training of students of economic profile. Interdisciplinary knowledge, skills, general adaptation of a specialist and experience in various professional communities is regarded as key competencies. Not only specialists' own profile and professional knowledge are important but the possibility to organize communicative activities in different socio-economic conditions, with members of various professional communities and cultures as well [Зникина, Мамонтова 2004].

Obviously, internationalization of economy in the period of globalization has indicated the demand for highly qualified specialists with professional competence and exceptional understanding of intercultural communication. Numerous complications (such as ineffective cooperation, system errors in management and marketing activities, loss of important contracts, even lowering of market share) appear in particular due to lack of skills of interlocutors to show their attitude to each other in accordance with the norms of this society and immediate expectations of a partner.

In intercultural communication, one should proceed from the fact that communicative behavior of people is an integral part of their national culture, governed by national rules and traditions, based on deep historical roots [Ларина

2003]. Therefore, the issue of tolerance plays an important role in building intercultural competence of prospective economists. The main purpose of the paper is theoretical analysis of future economists' tolerance within intercultural communication as a psychological and educational problem. Accordingly, the tasks that we set are to formulate the concept of tolerance as a key component of intercultural competence which is based on intercultural awareness developed through communication.

P. Donets, L. Znikina, T. Larina, N. Mamontova, T. Persikova, A. Safonova, E. Streltsova, W. Gudykunst and others took up the problem of tolerance within intercultural communication or competence aspects. Almost every scholar who studies intercultural communication gives definition of ethnocentrism, a phenomenon that accompanies intercultural relations that is an inclination to take norms and values of their own culture as a basis in order to express views as to another culture. According to T. Persikova ethnocentrism is emotional attitude, often subconscious, where own nation or culture dominates over the other, own cultural models are considered „normal” and alien are considered „strange”.

This attitude to alien, different and strange exists among people of each nation. According to P. Donets, the feeling of self-superiority is connected with ethnocentrism, which may lead to such phenomena as chauvinism and fascism, or on the contrary can revoke the feeling of „hard done by” which comes from the idea that your nation takes a low place in the global hierarchy of nations. Such status asymmetry is the main obstacle for successful intercultural communication. We can identify three main reasons for the cross-cultural interaction problems:

- 1) differential character of cultural values in different cultures; each individual system of cultural values is typical for a particular social group;
- 2) fuzzy configuration (blurred boundaries) of social relations; one and the same person is a member of different social groups and relations between each pair of individuals can not be unambiguously defined clearly in terms of their social status, (for example relations of a subordinate with his boss can be complicated by the factor, that they except labor relations may have friendly relations, their children can go to one and the same school, they may have mutual friends or relatives or belong to the same sports club etc.);
- 3) existence of dominant ideologies in cultural groups [Донет 2001].

According to modern studies, human individuality is stipulated by personal perception of the world and it is exposed only in interaction with others. For effective intercultural communication, dialogue of cultures is essential.

V. Safonova considers that it is necessary to introduce the following components of a foreign culture to students namely: the dominant system of values, historical background, political, economic, national, artistic, religious culture, traditional and new material culture, industrial and economic potential as part of a system of values, social and cultural characteristics of language etiquette, oral

and written communication skills and participation strategies in a foreign language. One should take into consideration social and cultural norms of behavior, language, specified behavior, national forms of communication as a feature of life in the country of the language under study, including grammar and lexical forms of the language, within formal and informal communication, with social life and culture of a foreign country as a member of the global community [Сафонова1991].

In this case, proper communication with other cultures results in mutual enrichment of cognitive and emotional spheres. According to P. Donets, communication with other cultures is perceived by modern cross-cultural education as an opportunity to release the potential synergy of cultures. As in general pedagogy it focuses on formation of a personality who is the object of pedagogical activity, development of his/her special traits of character, values, recording of behavior samples etc. [Донец 2001].

Below is a list of qualities that W. Gudykunst and Y. Kim postulate as necessary preconditions for effective intercultural and communicative behavior:

1. Openness to new impressions and experiences;
2. Empathy for other cultures;
3. Accurate perception of similarities and differences in own and foreign cultures;
4. Ability to describe strange behavior, instead of giving negative evaluation to it and classifying it as inappropriate, meaningless or absurd;
5. Maintain some distance as to own conduct and behavior of others;
6. Ability to establish relationships with representatives of another country and not only superficial;
7. Less egocentric behavior (intention firstly to understand the behavior of others, and then to classify it) [Gudykunst, Kim 1984].

In communication people tend to evaluate each other's positions as to its own culture and internal standards that are typical for their culture that is from the perspective of ethnocentrism. Trying to predict communicative behavior of the interlocutor, they consciously or unconsciously rely on their previous experience in communication, but if the communicants are members of different cultures, this experience differs greatly, and it may complicate the process of communication [Ларина 2003].

Involvement of students in intercultural communication should be done within a comparative context. In order to follow the prominent Ukrainian poet T. Shevchenko's advice „study foreign (culture), and don't forget about your own”, one should be on solid ground in his own culture to attract students to a foreign culture. Acquiring new knowledge should be based on of their own culture awareness. This approach leads to broadening of mind and personal development.

V. Kuzovlyev, V. Korostelov, E. Passov studied the process of learning of foreign languages in terms of their importance to society and formation of an individual. Scientists state that exchange of information, people to people, contacts, exchanges of cultural values are impossible without knowledge of foreign languages. In addition, the authors emphasize that people who know a foreign language, usually can appreciate and better understand their national culture, their language. In the process of studying a foreign language people acquire new personal qualities: self-confidence, active lifestyle, love for work, citizenship, patriotism, internationalism [Кузовлев, Коростелев, Пассов 1991: 83–90].

As it is known from scientific research, that people perceive and interpret information under condition that it is compatible with what they previously known. Naturally, intercultural communication can be considered as a process that takes place in human consciousness so that images of other cultures are consistently compared with native culture images. Foreign culture is studied in comparison with native culture and native culture is most deeply absorbed due to interaction with similar or different ways of perception of another culture in case of interaction with it [Фурманова 1993].

The best way to learn a new culture lies in the so-called dialogue of cultures [Moorjani, Field 1988: 25-45]. Any attempt to understand a foreign culture begins with those realities and values in their own culture which are either missing or misinterpreted. In particular national culture highlights the scale of values for comparison with other cultures. Contrasting effort of cultural backgrounds gives the opportunity not only to understand the identities and differences between cultures, but to overcome the false idea the of foreign culture realities, due to national stereotypes, as well as to free from the burden of its own imperfection. The principle of contrasting effort and clear differentiation of national culture develops sensitiveness and increases the level of tolerance.

Comparison, understanding of unity and divergence, synergy of intercultural awareness can be expressed by one notion that is reflection. Reflection allows to activate one's own experience and apply it creatively taking into consideration inclusion of new elements into the system. From the point of view of intercultural communication, reflection can be represented as a strategy that allows to realise foreign culture realities in comparison with own one. The unity of cultures are integrated by human values. Differentiation with native culture allows to prevent misunderstanding in intercultural interaction and avoid conflicts.

Developing tolerance contributes to mutual understanding between different cultures. There is an opportunity to consider the actions of other people in the same sequence as own actions. It results in the possibility of understanding the motives and feelings of another person, so called empathy, tolerance is eventuated. The researchers define three main components of tolerance for economists: cognitive-evaluation, motivational and integrative [Сафонова 1991].

According to V. Safonova cognitive-valued aspect is understanding by economists the alternative forms of management and structures of national economies. At evaluation level, it means recognition of economic diversity of human development adopted by other countries and social and cultural dimension of business environment. The specialists, who adhere to such values, expand their perception horizons and career opportunities.

Integrative component of tolerance is the basis for a specialist's joining to a certain community with its professional and intercultural interaction. Limits of self-identification of an individual are broadened by two additional measurements: professional and corporate. This means joining to a community of professional colleagues (horizontal cut on the market), as well as to community of employees of a certain company (vertical slice). In this context, recognition of corporate and professional values and loyalty to these communities is important.

Motivational element of tolerance should be understood as a driving force of key interest in other cultures. It is based both on tolerance and on respect for cultural diversity, on overcoming own irritation otherness of cultures involved. Such motivation renders adequate communication of representatives of two cultures based on mutual understanding and openness to dialogue.

At the first stage own cultural norms are perceived as natural that they are not even recognized as norms; at the second stage equal attitude to other cultures is formed, as to such cultures that have their own cultural norms. At the third stage, understanding comes that own norms are culturally specific [Донец 2001]. It is this stage where the understanding of the necessity to borrow and share cultural experience appears.

The study of a foreign culture increases self-awareness, self-esteem, responsibility, independence, capacity for creative heuristic, authentic behavior, tolerance. Such human traits of character are required for efficient intercultural interaction worldwide. Thus, all above mentioned confirms the exceptional importance of tolerance as one of the important results of building intercultural competence of prospective economists on the basis of intercultural communication. Developing tolerance based on reflection, comparativity and dialogue of cultures contributes to a harmonious, all-round personality.

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Abstract

In the article tolerance is under study as an integral part of intercultural communicative competence which in an era of globalization has become an important factor in formation of a personality capable to challenge constant changes in economic environment and international labor market. The author stresses the necessity of development intercultural competence by means of intercultural communication in the students majoring in economics.

Key words: intercultural communication, tolerance, intercultural competence, ethnocentrism, empathy, dialogue of cultures, reflection.

Толерантность как неотъемлемый компонент межкультурной компетенции будущих экономистов

Резюме

Толерантность рассматривается в статье как неотъемлемая составляющая межкультурной компетенции которая в эпоху глобализации становится

важным фактором формирования личности способной адаптироваться к постоянным изменениям экономического климата и рынка труда. Автор подчеркивает необходимость формирования межкультурной компетенции посредством межкультурной коммуникации у студентов экономических специальностей.

Ключевые слова: межкультурная коммуникация, толерантность, межкультурная компетенция, этноцентризм, эмпатия, диалог культур, рефлексия.

Tolerancja jako integralny komponent kompetencji międzykulturowych przyszłych ekonomistów

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono konieczność podjęcia badań nad tolerancją jako integralnym komponentem międzykulturowych kompetencji komunikacyjnych, które w dobie globalizacji stały się ważnym czynnikiem w kształtowaniu osobowości i są w stanie podołać wyzwaniom, jakie stawiają ciągłe zmiany w środowisku gospodarczym i międzynarodowym rynku pracy. Autor podkreśla konieczność rozwoju kompetencji międzykulturowych za pomocą komunikacji międzykulturowej u studentów na kierunku ekonomia.

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja międzykulturowa, tolerancja, kompetencje międzykulturowe, etnocentryzm, empatia, dialog kultur, refleksja.