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INTERETHNIC COMMUNICATION CULTURE FORMATION AMONG FUTURE TEACHERS-INOPHONES IN A MULTI- ETHNIC EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Changes in the Russian society, globalization and integration, and growing migration flows lead to a clear understanding of the fact that further development of the society is possible only in conditions of cross-cultural dialogue between the representatives of different nationalities capable of tolerating the host culture. In these conditions, international communication culture serves as a means of harmonious existence in the society. The aim of the study consists in identifying and analyzing the innovative methods of formation of international communication culture among students of a pedagogical institute and introduction of new content into the system of higher pedagogical education with consideration of the regional specificity.

The study uses various diagnostic methods: interdisciplinary, comparative, and semantic analysis of literature on psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, sociology; theoretical generalization and systematization of scientific, theoretical and empirical data, modelling; poll; questionnaire; analysis of activity products; direct/indirect, long term/short term observation; experiments; mathematical statistics.

The results of the study show that interethnic communication culture is considered as the main personal and professional characteristics of an undergraduate student. Pedagogical activity is a means of placing the values of native and host culture.

The paper results allow to state that the process of education and training of undergraduate foreign students must be implemented with consideration of cultural and national peculiarities, and changes in the society. Innovative methods, such as inclusion of students into creative national associations, their engagement into various University events enhance the process of formation of international communication culture and interaction in a pedagogical institute.

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Keywords: International communication, foreign students, bilinguals, multi-ethnic educational environment, globalization, migration.



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1. Introduction

Changes in the Russian society, globalization and integration processes, and growing migration flows lead to clear understanding of the fact that further development of the society is possible only in conditions of cross-cultural dialogue between the representatives of different nationalities capable of tolerating the host culture and perceiving it as the native one. In these conditions, interethnic communication culture serves as a means of harmonious existence in the society. However, the process of its formation should be well-organized and controlled. This is especially true in the training of foreign bilingual/polylingual teachers who will be able to form such cultures in their pupils later on.

Intensive investigation of the abovementioned problem began in the 80s of the XX century. So, the works of Burmistrova, Kryz'ko (2002) and others investigate the nature and content of interethnic communication culture. The problems of ethnic tolerance and ethno-pedagogical training of future specialists have been analyzed by Arsaliev (2015), Osipenkova (2007), Hasanov, (1998); Ivanova (2002), Kuznetsova (2001), and others. Researches on pedagogical conditions of formation of interethnic communication culture, ethnic tolerance, and ethno-cultural competence of students in secondary school were reflected in the works of Glebov, Latyshina, Poshtareva (2009).

The issues of formation of interethnic communication culture in conditions of higher education have been subjected to analysis by Nazarenko, Glukhova, Chipinova, Alekseeva, Nekrasova, Khairullina (Matis, 2003). The processes of realization of pedagogical conditions of interethnic communication culture formation as well as ethno-pedagogical training of future teachers have been analyzed by Nagornaya, Popova and others. The technology of the formation of international communication culture in undergraduate students has been analyzed by Nazarenko, Shumakova, Arsaliev (2015).

2. Problem Statement

The problem of formation of interethnic communication culture has become very important in the multinational Republic of Tatarstan, in conditions of polyethnic educational environment. Formation of interethnic communication culture among future teachers-inophones in the conditions of multi-ethnic educational environment requires consideration of the sociocultural peculiarities of the Republic of Tatarstan.

3. Research Questions

What are the effective conditions for forming interethnic communication culture?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study consists in identifying and analyzing the innovative methods of formation of international communication culture among students of pedagogical institutes and introduction of new content into the system of higher pedagogical education with consideration of the regional specificity.

5. Research Methods

In accordance with the nature of the phenomenon under study, its purpose, subject, and tasks, we used a complex of complementary research methods, such as: interdisciplinary, comparative, and semantic analysis of literature on psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, sociology; theoretical generalization and systematization of scientific, theoretical and empirical data, modelling; poll; questionnaire; analysis of activity products; direct/indirect, long term/short term observation; experiments; mathematical statistics.

The research has employed a questionnaire of students aiming to identify various views on the issues of interethnic and interreligious communication in Elabuga Institute of the Kazan Federal University (6 survey items). The participants were 205 students enrolled in Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 25, 3 of them are married. Time of residence in Russia is from six months up to 3 years. Majority of the students (89%) live in the hostel.

6. Findings

The study has shown that most foreign students of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University experience underdeveloped interethnic communication culture. The results of the study aimed at identifying the level of formation of interethnic communication culture are presented in Table 01.

Table 01. The Level of Interethnic Communication Culture Formation

The Level of Interethnic Communication Culture Formation	Percentage
High	11.2 %
Moderate	59.3 %
Low	29.5 %

The analysis was based on the obtained the information reflecting the readiness of the respondents for interethnic communication, their interest in cross-cultural dialogue, as well as the information giving clear understanding of the problems and obstacles of interethnic communication. The prior condition for establishing interethnic dialogue is understanding the significance of the national roots of the people with whom he/she comes into personal contact. The nature of this significance is related to how a person determines his/her ethnic communication circle, how strong his inclination is to venture into the world of his/her national culture, and how open he is to perceive foreign cultural traditions and habits. With consideration of all these aspects, the authors have worked out the following questionnaire.

The answers to the question "How important is the person's nationality in personal communication to you?" revealed the following:

For 11.2% of foreign students the person's nationality is very important, for 50.1% of students it is partially important, for 27.1 it is not important, for 11.6 – it is difficult to answer.

As one can see from the responses, in total number of students surveyed there are not many of those who perceive others through the prism of their ethnicity. The percentage is almost average, characteristic of all countries of the world (according to the ethno-sociological research of the Soviet period, the share of such people averaged about 7-8%). The proportion of people willing to communicate with others, regardless of their ethnic roots is twice bigger. However, here we should pay attention to the

share of respondents evaluating the situational importance of the ethnicity in the development of the dialogue (50%). This trend is very typical of the Russian society (in contrast to countries of Western Europe and America).

Historically, Russia is initially a multiethnic country: here more than 120 ethnic groups are autochthonous nations, i.e. native residents. For Russians it has always been habitual to divide people not so much on the ethnic, but on “friend-or-foe” basis (whatever their nationality is). "Friend" is, as a rule, people (of any nationality and religion), adhering to historically developed rules of behaviour common to this area. And "foe" is those who do not fit these rules, even if they are ethnic Russians.

Approximately the same ratio of affirmative and negative answers has been obtained to the question “Representatives of different nationalities study in Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. Do you dislike them?”:

Yes – 49.4%;

No – 51.6%.

The proportion of the respondents experiencing/not experiencing hostility of the representatives of various nationalities, is almost equal (the difference is within the standard of sampling error for representative surveys $\pm 5\%$). However, this does not mean that the half of the students of Elabuga Institute are “ethnically xenophobic” as it may seem from the responses. This means that for half of the students there is a distinction between “friends” (the Russian society) and “foes” (not yet adapted to the Russian environment). It is not the division of people based on their ethnicity, at least because the presented distribution is completely uncorrelated (according to statistical criteria of reliability) with distributions reflecting the importance of national identity for communication. The above conclusion is confirmed by the list of those nationalities whom the respondents dislike (Question 3).

Since the question was open, the respondents named specific nationalities (30 items). All this diversity has been reduced to 3 categories:

- 1) external migrants (the vast majority of the nations of the former Central Asian republics of the USSR) – 68.2%;
- 2) internal migrants from the republics of the North Caucasus – 27.8%;
- 3) other nations-autochthons of Russia – 4.0%.

As you can see from the responses, the overwhelming proportion of the respondents indicate the external migrants as the object of hostility. The second group is formed by migrants from the North Caucasus of the Russian Federation. And only a small proportion of respondents (comparable with the sampling error) experience hostility towards other indigenous peoples of Russia. Regarding the first two groups it can be explained by their weak integration into the traditions and everyday lifestyle of the local people. It has already been recognized at all levels: from the public opinion to the opinion of the President of the Russian Federation.

The responses to Question 4 have allowed the authors to determine the extent of their agreement or disagreement with a particular statement.

The degree of agreement with the statement “They live in a different way and speak an incomprehensible language” is as follows:

I agree – 42.2 %;

I rather agree – 41.1%;

I rather disagree – 9.5%;

I disagree – 7.2%.

The majority of the respondents state that they experience the feeling of hostility and irritation towards the representatives of particular nationalities due to the fact that these people are “strangers”, they live a different lifestyle and speak a strange language. This can be explained by the lack of integration of immigrants to the current social rules. Only 16.7% of the respondents do not perceive the representatives of other nationalities as strangers.

The survey has also determined the degree of agreement with the statement: “They humiliate the people of your nationality”:

I agree – 49.9%;

I rather agree – 37.2%;

I rather disagree – 10.4%;

I do not agree – 2.4%.

The agreement with the statement indicates an expression of the dissatisfaction with the lack of their integration, but it is expressed in a different emotional form, because often the violation from the norms of the local area (in this case – in the Republic of Tatarstan) is considered by the host population as a challenge and insult, causing further feedback.

The degree of agreement of students of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University with the statement “They do not respect the customs and traditions of other people” is as follows:

I agree – 42.7%;

I rather agree – 42%;

I rather disagree – 12.2%;

I disagree – 2.8%.

Here is shown another form of the same meaning reactions: rules of behaviour perceived as disrespectful to the host population.

Finally, the identified level of agreement with the statement "They are alien to my religion" captures the attitude of respondents to one extremely important phenomenon of modern life – the emergence of the extreme sects of Islam.

The degree of agreement with the statement "They are alien to my religion" is as follows:

I agree – 32.5%;

I rather agree – 20.7 %;

I rather disagree – 22.6 %;

I disagree – 24.7%.

A fairly high degree of agreement with the statement is not to be interpreted as a manifestation of religious intolerance. According to long-term studies of the Russian multi-religious environment, for the Russians of different faiths it is characteristic to have historically developed skills and habits of life in terms of interfaith harmony. Among the peoples of Russia, many peoples of the Muslim faith (for example, the Tatars and Bashkirs) are recognized as “friends”. In this respect, there have never been any serious problems of religious confrontation. Thus, it would be extremely incorrect to consider the consent to the abovementioned statement as evidence of growing religious intolerance. Here, we suppose, the reason lies in the dissatisfaction with poor integration of Muslims-newcomers in the Russian traditional

Islamic space with its skills of conflict-free coexistence with the Christian (Orthodox) cultural space. Since in the minds of most Russians religious preference is almost inextricably linked with the nationality (although it does not reflect the reality), while regulating interethnic relations it is necessary to support the efforts of the preachers of the traditional forms of Islam familiar to the Russians.

Thus, the main conclusion is that the dissatisfaction of the respondents is provoked neither by the strange ethnic and cultural specificity of migrants, nor by their different faith, but their poor integration into the context of everyday life of the University in which they live. Moreover, the poor integration triggers the growth of domestic nationalism, because the incorrect behavior disregarding local “standards of decency” is perceived as offensive.

Question 5 was aimed at determining the status and character of interethnic relations in Elabuga Institute that resulted in the following answers:

The situation is calm, peaceful – 31.8%

The situation is outwardly calm, but there is some tension – 44.3%

The situation is tense, conflicts are possible – 12.3%

It is difficult to answer – 11.6%

As you can see, the dominant feature in assessing the ethnic situation in the University as a whole is moderate, although the assessment of the situation as tense is also high, which is a direct consequence of the previously described dissatisfaction. It should also be taken into account that the moderate level of concern with inter-ethnic relations is not much of evidence of the impending “threats” to ethnic harmony, but the signal of a certain sense of responsibility of students for the representatives of different cultural traditions, and their ethnic and cultural needs.

As for Question 6 running “Would you like to learn more about the customs, traditions, and history of those peoples who are studying in Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University?”, we obtained the following results:

Yes – 77.9%;

No – 4.9%;

It is difficult to answer – 17.2%.

As it can be seen from the distribution of responses, students are keen on the idea of learning something new, with customs and traditions, the history of those peoples who are studying at the Elabuga Institute. This is achieved thanks to the contribution of huge educational work carried out at the University.

7. Conclusion

Close study and analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, interpretation of observations and interviews with the students have helped to identify the effective ways of cultivating the culture of interethnic communication in students, and the specific content of this work.

With the purpose of forming interethnic communication culture, and with it, cultivating universal, patriotic and national feelings, consciousness and behaviour among students, the University administration and staff have tailored up a variety of extra-curricular activities: 1) national holidays (“Nowruz”, “Sabantuy”, “Christmas”, “Slavic Writing Day”), 2) projects devoted to memorable dates of

historical significance (“Victory Over the War”, “And the Rescued World Remembers”), to the anniversaries of prominent figures of culture, literature, science, and folk heroes (Khlebnikov readings, Rasil Valeev’s creative work), 3) public lectures (“The Contribution of Lobachevsky to the Development of Science” in the framework of Lobachevsky year in 2017), 4) festivals (Festival of Peoples’ Friendship), 5) competitions (“Turkological Research of Lobachevsky’s Associates”, the competition of readers dedicated to Mother Tongue Day, creative competition “Kauriy kalam” which give foreign students a glimpse of the culture and traditions of people of different nationalities and form their ability to adhere to human norms of morality and behaviour, and mutual readiness to perceive national values, their desire to enrich themselves with their help. Organization and carrying out of those activities are aimed at the elimination of the negative feelings among learners towards people of other nationalities.

To promote respect for all people, there is Association of foreign students of Elabuga Institute of KFU, movie club, International friendship club.

The Association aims to create favourable conditions for foreign students’ studying and living, to provide them with legal assistance and other kinds of support, and to discover their creative potential. The main purpose of the International friendship club is to develop and support the sense of tolerance among students, to increase their interest in intercultural and international communication, to create favourable conditions for adaptation of foreign students in Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University. The club offers a variety of workshops, discussions, brain-rings, projects, such as: #followme (when visitors of the club "travel" to different countries), #madeinChina (activities aimed at studying of Chinese language and culture, etc.). Thematic movie club “Films from the Treasury of Soviet Cinema”, where Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian movies are watched and analyzed in Russian. Comprehension and assimilation of another culture does not only broaden foreign students’ scope but also forces them to get an external perspective of their native culture, comparing and finding their common and specific features.

Forming interethnic communication culture is also promoted by entertaining extra-curricular activities: the contest of first-year students, the Festival of peoples’ friendship, the ball, “Students’ spring” festival, etc. The annual Festival of peoples’ friendship aims at introducing the history, folklore, traditions and customs of peoples of different nationalities to students, effecting a tolerant attitude towards representatives of different nationalities, forming national identity within the framework of civil and patriotic education. Imperial ball in Elabuga Institute aims to revive the traditions, the morality and spirituality of the Russians, developing patriotic spirits and pride for their country in the minds of the younger generation.

Attendance of sports clubs by foreign students and their participation in various competitions on national kinds of sports also create favourable conditions for forming interethnic communication culture. Within the celebration of National Unity Day, a mini-football tournament is organized, where the University team consists of students of different nationalities. Foreign students compete in the ancient Tajik national wrestling “Gushtingiri”, Turkmen national wrestling – goresh – and other nationalities enjoy participating these competitions. It should be noted that many of the foreign students win prizes not

only in the Institute and in the city, but also in the republic national tournaments. Some students are engaged in international “Peoples’ Friendship” theatre-studio.

Thus, the particular value of involving international students in socio-cultural activities of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University consists in optimizing the process of linking the norms and values of the individual with those of the society. Ideological beliefs are advanced in the person; the students obtain educational, person-formative content in their free time; socio-cultural integration, communication, a free choice of leisure time activities, and development of motivational and emotional sphere of the personality are provided; the need of the individual in self-realization, self-education, creativity, group support, references, and identity is met; the adaptive capacity of the individual when joining different microenvironments is developed [6: 8]. Also, the samples of different peoples’ cultures, forming interethnic communication culture are transferred, as well as by maintaining the traditions of different nationalities of the University.

The teachers of Elabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University consider international communication culture to be the main personal and professional characteristics of an undergraduate student. Pedagogical activity is a means of assigning the values of native and host culture, and an opportunity for them to be introduced into the world culture.

The results of the study allow to assert that the formation of interethnic communication culture can be improved, in our view, if the education and training of future teachers of foreign languages will be conducted, taking into account the cultural and ethnic peculiarities and the changes that occur in the development of society. Effective ways (the inclusion of students in the national creative enterprises, the establishment of the Association of foreign students, their introduction to the activity) provide an opportunity to lay a solid Foundation for the formation of the culture of interethnic communication and interaction in a pedagogical University.

The results of the study allow to state that the process of education and training of undergraduate foreign students must be implemented with consideration of cultural and national peculiarities, and changes in the society. Innovative methods, such as inclusion of students into creative national associations, their engagement in various University events enhance the process of formation of international communication culture and interaction in a pedagogical institute.

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