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# ПРОФЕСІЙНА ІНШОМОВНА ПІДГОТОВКА В ПРОЦЕСІ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ

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## DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE NAVIGATORS AS A BACKGROUND OF EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

*The article aims to study the resources that can be used by foreign language teachers of universities to achieve standards of higher education and the development of intercultural competence as an integral part of the professional education of modern experts and background for effective intercultural communication. This leads to the importance of developing respect for other cultures, tolerance, empathy, desire to learn about foreign cultures, etc. And thus, it enables the development of a global expert who easily adapts to the modern requirements of society in an intercultural environment.*

*The article analyses relevant scientific papers and the requirements for modern experts in the development of intercultural competence. This makes it possible to say that an important task of teaching intercultural competence is to develop students' ability to participate in intercultural dialogue, taking into account the principles of cooperation and mutual respect, forming a sense of belonging to their own culture.*

*Based on the theory of high-context and low-context cultures, the authors made a comparative description of the representatives of Ukrainian, Filipino, Indian and Greek cultures, because Ukrainian sailors work mostly in this international crew. The features of the cultures presented in the table make it easier to adapt to the intercultural environment and understand and tolerate intercultural differences.*

*The article offers practical assignments for the development of intercultural competence at foreign language classes in higher education institutions, including maritime English.*

**Keywords:** intercultural competence, tolerance, intercultural differences, high-context culture, low-context culture.

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## ФОРМУВАННЯ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ МОРЯКІВ ЯК ПЕРЕДУМОВА ЕФЕКТИВНОЇ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ

*Стаття спрямована на вивчення ресурсів, які можуть бути використані викладачем іноземної мови на заняттях у вищій школі для досягнення стандартів вищої освіти та розвитку міжкультурної компетентності як невід'ємної складової професійної освіти сучасних фахівців і передумови ефективної міжкультурної комунікації. Це підкреслює важливість розвитку поваги до інших культур, толерантності, емпатії, бажання пізнавати іноземні культури тощо. І таким чином, уможливіє формування фахівця глобального рівня, який легко адаптується до сучасних вимог суспільства у міжкультурному середовищі.*

*Проведено теоретичний аналіз відповідної літератури та досліджено вимоги до сучасних спеціалістів щодо розвитку міжкультурної компетентності. Дослідження дає можливість стверджувати, що важливим завданням навчання міжкультурної компетентності є розвиток у студентів умінь брати участь у міжкультурному діалозі з урахуванням принципів співпраці та взаємоповаги, формуючи приналежність до власної культури.*

*Спираючись на теорію висококонтекстних та низькоконтекстних культур, автори склали порівняльну характеристику представників української, філіпінської, індійської та грецької культур, саме у такому міжнаціональному екіпажі здебільшого*

*працюють українські моряки. Особливості культур, наведені у таблиці, дають змогу легше адаптуватись у міжкультурному середовищі та розуміти і толерантно ставитись до міжкультурних відмінностей.*

*Стаття пропонує практичні завдання для розвитку міжкультурної компетентності на заняттях з іноземної мови у вищих навчальних закладах, зокрема морської англійської мови.*

**Ключові слова:** міжкультурна компетентність, толерантність, міжкультурні відмінності, висококонтекстна культура, низькоконтекстна культура.

Modern information society, globalisation of social and economic relations, and the expansion of relations between cultures raise the problem of mutual understanding between representatives of different cultures, leading to an increasing number of global problems. This results in the importance of developing respect for other cultures, tolerance, empathy, the desire to learn about foreign cultures, etc. The level of society requires new strategies for teaching English at higher educational institutions. One of the strategies is the development of intercultural competence, tolerance for cultural differences and communication skills for successful work in a multicultural environment. Intercultural competence is of the highest importance for seafarers who seek knowledge and skills to help them cope with the growing diversity of their employers, leaders and colleagues. It encourages cultivating tolerance for other people's cultures, arousing curiosity and respect for them, overcoming the feeling of irritability due to the dissimilarity of other cultures. Foreign language is an important means of intercultural communication, it promotes verbal understanding of citizens of different countries, and provides a level of cultural development that allows you to feel comfortable in the country which language is studied. University foreign language curricula and study abroad programs play a unique role in offering students the opportunity to develop their intercultural competences.

The concept of "intercultural competence" was widely developed in foreign science in the early 1970s, when intercultural communication was becoming an independent scientific field. In the scope of this process in the period of the 1970s and 1980s, the issues of attitude toward another culture and its values, overcoming ethnic and cultural orientation became relevant. Definitions of intercultural competence are varied and there has not been agreement on how intercultural competence should be defined exactly. Macmillan dictionary suggests a simplified definition of the term "intercultural competence" which is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures. Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) provide a broader definition of the term, i.e. "the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioural orientations to the world".

In the broadest point of view, Fantini (2006) defines intercultural competence as "a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself". In foreign language learning, Byram's definition has the greatest impact on further research. He defines "intercultural competence" as the capacity of language learners "to see relationships between different cultures – both internal and external to a society – and mediate, that interprets each in terms of other, either for themselves or for other people" (M.Byram, 2009). The content of intercultural competence has not been defined precisely and is still under the research of scientists.

Following the above definitions, an important task of teaching intercultural competence is to develop students' abilities to participate in intercultural dialogue taking into account the principles of cooperation and mutual respect, while forging their own identity. Intercultural competence of students of higher educational institutions is a personal education, which includes motivation to study, compare cultures and readiness to update intercultural experience. These are important aspects of the language policy of Ukraine to be covered which were recommended by the Council of Europe. It is widely accepted that cultivating love and respect for native culture will be only effective if these qualities are developed in the aspect of a foreign culture, so the two processes are cross-connected and interdependent. This fosters the teachers to plan strategies that assure their students will gain not only professional skills but also cross-cultural communication skills.

The subject "English for specific purposes" for maritime educational institutions is of the highest priority. Students have an opportunity not only to get acquainted with the culture of the countries which language is studied but also via comparisons observe the features of their national culture, understand social values. The world and communities become more multilingual, that's why classrooms should reflect a global society where people must learn to interact and create harmony.

Culture is behavioural patterns and beliefs that a group of people have in common. Culture consists of the daily living patterns and the most deeply held beliefs that a group of people demonstrates in many ways: customs, traditions, values, worldview, styles of dress, attitudes toward education, beliefs about the importance of time, the responsibilities of children and teens, and the role of the family, as well as celebrations, music, art, and much more.

When individuals cross from one culture into another, they often feel strange, or like an outsider—and they perceive people from the new culture different. They feel awkward as if they have stepped out of a familiar place where all the rules for behaviour are known, into a place where they have to learn a whole new set of rules. We may ask students to share their experiences of feeling embarrassed or how it felt in situations like moving to a new place, or country, changing school or a group of mates.

Due to the nature of their work, seafarers must be flexible to work with people representing different nationalities. Lack of intercultural awareness may result in intercultural conflicts within the multinational crew. Positive interaction between crew members depends on successful professional communication, which affects the safety of voyages, safe ship navigation, and successful delivery of passengers and cargo to the ports of destination. Physical and psychological stress, the mixed ship's crews, the lack of opportunity to speak their native language, fatigue, hard work do not contribute to a positive working climate but lead to misunderstandings, especially between the representatives of different cultures. But despite this, navigators must be able to communicate quickly and effectively with ports authorities, companies, shipowners, etc. to solve various production problems without conflicts, interact with crew members, maintain a high level of cohesion.

Thus, understanding traditions, behaviour, specific features of a foreigner's life, his belonging to a certain cultural and predominant style of communication, prevents misunderstandings, ridiculous and sometimes offensive situations during personal and professional communication and leads to cultural security and successful cultural dialogue.

When people from different cultures interact, communication can break down if they do not share similar cultural contexts. According to Edvard Hall's theory (1977), "context" refers to the cultural background in which communication takes place. The key

factor is the division into low-context and high-context cultures. This theory helps us understand how the characteristics of a given culture affect communication. Following Guffey and Loewy let's compare specific features of low-context and high-context cultures.

High-context cultures	Low-context cultures
People tend to emphasize interpersonal relationships People prefer group harmony and consensus over individual achievement People share a high degree of commonality of knowledge and viewpoints Words are less important than a speaker's intent There is little need to spell things out Meanings tend to be implicit or can be communicated in indirect ways Cultures are typified by long-lasting social relationships, spoken agreements, and mutual trust Interlocutors depend less on language precision and may come across as ambiguous to people from low-context cultures	People tend to be individualistic and goal-oriented People tend to value directness with discussions resulting in actions Interlocutors are expected to be straightforward and concise

These differences can cause problems in the process of personal and professional interactions between members of high- and low-context cultures.

Vietnam, China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Japan, etc. represent high-context culture, while Germany, Canada, Sweden, Norway, USA, Ukraine, etc. are representatives of low-context culture.

Students of State University of Infrastructure and Technologies work onboard different types of vessels being a part of the multinational crew. Though the language of communication is English according to IMO, the students deal with the Philippines, Indians, Greek, etc. who represent high-context culture, while Ukrainians are low-culture representatives. Let's compare these nationalities.

Ukraine	Philippines	India	Greece
Ukrainians do not make a lot of gestures and seldom pay much attention to others' facial expressions.	Philippines use communication that focuses on underlying context, meaning, and tone in the message, and not just the words themselves. Hints and indirectness prevail.	The words said may have multiple interpretations based on the context of the interaction, as well as the body language, tone and words used.	Greeks place non-verbal communication higher than others. They use a lot of hand gestures. They prefer keeping eye contact and pay close attention to other peoples' posture and facial expressions.
Ukrainians are rather independent	Philippines are family-oriented and often religious with a respect for art, fashion, music and food.	Indians rely on their families for everything from arranged marriages, to buying a house, to naming their child.	Greeks tend to be very proud of their families. A person's family name and background influence perceptions of an individual's reputation.
Sequence talking, turn-taking	Overlap talk	Subject to distractions, interruptions	Greek may speak with impassioned, loud voices when talking to each other, often interrupt
Ukrainians are considered to be highly individualistic.	They are collectivist in nature and value harmonious relations.	Indians are representatives of a collectivistic culture	It is recognized as a collectivistic culture.
Ukrainians meet deadlines, think and work independently, take initiative, they are reliable and smart.	Philippines are hard-working and productive, they are team players and demonstrate a high tolerance to high-pressure situations	Indians work hard, do not take too much leave, don't quarrel with teams, they are honest, soft-spoken and reliable.	Greeks are timely with schedules and deadlines.

So, we can see while Ukrainians advocate straightforward communication and prefer to avoid ambiguity, by all means, Philippines and Indians pay more attention to the context in which the communication is taking place than to the explicit message. Ukrainians are open, direct, and honest, which sometimes can be mistaken for a lack of soft skills but they are still flexible enough to accept other cultures' communication patterns. Representatives of high-context culture anticipate others' needs through facial expressions, behaviour, and gestures rather than verbal messages. If a Phillipino colleague asks Ukrainian seafarer questions about him, it's not an attempt to trespass but the way to welcome a Ukrainian to the crew and treat him as a friend. So, to manage the situations when professional issues become personal, it's very important to establish boundaries between work and personal relations.

Intercultural competence involves not only theoretical knowledge but also practical experience of intercultural communication. Due to the social order, intercultural communication is one of the most important components of professional education of future experts. That is why the university course of a foreign language is designed to be communication-oriented, and its tasks are defined as communicative and cognitive. And one of the teacher's strategies is to become a valuable and interesting source of information about another culture. This can be facilitated via internships for teachers abroad, participation in international conferences and projects, etc.

Let's consider practical tips to increase students' intercultural competence when developing a lesson plan. Create intercultural activities to raise cultural awareness.

First of all, you should decide what you want your students to learn. Self-reflection is a major aspect for students in developing their own cultural identities and feeling a part of a certain culture. Only self-awareness of own culture fosters successful development of intercultural competence and communication. Jerrold Frank (2013) suggests these activities that help learners.

- 1) the cultural iceberg activity;
- 2) quizzes to help learners understand their cultures' values;

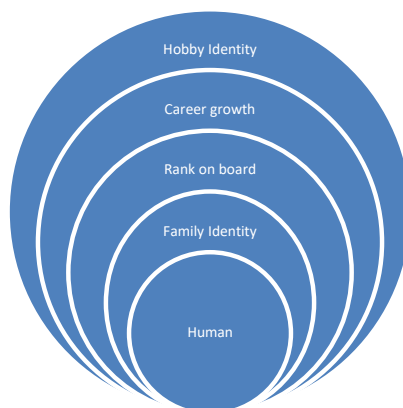
3) the “Identities Wheel” activity.

For example, it might be a lunch where each student brings a dish associated with his or her country of origin. That will combine both aims of training in an ice-breaking activity, sharing personal preferences, and learning about others. Work out a list of celebrations and holidays on the team’s calendar to keep track of and celebrate together. Describe the traditions of celebration and research the historical context of these traditions.

Describe different local cultural traditions from a part of an alien which will allow you to differentiate empathy from making judgments and thus to understand how other people might interpret certain actions and behaviour and make wrong assumptions. That trains sensitiveness to cultural differences and teaches to appreciate them.

Assign your students the roles to act and then guess about the roles when conducting a discussion of – buying new equipment, investing in..., developing new business. Ask students to consider the following statement: “To avoid misunderstanding the behaviour of individuals different from yourself, you have to try to see the world from their perspective, in addition to your own.”

We suggest an interpretation of the identity wheel for future seafarers.



There are multiple ways of exploring other cultures in the class. These include role-plays, web quests, examining a situation from multiple perspectives, cultural collections, etc.

#### Roleplay

Such activities are engaging and memorable. They develop critical thinking and intercultural competence, help avoid communication breakdowns and prepare for possible difficulties onboard.

<p><b>Student A</b> You are a third officer from Ukraine. The Cook on your ship is a Phillipino, he cooks very spicy and hot food. Try to convince him to change his cooking addictions.</p>	<p><b>Student B</b> You are a cook from the Philippines and hot and spicy food is traditional for your country. But part of the crew is not satisfied with your culinary delights. Try to compromise.</p>
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#### Web quest

One of the tasks is searching different websites to find the information. Students can be divided into groups and each group will research one culture and then will share their findings with the other groups.

These questions can be used as examples for research:

1. What traditional dishes are served in the country and what is the history behind them?
2. What are the popular sports of the country and how do they reflect the culture of that country?
3. How is the government structured in the country?
4. What are the specific features of education and how is it different from Ukrainian?

A teacher can suggest students designing posters or collages demonstrating aspects of the target culture. The assignments provide both the cultural awareness value and plenty of opportunities for students to develop English skills.

#### Examining a situation from multiple perspectives

Interactive classes aim to develop students' sensitivity to other cultures using discussion and inquiry. Another option is completing personal associations as for "what "crossing cultures" might mean", or "have you ever "crossed cultures"? "What did it feel like when someone crosses the borders?"

The reasons for misunderstanding, first from their own point of view and then from the point of view of another person involved. To help students organize their thoughts and their writing, suggest that they talk to the person with whom they had the misunderstanding and–putting their own perspective aside for a moment–try to see the misunderstanding from the other person's perspective. If they are not comfortable talking to the person, they should try to imagine, what the situation looked like from the other person's perspective.

Work in pairs – one of the students receives the picture of the ship and another one gets the same picture upside down. The task is to describe the picture to each other. And it will be great if the students guess that the images are equal. This activity develops participants' communication skills and promotes analysis from multiple perspectives. It's important for students to understand that they may see the same but interpret it differently. This activity fosters the development of professional language and general communication skills, tolerance and critical thinking.

Before their shipboard training students receive an assignment to interview someone of another nationality to find out how people in a certain neighbourhood live, think or relate to specific issues. The results can be shared, contrasted and analysed in the class to develop knowledge or skills required for intercultural competence.

To conclude, we may say that the development of intercultural competence is a complex problem that implies the readiness of a person to interact with other cultural systems and is based on respect for other cultural values. The issue requires new strategies to solve it and summarise. Intercultural competence is the ability to recognize, respect and effectively use differences in the perception, thinking and behaviour of own and other cultures. The high level of intercultural competence as an integral part of language learning certainly has a very important impact on teaching future seafarers. Developing intercultural communication diversifies ESP classes, increases learning motivation and prepares for real-life situations onboard ships.

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