

Review Paper

Intercultural Economic and Communication Competence: International Relations and Diplomacy Area

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ABSTRACT

The study outlines the role of intercultural communication as a crucial component of diplomats and international professionals' training, which increases the effectiveness of interaction with representatives of different cultures in performing professional duties. Conditions of civilizational development, achievements of science, innovative technologies, requirements of public life, priority of foreign policy activity have led to deepening of peoples and cultures' interaction. Because of such interaction of both individuals and cultures, diplomatic relations between different states have gained a special status. The diplomatic relations are based on intercultural communication as a tool of international cooperation aimed at promoting foreign policy interests of different states, as well as ensuring international cooperation and developing long-term formal and informal ties between government institutions, international actors, diplomatic missions and political leaders. All these because the intensification of intercultural communication processes that become systemic. With the research methods being study, analysis and generalization, the study was aimed at revealing the concept of intercultural communication competence as the diplomats and international affairs specialists' ability to choose and implement a speech act depending on the goals and content of professional speech through language, as well as mastery of communication strategies and tactics.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The role of intercultural communication as an essential component of diplomatic training and the training of international professionals, which enhances the effectiveness of interaction with representatives of different cultures in the performance of professional duties.

Keywords: Diplomacy, international affairs, intercultural communication, diplomatic communication, effectiveness of diplomatic communication, diplomatic communication participants, professional activity

In the era of globalization, the structure of international and diplomatic relations is becoming increasingly complex, so engagement in the field of international relations is seen as a special kind of professional activity that provides solutions to strategically important state tasks. The successful development and strengthening international and intercultural ties with other countries leads to the expansion of humanitarian and economic integration with the modern world and requires

international affairs and diplomacy professionals to be prepared for real professional communication when contacting different cultures. Thus, there is an increasing need for specialists who can not only briefly and correctly explain in a foreign

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language, but also reach mutual understanding with other cultures, which requires them to master intercultural communication competencies as a crucial competence of their professional activity.

Consequently, the issue of intercultural communication gains a special significance in the context of international relations and diplomacy, which, on the one hand, are a vivid example of the communication development at various professional levels, and at the same time reflect the numerous features of the intercultural communication phenomenon. The very history of intercultural communications shows them to be directly related to the development of political, trade, cultural, and interreligious contacts. The history of international relations and diplomacy history prove the formation of various directions and forms of intercultural communication to have evolved under the influence of numerous factors.

Moreover, intercultural communication in international relations and diplomacy can be referred to as an important condition for political, economic, humanitarian cooperation. Without taking into account the main features of the intercultural communication process, it is quite difficult to build contacts in the modern world, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. On the other hand, the very direction, depth and content of the intercultural dialogue largely depend on the international relations specifics.

However, the globalized world has made the intercultural communication issue to be especially relevant, with its socio-cultural aspects relating to the professional activities of international affairs and diplomacy specialists. These are: intercultural competence of specialists, i.e. the formation of practical skills and abilities that ensure ethno cultural perception of the individual development, his/her ability to correctly interpret specific manifestations of verbal and nonverbal behaviour in different ethno cultures.

Intercultural mis understandings are even more likely because by the very nature of their work, diplomats are required to interact with individuals of various cultural backgrounds. Due to the ability of overcoming the cultural gap, such professionals communicate and work with people of different cultures is becoming of greater importance. It is the

sufficient level of intercultural competence to ensure a specialist in the field of international relations and diplomacy to properly perform his/her professional duties and resolve situations arising during a stay in a foreign country.

Based on the above mentioned, the purpose of the study is to outline the role of intercultural communication competence for the international diplomacy actors, which helps international and diplomatic professionals to perform their professional duties more effectively when interacting with people of different cultures. In order to achieve this purpose, the following tasks are to be solved: (1) to view in-depth the intercultural communication concept; (2) to look into the diplomat's intercultural competences; (3) to analyze the diplomatic communication as a part of intercultural communication; (4) to determine the socio-cultural bases of intercultural communication (verbal and non-verbal) as a crucial component of the diplomacy and international relations specialists' professional activity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design used in this study is the application of such research methods as study, analysis and generalization with the purpose of revealing the concept of intercultural communication competence as a crucial one for international affairs and diplomacy actors.

With the subject of the research addressed to the publications dealing the intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2002; Hua, 2014; Ling, 2017; Myron & Koester, 2010), the diplomats' intercultural communication competences (Gesnot-Dimic, 2019), the relevance of culture in diplomacy (Bolewski, 2008; Valiyev, 2017), as well as diplomatic communication's specifics issues (Jonsson & Hall, 2002; Mircea, 2014; Slavik, 2004). Thus, the collective research data were inductively analyzed with the study results been grouped and the further abstraction made.

As well, the attention was paid to the academic programmes and courses on "Intercultural Communication", as well as publications concerning the intercultural communication training of diplomats and international relations specialists:

- ♦ Council of American Ambassadors: <https://www.americanambassadors.org/publications/ambassadors-review/fall-2017/a-case-for-intercultural-communication-training>;
- ♦ European Academy of Diplomacy: <https://diplomats.pl/course/intercultural-communication/>;
- ♦ Kyiv-Mohyla Business School: https://kmbs.ua/ua/edp/pr/managing-cross-cultural-communication-principles-and-practice?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8p2MBhCiARIsADDUFVGDIQ78IE3ATczDfeCz6PYaEGwqX7qlf4J5x9XFWg50R9hJjM4b1A0aAkkXEALw_wcB;
- ♦ American Diplomacy: <https://americandiplomacy.web.unc.edu/2015/09/diplomacy-and-intercultural-communication/>;
- ♦ School of International Service, American University in Washington: <https://ironline.american.edu/degrees/course-descriptions/intercultural-communication/>.

In turn, the theory of the issue related to intercultural competence, the analysis of special literature shows the issue is in the stage of active discussion. The main points of discussion concern the interpretation of the concept itself, the components of this type of competence, as well as the search for optimal ways of forming intercultural communication competence. Nevertheless, the problem of intercultural communication by itself has lately gained much significance for the sphere of diplomacy and international affairs. It can be explained from the point of view of a special attention been paid to the very issue of modern political communication effectiveness, in which establishment of various approaches and forms of intercultural communication appears to be influenced by numerous factors.

Thus, the effectiveness of modern diplomatic communications largely depends on the ability of the actors to use tools and technologies competently that can enhance the attractiveness, and, consequently, the effectiveness of interacting political institutions and subjects, to form a positive international image of the country, to increase the authority of the state brand. Today it is customary to refer to tools of this kind as “soft power”. Consequently, the widespread concept of “soft power” has made it necessary

to search for methods, techniques and criteria of successful communications, including intercultural communication skills, that allow diplomacy and international relations actors effectively deal on the international arena.

The issues of organization of education based on theoretical provisions of intercultural communication training are actively discussed (Müller, 2003; Furmanova, 2014), in many works the role of the text as a source of information about the culture of the country of the studied language (Bredella, 2002). Together with an active discussion, there are the ways been sought for the formation of the foreign language and culture interactive competence by addressing to the innovative methods (Astafurova, 2021). In other works of scientists, much attention is paid to solving problems of acquiring intercultural communication competence that includes rules and norms of behavior in a foreign language environment, values of other cultures, interpretation of cultural information, analysis of ways out of difficulties and social conflicts (Popova, 2015).

RESULTS

World globalization has necessitated the formation of new special communicative competence of the XXI century diplomacy and international affairs actors, as there are a number of differences in behaviours and intercultural dialogue between Ukrainian, Western and Eastern cultures. These differences in intercultural communication models and frames are found in many cases of keeping machinery discussions or negotiations to the ability to speak in public.

Intercultural communication is an integral part of the contemporary world with the intercultural communication competence being a very important component of social interaction, especially in diplomatic relations. With diplomacy defined as the art and practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of countries (Diplomacy), it deals with culturally diverse groups by means of interactions and negotiations. The negotiation style of each participant is formed by one’s own cultural “program.” As different cultural groups communicate differently, the culture of a party to negotiation influences its negotiation style.

Therefore, the probability of mistakes and misunderstandings increases when the interaction is cross-national (Bolewski, 2008).

In particular, the sphere of international relations and diplomacy is one of the most important components of the foreign policy of each state, which contributes to the establishment and maintenance of intercultural communication, mutual understanding and cooperation between organizations of different levels. It includes the different problems' solution, among which we can specify the securing the state's interests, both foreign and domestic, through the work of diplomats and consuls; accounting and compliance with international norms, laws, etiquette; paying attention to the events taking place in the country and in the world, objective interpretation and the ability to critically anticipate the next steps of various politicians; development and substantiation of competent and effective resolution of conflict situations through diplomacy; active implementation of business contacts with taking into account the status of participants in business communication and critical assessment of the behaviour of business partners (Grebennik *et al.* 2019).

In the course of this intercultural communication, the nature of international relations and diplomacy relations is formed in a wide range from formal-business to friendly ones, which significantly affect the achievement of certain results between communicants. Interaction reveals the essence of communication not in the one-sided influence of the speaker on the listener, but in the complex communicative influence of two subjects, taking into account their socio-cultural specifics (Khomutenko *et al.* 2019). In this case, it deals with behaviour of the communication process. Communicative behaviour is the speaker's action, which is characterized by intentionality, space-time relations (rules and norms of behaviour), language code, communicative effect or feedback.

With sovereignty and equality been considered the rational backbones of diplomacy and international relations, culture is viewed as "its distinctive emotional differential; the hidden dimension which projects as much impact as political or economic power on decision-making" (Bolewsky, 2008).

Thus, linguistic and cultural diversity at all levels of international contacts and cooperation require

not only the inclusion of linguoculture in the content of diplomacy and international affairs specialists' training, but also the comparison of linguistic cultures, the identification of the general and the specific. Comparison of linguistic cultures is associated with the polyphony of the content, which contributes to the development of one's own assessment of various cultural phenomena and thereby the development of the diplomats and international affairs specialists' personality and his intercultural competence. Hence, intercultural communication competence is a cognitive space in which linguistic culture, acting as a background environment for cognition at the macro level (space, time, values) through concepts, provides the formation of cultural background knowledge necessary for adequate intercultural interaction. The mastery of concepts contributes to the achievement of the thesaurus level, familiarization with the concept sphere of linguistic cultures, reflecting the hierarchy of meanings and cultural values (Furmanova, 2014).

Intercultural communication competence is the ability and willingness of an individual to successfully communicate with representatives of another culture (Wiseman, 2002) and necessarily contains the following elements such as: knowledge (necessary information for effective interaction), motivation (positive thinking about another culture), skills (necessary behavioral skills for effective interaction) and empathy (Griffin, 2006). Among the necessary conditions for effective intercultural interaction, of course, are: first, sensitivity and self-confidence; secondly, understanding the behavior of others, their ways of thinking; thirdly, the ability to express one's own point of view clearly and distinctly, in order to be clear and gain respect, while remaining as flexible as possible and as transparent as necessary (Gudykunst, 2002). These abilities are critically useful both in peace-building and post-conflict reconciliation processes for effective interaction between the parties during and after the violent conflict, for development of positive relations and reformatting cultural and value paradigm, as well as the transformation of socio-economic reality. Moreover, such characteristics as ability to relationship building, respect, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, realistic expectations, initiative, and self-confidence, among others, are consistently

identified by researchers (Jönsson & Hall, 2002; Slavik, 2004; Mircea, 2014) as part of the diplomat's skills profile needed for success in another culture.

Applying these skills in intercultural communication may result in lowering negativity and tension (unintended negative emotions based on tone, body language and particular language), and, on the contrary, raises sensitivity and strength in the negotiation process. Thus, diplomatic skills in intercultural communication respond to negative messages and replace them with positive attributes. In case of disagreement, diplomatic intercultural communication competence helps to bring the conversation to a positive result, when simply listening to without interruption, trying to understand others' beliefs and viewpoints, not displaying negative body language (Slavik, 2004; Mircea, 2014).

For the diplomacy and international affairs specialist to be acknowledged as a interculturally competent, his/her profile of skills and knowledge should encompass nine major competency areas. These competency areas are (Slavik, 2004; Mircea, 2014):

- ♦ adaptation skills;
- ♦ an attitude of modesty and respect;
- ♦ an understanding of the concept of culture;
- ♦ intercultural communication;
- ♦ knowledge of the host country and culture;
- ♦ organizational skills;
- ♦ personal and professional commitment;
- ♦ relationship-building;
- ♦ self-knowledge.

Moreover, these are the most necessary professional skills for succeeding in diplomatic communication, especially when it comes to informal communication with foreigners or fellow diplomat in the host country. A defining aspect that must be taken under advisement when examining international communication is linked to the levels of this specific category of diplomatic communication (Slavik, 2004; Mircea, 2014):

- ♦ "...communication referring to exchanges of information between the population of two countries, and its scope includes all information in the field of culture and civilization values;
- ♦ communication between two states or

governments or between the state and the public opinion of another country. In this case, the main players are diplomatic offices and media channels, which convey the messages through which states express their foreign policy objectives, and therefore plan on promoting and upholding their interests. These communicative flows are aimed at raising the awareness of governments, diplomatic institutions but as well of the public opinion regarding these interests. If the stated objective cannot be achieved, all communicative undertakings will focus on reaching a neutrality or non-combat attitude on behalf of the receiver of the messages;

- ♦ communication by way of classic or modern communication channels. In this particular case, the transmitter addresses a virtually unlimited number of receivers. Elements contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the transmitter are the following: national interest (of the transmitter and receiver), the media culture and editorial policy of the communication channel."

As diplomacy tends to highlight its communicative aspects, consequently, diplomatic interaction by the means of intercultural communication involves the message transmission with certain meanings been attached. When receiving the message at the level of entities, there is also a series of elements determining the reception and cultural decoding of the messages that been much predetermined by the intercultural communication competence of the diplomacy and international affairs actors (Slavik, 2004; Mircea, 2014):

- ♦ "dominant encoding/decoding of the message, by means of which the transmitter and receiver agree on the meaning and significance of certain topics of international interest, on the assessment and solutions provided, as well as on the suggestions made;
- ♦ negotiated encoding/decoding, by means of which the transmitter and the receiver agree upon and accept only certain parts of the message and dismiss others;
- ♦ positive encoding/decoding, by means of which the receiver rules out most of the assessments, evaluations and solutions provided by the transmitter."

DISCUSSION

The new paradigm of intercultural communicational flow in the diplomatic sphere is the process of globalization, which in turn has determined an interest increase towards this issue study at the level of states, organizations, regional or global entities. Accordingly, diplomatic communication faces three major situations upon which it needs to adjust to current realities. The first one is that modern communication technologies have allowed states, governments and other institutions to give up their traditional technologies and communication channels. In turn, the new communication technologies have prompted the emergence of a large array of professions, well integrated in the system of the institutions, including diplomatic ones (Lagodiienko *et al.* 2019).

A specialist in the sphere of the international relations or a diplomat in modern society lives in a multidimensional space culture. His/her life is determined by what knowledge, skills and abilities, including intercultural communication, he/she has owned. In addition, what makes this situation even more complex is the esoteric nature of diplomatic communication combined with the unrecognized and psychological nature of the hidden national cultural norms that affect communication. Finally, a short-term nature of language and cultural training and assignment abroad makes it difficult to build trust with cultures with all these being highly valued when building a long-term relationship (Tsivatyi, 2014).

Acquiring intercultural communication competence does not address to the language competence exclusively. We tend to notice only the obvious differences from our own cultural norms and ignore the subtle, but equally important, ones of the other. According to S.B. Ryan "...in a mono-cultural setting, the common bond of a single culture goes unnoticed and generally smoothes and facilitates the decision-making process. What are these unnoticed communicative behaviors that smooth communication? Cultural values and norms, or what we regard as "right/wrong" and "good/bad", are very similar and, therefore, go unrecognized by those in communication with each other. This is partly because speakers from the same culture, although unique as individuals, have similar cultural values, draw off very similar set of communicative

background knowledge and, generally, know what to expect from their communication partner. The context of communication also plays a significant role in shaping how interlocutors will achieve their communicative goals" (Ryan, 2015).

Diplomats and international affairs specialists from a low context culture are expected to have an immediate opinion and be able to articulate this directly to their colleagues to show that they are being attentive and participative. This contrasts with the high-context culture tendency to prefer communication that is more ambiguous, utilizing silence and moving from general to comments that are more specific as each member is probed for their true opinion before reaching a final consensus. When one or both speakers interacting from unique cultural mindsets fail to recognize these subtle face-to-face communication preferences, confusion and misunderstandings are more likely to occur (Cole, 2011; Nelson & Izadi, 2009).

Thus, the intercultural communication competence is a necessary condition for the international affairs and diplomacy actors and their professional development in the modern world. All professional activities of specialists in the field of foreign relations combined with communication: with colleagues; with partners; with large and small groups; with people of the same age and different; with groups that have similar priorities in life and no. It is quite natural that in order to become a successful professional, it is necessary to acquire knowledge, skills and ability to establish appropriate verbal interaction in a professional and at the level of everyday communication.

CONCLUSION

The content of professional competence of international specialists is quite large, because approach to its understanding contains two main areas: the ability of an employee to act in accordance with generally accepted state standards, as well as his personal characteristics to achieve results and effectively overcome professional difficulties, arising in the course of professional activity. Officials in the field of international affairs and diplomacy can demonstrate professional communication competence by objective processing of information received from various resources, making correct and timely decisions, a clear understanding of the

limits of their authority and adherence to business etiquette in intercultural interaction.

During business contacts an important place is occupied by professional intercultural communication, in the process of which information is exchanged, contacts are established. Intercultural communicative competence plays an important role here, which consists not only in excellent knowledge of local lore information about the country of the foreign language, but also in understanding the behavioral culture of foreign speakers, their mentality, knowledge of traditions and customs. Intercultural communicative competence chooses and implements language action (behavior) depending on the goals and content of communication through language, as well as mastery of communication strategy and tactics. In practice, we are talking about the presence of an international specialist in literate written and oral speech not only in his native language, but also in several foreign languages, his oratory techniques, and the presence of analytical mind and the formation of critical thinking.

Thus, the training of international specialists should form an understanding of the role they play in international cooperation, strengthening, peace development, which should be focused on understanding the unity of mankind, a global approach. Such a specialist must have not only certain knowledge, but also be ready to share this knowledge in a foreign language, as well as have such competencies as: socio-linguistic (the ability to use and interpret language forms according to the situation); discursive (the ability to understand and logically construct individual statements for the purpose of semantic communication); strategic (ability to use verbal and nonverbal strategies to compensate for missing knowledge); socio-cultural (a certain degree of familiarity with the socio-cultural context); social (desire and willingness to interact with others, the ability to manage the situation).

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