

Formation of intercultural competencies in language classes at the university

Nursaule Meirbek ^{1*} South Kazakhstan State Pedagogical University, Department of Russian Language and Literature, Address: 13, Baytursynov street, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5058-2756>

Valentina Narozhnaya ², South Kazakhstan State Pedagogical University, Department of Russian Language and Literature, Address: 13, Baitursynov Street, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8928-1539>

Marina Shingareva ³ South Kazakhstan State Pedagogical University, Department of English language, Address: 13, Baitursynov Street, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1866-035X>

Saule Kozhakhmetova ⁴ South Kazakhstan State Pedagogical University, Department of Russian Language and Literature, Address: 13, Baitursynov Street, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6476-5713>

Lyazzat Kanayeva ⁵ South Kazakhstan State Pedagogical University, Department of Russian Language and Literature, , Address: 13, Baitursynov Street, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9015-6313>

Ainur Zhorabekova ⁶ Mukhtar Auezov South Kazakhstan University, Department of Foreign Languages for Technical Specialties, Address: 5, Tauke khan Avenue, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2697-8077>

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Abstract

This research aimed to study and design the formation of intercultural competencies in language education classes at the university. The quantitative research method was used. The research was carried out in the spring term of 2021–2022. 198 volunteer students who continue their education in schools participated in the research and 4 weeks of online training were given to the students. The 'language and proficiency' measurement tool developed by the researchers and compiled by experts in the field was used in this study. The measurement tool was delivered to the students online and then collected. The analysis of the data was made by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences programme, frequency analysis and *t*-test; the results are added to the research in the form of tables. According to the results obtained, it was concluded that students' proficiency in language education classes and their intercultural status were high. While this situation was determined as good for education, it was concluded that it was used to reflect the distance education systems in the course.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Ainur Zhorabekova, Mukhtar Auezov South Kazakhstan University, Department of Foreign Languages for Technical Specialties, Address: 5, Tauke khan Avenue, Shymkent city, Kazakhstan
E-mail address: ainur.zhorabekova@aezov.edu.kz

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1. Introduction

The basic principle should be to deal with the affective, motor and cognitive development areas of the people involved in the teaching–learning process with a holistic understanding. If one area of development is neglected or given less importance, inevitably, other areas of development will also be affected. However, in the practices in the education system, the affective dimension is neglected and the cognitive and psychomotor areas are emphasised (Essien & Adelekan, 2021). The principle that development is a whole in the teaching–learning process is a principle that should be taken into account in all courses. In this context, it is known that there is a relationship between affective factors such as interest and attitude towards language and students' academic success towards language (Ghoneim, 2021). If success is expected in language learning, then the attitude towards a foreign language and the variables that may affect this attitude should not be ignored. In the related literature, it has been determined that the studies on the affective factors of language education are less than the studies on the cognitive factors, which is seen as a deficiency in the literature (Legas & Mengistu, 2018). With the globalising world, foreign language teaching has been emphasised and foreign language teaching has begun to be emphasised more. Today, language has become a necessity not only in business but also in many different fields. Various factors should be considered in learning English, which is important for personal development and business or cultural development (Karpovich, Sheredekina, Krepkaiia, & Voronova, 2021). Many factors affect language learning and it is known that one of these factors is the attitude towards language education and lesson, which is one of the affective characteristics. It is thought that knowing what is effective will shed light on the practices in education (Freiermuth & Huang, 2021).

It is known that progress in technology increases intercultural interaction and it is seen that people communicate with each other through different social platforms (Uzunboylu & Özmen, 2021). It is seen that many countries include students from different cultures. Communicating with people from different cultures contributes to learning new things and brings with it some problems, such as excluding and marginalising different cultures. It is very important to know that there are different cultures, to accept the existence of cultures and to act with the awareness of these cultures to avoid behaviours such as excluding and marginalising people from different cultures (Etzkowitz, Dzisah, & Clouser, 2022). In this context, it is possible to say that the language used has an important mediator role in intercultural interaction. While English has become a more widely accepted language in intercultural interaction than other languages, the importance of language learning is increasing today (Lukina et al., 2021). It can be said that the most important factor affecting language learning success is the attitude towards language learning. Many factors can affect this attitude. The influence of the target culture in the formation of attitudes should never be ignored. In addition, language and culture are like half of an apple, so it is impossible to consider language and culture as two separate concepts (Bazarova, 2021). Finally, considering that people from different cultures interact socially with each other, it should be taken into account that the intermingling of different cultures brings forward the concept of intercultural awareness (Lepore, Hall, & Tandon, 2021).

1.1. Related research

Krotik and Morhun (2021) aimed to examine the values related to the intercultural competencies of university students that should be developed in the conditions of the coronavirus pandemic in English

and Chinese majors, and this resulted in the systematic formation of intercultural competencies of university students, the improvement in the current curriculum and the translator and interpreter of the future. It is seen that the curricula of the training programmes for the education profession for their teachers have to be adapted.

Pryshliak, Polishchuk, and Lupak (2020) aimed to examine the effect of the intercultural education field on the formation of intercultural competencies of future teachers in a pedagogical higher education institution, and as a result, it was concluded that the creation of the intercultural training field in higher education institutions has a positive effect on the intercultural competences formation process. Therefore, in this study, it is planned to develop competencies.

Volkova, Semushina, and Tsareva (2020) aimed to reveal the factors of the environment that affect the elements of the intercultural communicative competence structure and encourage the development or deterioration of this environment, but they disregarded the conclusion.

As seen in the related research section, it seems essential that the proficiency levels and skills of the participant group included in the research for the language element provide intercultural benefits and develop into a more logical society within the society, and this study will continue with the aim of serving the same goals with technology.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study was to form intercultural competencies in language education classes at the university and design it. To reach the problem situation in the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the educational readiness level of the students participating in the study in language classes?
2. Is there a significant difference in the intercultural proficiency of the students participating in the research according to the gender variables?
3. Is there a significant difference between the asynchronous education statuses of the students participating in the research according to the language activities performed, according to the gender variables?
4. What are the opinions of the students participating in the research on the dimension of intercultural competencies in language education classes?

2. Method

In this section, information on the method used in the study, the participant group included in the study, the type and source of the data on the tables, the data collection tools and the statistics used in the research are given.

2.1. Research model

In the study, the quantitative research method, which is the most appropriate model, was used following the research problem situation. It is known that the quantitative research method is a research method that aims to describe an event that continues until today, in the existing situations in future lives (Caliskan et al., 2022). In this research, with the quantitative research method, the

development and determination of intercultural competencies in the language education classes at the university were aimed at; it was patterned according to the variables of gender, education status and education duration.

2.2. Working group/participants

The research was carried out voluntarily with 198 students who continue their education at schools in Kazakhstan in the 2021–2022 spring academic year. The data collection tool used in the study was applied to 198 students and accepted.

2.2.1. Gender

In this section, the gender differences of the students included in the study are given (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of students included in the study by gender

Gender	Male		Female	
	F	%	F	%
Variable	102	51.51	102	51.51

In Table 1, it is seen that the participant group participating in the study comprised 51.51% (102 people) male students and 48.48% (96 people) female students. The findings in this section reflect the actual gender distribution.

2.2.2. Smart applications use cases

In this section, the language classes were given to the participant group included in the study by using smart applications that support education. Their time allocation during the day was examined and detailed information is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Smart applications usage cases of the participant group participating in the research

Smart applications	1–3 hours		4–6 hours		7 hours or more	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Variable	27	13.64	76	38.38	95

In Table 2, the use of smart applications was examined concerning the problem status of the students included in the study, and among the values, 13.64% (27 people) stated that they used it for 1–3 hours, 38.38% (76 people) used it between 4 and 6 hours and 47.98% (95 people) preferred to use it for 7 hours or more.

2.2.3. Age status

In this section, the age status of the participant group included in the study was examined and detailed information is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of the participant group included in the study by age

Age	18–21		22–25		26 and above	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Variable	155	78.28	38	19.19	5	2.53

In Table 3, it is seen that the information given about the age range of the students participating in the study is included. In this context, 78.28% (155 people) are between the ages of 18 and 21, 19.19% (38 people) are between the ages of 22 and 25 and 2.53% (5 people) are 26 and above. They expressed their grooves in the range. The findings in this section reflect the true distribution.

2.3. Data collection tools

The data collection tool used in the research was prepared, developed and created by the people who suggested the study. The created and developed data collection tool was shown to experts who work in language, intercultural competence and technology fields, as well as their status information, and arranged accordingly. In the data collection tool, language, proficiency and technology issues were emphasised and the participating students were trained in an online environment. 17 items of the measurement tool consisting of 24 items were used and 7 items were removed from the measurement tool, thanks to the experts' opinions.

1. The Whole Demographic Data: Information was sought and requested to determine the views and information of the people participating in the research; information such as gender, age and smart applications usage status are included.

2. Language and Proficiency Data Collection Tool: The opinions of the students from two factorial dimensions, namely 'Language' and 'Intercultural Competence', were consulted. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the measurement tool as a whole was calculated as 0.88. The measuring tool was in the range of 'strongly disagree' (1), 'disagree' (2), 'undecided' (3), 'agree' (4) and 'strongly agree' (5). The measurement tool was also collected from university students in the form of an online environment.

2.4. Application

When the application part is considered for the students who continue their education in schools in Kazakhstan, the application environment was prepared for 198 volunteer students and designed accordingly. The online education environment was organised by experts in the field of education environment on language, intercultural competence and technology. After the education part of the research, the application of the language and competence data collection tool for students took its place among the objectives. Information such as 'language in the classroom', 'proficiency' and 'intercultural reconciliation' was transferred to the students in the form of online education within the 4-week training period. After the 4-week training, the measurement tool and information form were applied to the students participating in the research and the data are given in the findings section in the tables. Education was determined into four sections through Google Meet, which is preferred by most universities, and each section was distributed over the weeks to be limited to a maximum of 50 students, each education programme is covered in a total of 50 minutes, 35 minutes of which are training and 15 minutes of which are questions and answers. The participant group participating in the research was expected to participate in the training by using devices such as tablets, smartphones, and computers, with video and microphones. The measurement tool applied to the students participating in the research was collected online with the help of Google Survey and transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences programme by coding in the computing software environment.

2.5. Analysis of the data

The data obtained from the students participating in the research were analysed in the Statistics programme using frequency (*f*), percentage (%), mean (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*) and *t*-test. The data obtained from the programme are given in the findings section accompanied by tables and comments.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data obtained to establish the intercultural competencies in the language education classes of the participant group in the research are added to tables and various interpretations are included in the direction of the findings.

3.1. Educational readiness in the language classes of the participant group participating in the research

In this section, the educational statuses of the students participating in the research under two headings were investigated and information about these findings is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Educational readiness in language classes of the participant group participating in the research

Education in language classes	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SS</i>
Familiarity with language classes	<u>198</u>	<u>4.24</u>	<u>0.421</u>
Unable to use the environment in language	<u>198</u>	<u>4.33</u>	<u>0.511</u>

When Table 4 is examined, the education in the language classes of the students included in the study is presented. According to these values, it is seen that the students participating in the research are highly prone to language classes and can use the environment.

3.2. Distribution of intercultural proficiency in languages of the students participating in the study by gender variables

The *t*-test was applied to find out whether the intercultural proficiency status of the students participating in the study was different according to gender variables, and the relevant data are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of intercultural proficiency in the language of the students participating in the study by gender variables

Students participating in the research	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Cases of intercultural proficiency in the language	<u>Male</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>4.22</u>	<u>0.422</u>	<u>198</u>	<u>-1.989</u>	<u>0.011*</u>
	<u>Female</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>4.02</u>	<u>0.408</u>			

When the findings in Table 5 are considered, according to the *t*-test results, it was concluded that the difference between the scores of the participant group included in the study on intercultural proficiency in language and the gender variable dimension was significant [$t(198) = -1.989, p < 0.05$]. When the arithmetic averages of male students in the dimension of intercultural proficiency in the language are examined, it is seen that the average score of the female students is $M = 4.02$ but the

scores of the male students are high. Accordingly, it can be said that male students are more prone to intercultural proficiency in language than female students.

3.3. Distribution of asynchronous educational status of the students participating in the study according to the language activities performed according to the gender variable

In Table 6, a *t*-test was applied to find out that there is no difference between the asynchronous education status of the students participating in the research according to the language activities performed according to the gender variable.

Table 6. The distribution of asynchronous educational statuses of the students participating in the research according to the language activities performed according to the gender variable

Students participating in the research	Gender	N	M	SS	SD	t	p
Asynchronous lesson	Male	102	4.26	0.447	198	-2.027	0.019*
	Female	96	4.17	0.512			

According to the results of the *t*-test applied according to Table 6, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the asynchronous education status of the students participating in the research according to the language activities performed and the gender variable [$t(198) = -2.027, p < 0.05$]. When the arithmetic averages of the asynchronous education according to language activities are examined, it is seen that the average score of male students is $M = 4.26$ and the average score of female students is $M = 4.17$. Accordingly, it can be said that male students are more prone to asynchronous education according to language activities compared to female students.

3.4. Opinions of the students participating in the research on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes

In this section, the opinions of the students participating in the research on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes were taken after the study and detailed information is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Opinions of the students participating in the study on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes

No	Opinions of the participants participating in the research	M	S
1	Live lessons taught in language training classroom settings are more effective	4.48	0.71
2	Taking my language education with a live event allows me to spend more time in my social life.	4.56	0.52
3	Instant correspondence and asking questions with the teacher who teaches the language education in a live environment is a very effective method in terms of sociocultural	4.53	0.59
4	Reaching the record of the lesson taught in the language education environment is more effective in reinforcing the lesson.	4.51	0.62

5	It is an advantage for me to be able to learn every activity I take with language education, technology and information whenever and wherever I want.	4.58	0.61
6	I do not experience any disconnection while teaching every course I take in the language education course environment.	4.42	0.52
7	I have the opportunity to learn how to use the dimension of intercultural competence by taking lessons in a language education classroom environment.	4.49	0.57
8	If the language education environment is a live event, it gives me the pleasure to chat with my friends while taking lessons.	4.58	0.63
9	I can watch the video recordings uploaded for the intercultural competence environment when they are uploaded.	4.46	0.78
10	I can download the videos of each lesson processed as a live event from the system at any time.	4.53	0.62
11	I find language training classes effective and useful	4.42	0.72
12	I am happy to express my opinion freely in language education classes.	4.51	0.71
13	Raising my hands in language training classes makes me feel more confident and conscious of the lesson	4.42	0.67
14	I think that my communication is very effective in the educational environment I received.	4.53	0.71
15	I believe that language training classes are generally beneficial and effective for me.	4.52	0.61
16	Being in the language education environment simultaneously with my teacher increases my interest in the live lesson.	4.47	0.71
17	The materials used in the environment in language education classrooms allow me to better understand the subject.	4.57	0.58
	Overall Average	4.50	0.64

In Table 7, it is seen that the views of the students participating in the research on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes are included. It is seen that the values of the opinions are high. 'Chatting with my friends gives me pleasure' and 'It is an advantage for me to be able to learn every activity, technology and information I receive with language education, whenever and wherever I want' had a score of $M = 4.58$ each. Although there was a significant difference in each statement, another finding was 'Instant correspondence with the teacher who teaches the lesson and asking questions is a very effective method in terms of sociocultural terms' ($M = 4.53$).

It is seen that the views on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes have become an advantage for the students included in the research. It is seen that 'Reaching the recording of the lesson taught in the language education environment is more effective in reinforcing the lesson' had a score of $M = 4.51$ and 'I can watch the video recordings uploaded for the intercultural competence environment when they are uploaded' had a score of $M = 4.46$. In this context, all values in Table 7 have a positive meaning. Based on the findings, it can be said that the opinions of the

students included in the study about the dimensions of intercultural competence in language education classes are positive.

4. Discussion

Mikhailova, Duisekova, Orazakynkyzy, Beysembaeva, and Issabekova (2021), as a goal the work they have carried out in the year of students' intercultural professional technology-based and communication-based evaluation sought to determine the formation of communicative competence and intercultural professional to work. As a result, this has been accepted as a very important requirement in the development of communicative competencies and professional communication skills for students' future careers can give great opportunities for and provide positive results. This value when compared with the results of intercultural competence shows that the results of the predisposition states come out well. Each value of the research is among the goals to shed light on students.

In the work of Poort, Jansen, and Hofman (2022), culturally diverse learning groups are particularly valuable in preparing university students to participate in a globalised world. Students' participation in group work is critical in realising these benefits. Therefore, more information is needed on what factors favour participation. This study aimed to investigate the cultural diversity of the trust in the group, and as a result, it was found that cultural diversity promotes behavioural and cognitive participation, but compared with trust, they concluded that the effects differ. In this context, the results of this research study when combined with the state of intercultural competence differ in the concept of gender. The value of male students compared to female students is higher, but both scores are high results that have been achieved in the group field variable and in this context, it can be said to be of different sizes.

Horbatiuk, Bilan, Sitkar, and Tymoshchuk (2022) in the work they have carried out on the formation of foreign language education in a training environment sought to focus on the results of the experimental studies, and as a result enhanced the educational environment, the successful learning of a foreign language, creative thinking, development of communication skills of students in energy engineering, foreign differentiation, which allows you to create the necessary conditions for the formation of the formation, individuality, independence, autonomy and bilgilendiricilik. In this context, when this value is combined with the results of the research, it is seen that the opinions of the students included in the research in the language education classes are high after the study. In this context, it can be said that language education classes benefit both areas.

In the discussion section of the research area and provide benefits to students over the years, it is seen that, in this context, the state of research in this area of intercultural competence in language teaching classes in a better future for them and bring benefit to the students with the preparation is equivalent. In this context, each value is thought to be sound.

5. Results

When the results part of the research is considered, it is seen that, first, the data of the participant group are the first. In this context, it is seen that 198 university students participated in this research. Another value of research is that students were examined about a problem state application for smart devices in the range of 7 hours and more of use cases, and as a result, it is seen that the preferred

results have been achieved This value will go up in value education classes in research with language in that it is seen that values are reached. When another value of the research is considered, the education in the language classes of the students included in the research is examined and it is concluded that their predisposition to language classes has a high value, and it is also seen that the results of using the environment in the language classes are also high.

Another value of the research is that the participant group were examined concerning scores on the language of intercultural competence for their state according to gender, and as a result, the resulting difference is significant in this dimension concluded that male students were more likely than female students on the language of intercultural competence of the state, although the size of the average high results has been achieved. Another value of the research is examined according to the gender variable of the state of asynchronous education activity students' language distribution according to gender was examined and concluded that the size of the variable is the resulting difference is significant. According to the language education of the state of asynchronous activity of male students, the female students were more likely to induction training according to their status according to the language of the activity. Although the highest values in both groups, it is seen that the conclusion is reached. The research addressed the final value of language learning in intercultural competence of the students that participated in the research researched opinions on the size of the classroom, and as a result, the language learning environment in the case of a live event chat with friends while taking the course and what gave them pleasure, they work with every language training activity, technology and information and to them anytime, anywhere is an advantage to being able to learn them, instant processing language training in a live environment with the teacher to ask questions about the course of correspondence and a sociocultural perspective is a highly effective method; it is seen that the results have been reached that the views on the dimension of intercultural competence in language education classes have become an advantage for the students included in the research. In addition, the materials used in the environment of language education classes provide a better understanding of the subject, achieving the registration of the lesson in the language education environment is more effective in reinforcing the lesson, as well as positive values have been achieved.

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