

Intercultural Communication Skills as an International Tool for the Development of English-Language Communicative Competencies

Inna Kostyrya¹, Ganna Kozlovska^{2,*}, Oksana Biletska¹, Marina Shevchenko¹, Valerii Lastovskyi¹ & Alla Mishchenko¹

¹Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts, Kyiv, Ukraine

²Sumy State University, Sumy, Ukraine

*Correspondence: Sumy State University, 2 Rymyskoho-Korsakova str., Sumy, 40000, Ukraine. E-mail: gkozlovska1@gmail.com

Received: June 23, 2022

Accepted: August 16, 2022

Online Published: September 14, 2022

doi:10.5430/jct.v11n6p30

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v11n6p30>

Abstract

The aim of this experimental study was to find out whether intercultural communication skills can be used as a tool to develop communicative English-speaking competencies. The experience of three countries: the Netherlands, Singapore, and Belgium was used for this purpose. The population of these countries has a high level of English as a foreign language. The pedagogical experiment was conducted in the course of research. A survey of the 137 participants in the experiment was conducted. The results were processed by mathematical methods of analysis of variance, Cohen's coefficient and Pearson's chi-squared test. Statistica software was also used. It was found that the use of such English teaching methods as watching English-language films, and reading English-language art works in the original language promotes the development of intercultural communication skills. Participation in live communication between students and English-speaking foreign classmates and virtual exchange are effective. However, the best results can be achieved by applying these three methods in sequence. The study showed that the teaching methods used, which contributed to the development of intercultural communication skills, also had a positive impact on the development of English-language communicative competencies. The established connection gives grounds to claim that the intercultural communication skills can be used as a tool for the development of English-language communicative competencies. Further research should focus on finding ways to optimize curricula, finding effective methods and focusing participants on the development of intercultural communication skills.

Keywords: speaking skills, communication, culture, multicultural environment, curriculum, critical thinking, English language teaching

1. Introduction

Globalization and integration have entailed levelling of borders and the active interaction of native speakers of different languages. Therefore, learning the language of international communication is no longer just a requirement of educational institutions, but also a personal need of many citizens around the world. English is recognized as the main language of international contacts (Ruiz and Spínola, 2019; Mai, 2018). It is used by students in international educational institutions, by migrants in destination countries, in negotiations at all levels of politics, business, etc. (Gumenyuk et al., 2021a). The participants of the dialogue are representatives of different cultures, religions, traditions and ways of life. This is necessarily reflected in the language of communication, enriches it with language models, and makes some verbal and nonverbal differences (Akimova, Akimova & Akimova, 2022). This, however, complicates understanding interlocutors from different countries of origin. This must be taken into account in order to succeed in the dialogue and to avoid misunderstandings. That is, in addition to the language, it is important to know also the peculiarities of the native culture of your interlocutor. Educational institutions currently face the urgent task of not only developing students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary, but also developing intercultural English-language communicative competencies (Vu & Dinh, 2022; Dvorianchykova et al., 2022).

Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in

work or study situations and in professional and personal development (EQF Recommendation, 2017).

'Skills' means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments) (EQF Recommendation, 2017).

International communication has the impact of on the study of English (Tosuncuoglu, 2019; Esen, 2021). In turn, English is a means of acquiring communication skills between people of different cultures (Ruiz and Spínola 2019, Mai, 2018). Chaya and Inpin (2020) believe that language and culture have a complex connection and cannot be separated. However, you can study the culture of another country in your native language or combine the study of language and culture. Sarwari and Wahab (2018) state that international universities are a multicultural environment which offers a possibility and need for knowledge of foreign languages and cultures of different countries. International universities also provide unlimited opportunities to communicate in English with classmates having different backgrounds and cultures, as well as teachers who are often invited from other countries. The development of intercultural communicative competence has a positive effect to the development of critical thinking (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019), creative, synthesized, and integrated approach to language learning (Jitpranee, Lisec & Songsirisak, 2020), cooperation skills, organizational skills, responsibility (Gumenyuk et al., 2021a; Hřebačkov, 2019).

According to Ruiz and Spínola (2019), Wang (2019), the main focus is placed on the study of language, the development of speaking, reading, listening, writing, vocabulary and grammar, with the allocation of significant proportion of teaching hours. Little or no teaching hours are allocated to introduce into the peculiarities of the cultures of different countries. In other words, the emphasis is placed on the correctness of the sentence and almost no attention is paid to the relevance of the formulated sentence to a particular situation. Therefore, Ruiz and Spínola (2019) proposed to consider culture along with such language skills as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This fifth language skill has a complex structure that takes into account knowledge of cultural institutions, values, cultural behaviour, intercultural sensitivity, and awareness. Ruiz and Spínola (2019), Idris and Widyanoro (2019) state that in general, communicative language skills consist of five components: discourse, socio-linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural, and strategic. There are also various assumptions about the way of establishing intercultural communication. One of them involves overcoming anxiety and uncertainty caused by the differences between intercultural communication and interpersonal communication within one culture. Another involves adapting to a new culture. One more provides for the creation of a new universal "third" culture, which will promote intercultural communication between representatives of two different cultures.

Effective intercultural communication requires knowledge of one's own culture and the interlocutor's culture, and equal respect to both one's own culture and the interlocutor's culture. It is necessary to know the processes that take place between society and the individual, the ability to interpret events not only from the perspective of their own culture, but also the interlocutor's one. It is also necessary to constantly update knowledge about one's own and other cultures for the sake of effective intercultural communication, be critical and evaluate the actions, prospects and results of the activity of the representative of different cultures (Gumenyuk et al., 2021b; Ruiz & Spínola, 2019).

In turn, different forms, approaches and teaching methods should be used to develop intercultural communication skills in students. For example, Jitpranee et al. (2020) recommends using an interdisciplinary approach as a way to integrate learning resources. For example, Ruiz and Spínola (2019) developed assignments that help to develop intercultural communicative competence in learning English. Ghasemi, Yazdanimoghaddam and Mohseni (2020) confirmed the growth of intercultural communication skills promoted by the introduction of an intercultural course in university curricula. Ibrahim (2019) proved that intercultural communication during classes leads to increased students' motivation to learn English. Ruiz and Spínola (2019) developed a model, which allows achieving intercultural competence while using linguistic competence in the study of English. It differs from others because it focuses not on the development of communicative competence only, but on intercultural communicative competence. Chaya and Inpin (2020) noted that the productive use of this model requires teachers to have the skills of intercultural dialogue, taking into account not only language but also linguistic models that are appropriately used in certain situations. It is also important to understand body language (Mekheimer & Amin, 2019), songs (Jitpranee et al., 2020), proverbs, sports, movies (Chaya & Inpin, 2020), jokes, features of greetings, celebrations (Hřebačkov, 2019), expression of emotions, gestures, facial expressions, stereotypes, expressions, dialects (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019), features of nutrition and daily routine (Hřebačkov, 2019). It is necessary to understand different types of English (Mai, 2018). Other researchers consider it appropriate to use the latest technologies for the development of intercultural competence (Pudikova et al., 2019). Scientists propose to observe the behaviour of the representatives

of the cultures studied, consider a variety of real situations, role-playing games, interviews, brainstorming, storytelling, case study, puzzle (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019), comparison method, cultural capsule, cultural assimilation, cultural island (Sevimel-Sahin, 2020), joint completion of educational assignments by representatives of different cultures, using English for communication (Godwin-Jones, 2019), cross-cultural project learning (Syzenko & Diachkova, 2020), mobile learning (Chaya & Inpin, 2020), creating a language portfolio (Griva & Kofou, 2020), virtual exchange (Hřebačkov, 2019), reading fiction in a foreign language (Heggernes, 2021; Kato, 2018), in particular, short stories with real-life examples (Rezaei & Naghibian, 2018), international projects aimed at developing intercultural English-language communicative competence (Madina & Zamira, 2020), Internet resources, ICT (Korosidou, 2020; Madina & Zamira, 2020), and media technologies (Zilola et al., 2019), telecommuting (virtual exchange, international exchange) (Godwin-Jones, 2019), distance learning (Sandorova & Betak, 2021), etc. A special role is played by ICT in the educational process (Batra, 2022) in general, and in language learning, in particular (Ou, Gu & Lee, 2022). Their importance increased during the 2020 pandemic (Mehrpuoyan, 2022) and changed the form of education in POST STAGE (Batra, 2022).

The development of intercultural communicative competence during English classes provides that the teacher definitely has this competence (Gedik & Perihan, 2020; Lei, 2021). The teacher should also select assignments not only according to educational and linguistic criteria, but also to meet the needs and experience of intercultural communication of students, motivate for the study of English as an international language, the study of cultures of other countries (Ruiz & Spínola, 2019). The assignments should be selected so that students pay attention to the existence of different cultural differences in human communication, as well as study these differences when completing them. Such assignments are aimed at developing students' confidence in communicating in English with representatives of other cultures without assimilation, while avoiding intercultural misunderstandings. Despite the time-consuming process of preparation for classes, teachers point to a noticeable positive impact of culture on language learning (Tosuncuoglu, 2019; Minh et al., 2019; Poplavskyi, 2019).

There is a double correlation between English-language communicative competencies and intercultural communication skills: 1) intercultural communication can be a tool for the development of English-language communicative competence; 2) English-language communicative competence is a tool for the development of intercultural communication skills (Figure 1). We consider the first of these cases in this paper.

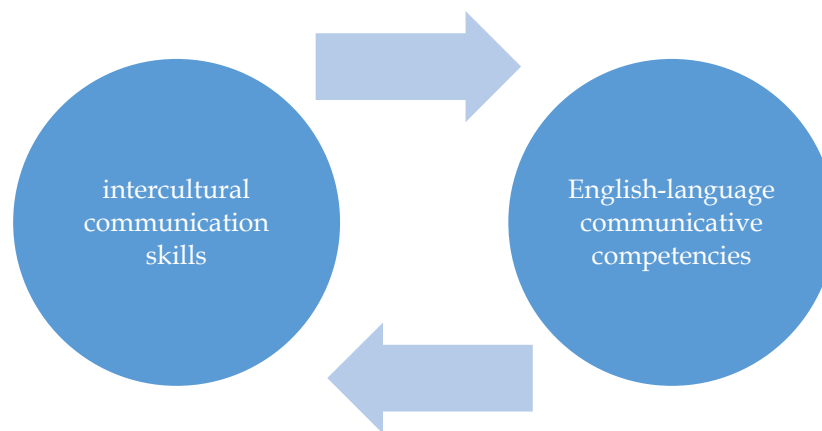


Figure 1. The Correlation between Intercultural Communication Skills and English-language Communicative Competence

Despite the large number of works in the scientific literature related to the study of intercultural communication and the development of communication skills, the issue of effective development of intercultural communication skills and their correlation with the development of English-language communication competencies remains poorly studied. This study aims to fill this research gap in the scientific literature.

The aim of this work was to study the possibility of using intercultural communication skills as a tool for the development of English-language communicative competencies on the example of different countries and Ukraine.

The aim involved the following objectives:

- 1) Identify countries that have a high level of English as a foreign language and study their experience in developing

intercultural communication skills. Compare it with the Ukrainian experience;

2) Study the impact of different teaching methods on the development of intercultural communication skills in order to identify the most effective methodologies;

3) Determine how learning by the studied methods influenced the development of English-language communicative competencies.

4) Identify the correlation between intercultural communication skills and English-language communicative competencies.

2. Methods

The research procedure included 3 stages.

The first stage involved the selection of universities that provide English language studies and located in countries with a very high level of English proficiency. The curricula in these educational institutions were studied and analysed in order to identify the subjects that promote the development of intercultural communicative competencies. The higher education institutions of Ukraine were selected at this stage, which train translators, philologists and English teachers. The educational and professional programmes were also analysed in terms of subjects that teach students to distinguish between linguistic and cultural features of different countries. It was found out which group of components of the educational programmes they belong to (compulsory or optional).

The second stage involved a pedagogical experiment conducted in four experimental groups.

In the third stage, the intercultural communication skills and the English-language communicative competencies were evaluated.

Table 1. Research Procedure

	Methods of developing intercultural communication skills	Evaluation methods	
		intercultural communication skills	English-language communicative competencies
Experimental group I	reading fiction, watching movies	English-Language Intercultural Competence	The level of foreign language communicative competence tests
Experimental group II	joint studies of Ukrainian students with English-speaking foreigners	Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Mekheimer & Amin, 2021)	http://www.ompersonal.com.ar/omtest/contenidotematico.htm (max 100 points)**
Experimental group III	international virtual exchange	Mindfulness and Cognitive Flexibility,	
Experimental group IV	reading fiction, watching movies	the Cranach's alpha value has been confirmed at 0.934-0.989 (max 100 points)*	
	joint studies of Ukrainian students with English-speaking foreigners		
	international virtual exchange		
Control group	Traditional studies		

*levels of intercultural communication skills: 0-20 — very low, 21-40 — low, 41-60 — medium, 61-80 — high, 81-100 — very high; **levels of English-language communicative competencies: 0-60 points — initial level, 61-70 low intermediate, 71-80 — intermediate, 81-90 — high intermediate, 91-100 — high.

Teachers of English language and literature introduced different teaching methods that were to promote the development of students’ intercultural communication skills. The first group used passive learning methods: reading fiction, and watching movies that show different real situations and dialogues of the characters as an example of the peculiarities of communication between the representatives of other cultures. In the second experimental group, students’ intercultural communication skills were developed in the process of joint study of foreign English-speaking students with students from Ukraine. In the third experimental group, students from higher educational institutions participated in an international virtual exchange. They acquired intercultural communicative competencies by communicating only in English when solving didactic problems in an English-speaking environment, which included the representatives of different countries, and only one Ukrainian. In the fourth experimental group, the international communication skills were developed in three stages. At the first stage, the same methods were used as in the first experimental group. At the second stage, the same methods were used as in the second experimental group, at the third stage the same methods were used as in the third group (Table 1). For data collection, the methods presented in the Table 1 were used.

The term for the development of intercultural communication skills in all four groups was the same — 5 months. In Experimental group IV, the time was divided as follows: 1.5 months were allocated for the development of intercultural communication skills through reading fiction and watching movies, 2 months — joint studies of Ukrainian and English-speaking foreign students, and 1.5 months — international virtual exchange (Bondar et al., 2021b).

In the third stage, the intercultural communication skills were evaluated through adapted and supplemented English-Language Intercultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Mekheimer, 2021). The English-language communicative competencies were evaluated through a test to identify the level of foreign-language communicative competence (OM PERSONAL MULTIMEDIA ENGLISH, n.d.).

The research involved pedagogical experiment, questionnaires and testing of students. The questions in the questionnaire were close-ended. Participation in the pedagogical experiment was voluntary, free of charge. The survey was conducted in compliance with all ethical standards. There was enough time for answers. The results were processed by mathematical methods of analysis of variance, Cohen’s coefficient and Pearson’s chi-squared test. Statistica software was also used.

Table 2. Sample Description

		Number of students							
Exp. group I		Exp. group II		Exp. group III		Exp. group IV		Control group	
Ukrainians	foreigners	Ukrainians	foreigners	Ukrainians	foreigners	Ukrainians	foreigners	Ukrainians	foreigners
30	0	22	14	16	0	18	0	37	0

The sample includes educational institutions located in the top ten countries and regions in terms of English language proficiency EF EPI (2021). The selection of institutions and countries was as follows: 20 institutions were randomly selected, which are located in 3 countries that ranked first, fourth and sixth in 2021 in the EF EPI ranking — the Netherlands, Singapore and Belgium, respectively, where English language proficiency is assessed as very high. The sample also included 20 higher educational institutions of Ukraine, which rank 40th in the EF EPI and has a medium level of English language proficiency.

Besides, the sample involved 137 students, 123 of them studied in higher educational institutions of Ukraine majoring in Secondary Education: English Language and Literature; Philology. Language and Literature (English), as well as 14 English-speaking foreign students (Table 2). The sample also included 10 teachers of English Language and Literature, who were introduced into the peculiarities of the pedagogical experiment. They had more than six months of experience teaching abroad.

3. Results

According to the ranking of countries in terms of English language proficiency, the top ten includes the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Singapore, Norway, Belgium, Portugal, Sweden, Finland and Croatia. The results of the analysis of curricula and programmes of higher educational institutions located in the Netherlands, Singapore, Belgium, Ukraine, selected at random on the basis of English Philology major, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The Results of the Analysis of Educational Programmes

Country	Percentage of programmes that contain components aimed at developing:					
	Speaking	reading	listening	writing	grammar and vocabulary	understanding of cultural differences
Netherlands	100	100	100	100	100	90
Singapore	100	100	100	100	100	65
Belgium	100	100	100	100	100	60
Ukraine	100	100	100	100	100	50

As Table 3 shows, all philological universities of the Netherlands, Singapore, Belgium pay attention not only to the development of students' English-language communication skills: listening, reading, speaking, writing. Curricula also contain components that enrich students' vocabulary and provide grammar knowledge. Only two universities in the Netherlands, and in a third of Singapore's universities did not have components in their curricula and plans that help students understand the differences between the cultures of English-speaking population from different countries. Components of intercultural communication skills were found in 60% of curricula of Belgian higher educational institutions.

There were 50% of the curricula of Ukrainian universities which had the subjects: *Linguo-Regional Geography of English-Speaking Countries*, *Intercultural Linguistic Anthropology* and others that develop socio-cultural competence in students. However, in 70% of them these subjects were optional.

This paper investigates how the fulfilment of such curricula affects the development of intercultural communication skills of students in Ukraine.

The results of self-assessment of students' intercultural communication skills before and after the introduction of teaching methods in English language classes that contribute to the development of intercultural communication skills are presented in Table 4 and Figure 2.

The study showed that reading fiction and watching movies with a demonstration of the peculiarities of communication of the English-speaking population, has a positive effect on the development of students' intercultural communication skills (10%). These figures increased by 3.5% in the control group during the pedagogical experiment. The level of students' intercultural communication skills remains medium. The live communication of students with native English speakers is much more effective in this case. If it takes place during students' stay in the usual learning environment, which involves foreign English-speaking students, it leads to an increased self-assessment of intercultural communication skills by 20%. At the same time, the level of intercultural communication skills of students grew from medium to high. In case of a complete change in the learning environment and separation from Ukrainian-speaking classmates, the effectiveness of acquiring intercultural communication skills is slightly lower than in the previous case (17%).

Table 4. Results of Self-Assessment of Students' Intercultural Communication Skills

	Questions	Mean on the Likert scale					Control group				
		Exp. group I	Exp. group II	Exp. group III	Exp. group IV	Control group					
1	Are you interested in communicating in English with people from other cultures?	2.8	3.2	2.9	4.5	2.8	4	2.9	4.9	2.9	3
2	Is it easy to understand the English-speaking interlocutors during the dialogue with them?	2.7	3	2.6	3.7	2.6	3.5	2.7	4	2.7	2.8
3	Can you explain the discrepancy between the text heard and the emotional perception during the conversation?	2.3	2.9	2.4	3.3	2.3	3.2	2.4	3.7	2.3	2.5
4	Does learning English help you understand the culture of English-speaking communities?	2.9	3.5	2.8	3.8	2.9	3.7	2.9	4.5	2.9	3.2
5	Does understanding the interlocutor's culture help you to have a successful dialogue?	3.4	3.9	3.3	4.3	3.5	4.1	3.4	4.7	3.4	3.5
6	Do the teaching methods used in English and literature classes help you learn more about the behaviour and habits of native English speakers?	3.1	3.7	3.2	4.4	3	4.2	3.1	4.6	3.1	3.4
7	Does learning English help you develop knowledge about the culture, identity and communication patterns of native English speakers?	3	3.4	2.9	4.2	3.1	4	2.9	4.5	3	3.1
8	Does learning English help to develop empathy for other cultures?	2.1	2.7	2.2	3.9	2.1	3.4	2.2	4.1	2.2	2.3
9	Do you have enough knowledge about the communicative behaviour of native English speakers?	2.1	2.5	2.3	3.2	2.2	3.2	2.1	3.9	2.2	2.4
10	Are English classes the main source of developing your knowledge of English culture?	3	3.4	3.1	3.9	3	3.8	3	4	3	3.1
11	Do you understand the English texts read?	3.1	3.6	2.9	3.8	3	4	3	4.3	3	3.2
12	Do you understand English-language films in the original language?	2.6	3.1	2.6	3.2	2.6	3.1	2.7	3.9	2.7	2.9
13	Can you communicate with native English speakers?	2.3	2.9	2.4	3.4	2.2	3.5	2.3	4.1	2.2	2.4
14	Can you avoid moments of misunderstanding when communicating with native English speakers?	2.7	3.2	2.6	3.7	2.7	3.1	2.6	3.9	2.7	3
15	Can you adapt your communication in English with people from English-speaking countries?	2.6	3	2.8	3.2	2.7	3.1	2.6	3.7	2.7	2.9
16	Do you have enough experience to confidently communicate in English with people from other cultures?	2.2	2.9	2.2	3.4	2.1	3.2	2.1	3.8	2.2	2.3
17	Did English classes help you avoid stereotypes and prejudices against the representatives of English-speaking countries?	2.7	3	2.6	3.6	2.8	3.4	2.7	4	2.6	2.8
18	Can you avoid discomfort due to lack of knowledge about the culture of the English-speaking interlocutor during the conversation with him/her?	2.1	2.5	2.2	3.1	2	3	2.1	3.5	2.1	2.2
19	Do you feel what you can and can't say when communicating in English with people from other cultures?	2.5	2.8	2.4	3.5	2.5	3.4	2.4	3.9	2.4	2.6
20	Can you avoid a situation of uncertainty when communicating with an English-speaking interlocutor?	2.6	2.9	2.6	3.2	2.7	3	2.6	3.7	2.6	2.7
	Total points	52.8	62.1	53	73.3	52.8	69.9	52.7	81.7	52.9	56.3
	The level of students' intercultural communication skills	medium	high	medium	high	medium	high	medium	very high	medium	medium

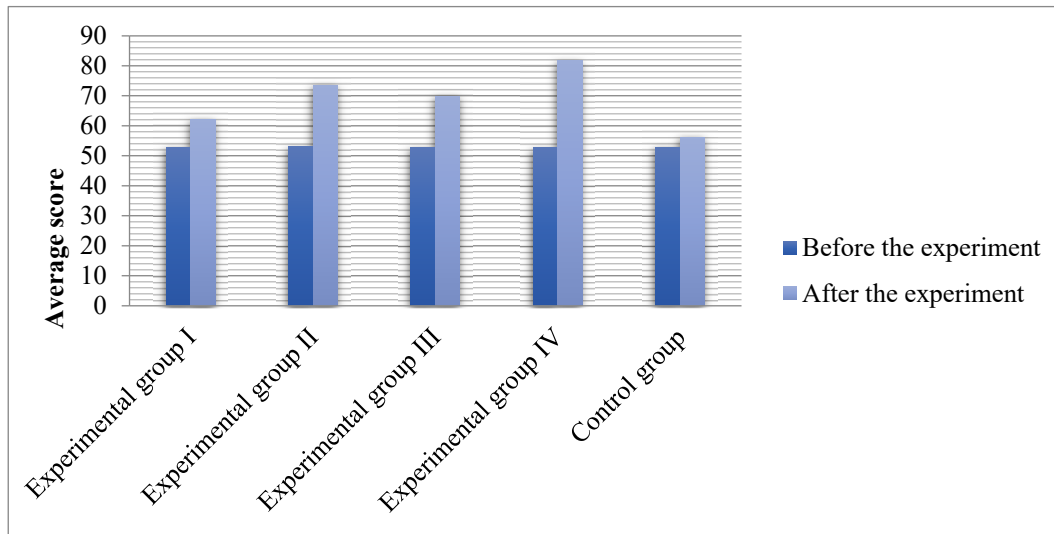


Figure 2. Results of Evaluation of Intercultural Communication Skills

In order to achieve the maximum possible result in the development of intercultural communication skills (29%, the level of students’ intercultural communication skills has changed from medium to very high), as this study showed, the learning process had to be organized in three stages. The first stage involved reading fiction and watching movies in order to introduce students into the peculiarities of English communication. In the second stage, we moved to live communication in English with representatives of other cultures directly during classes in mixed multicultural groups, where the majority were Ukrainian-speaking students. And at the third stage, students, already having experience in the previous stage of communication with native English speakers, independently communicated in 100% English-speaking group during a virtual exchange.

We found through the mathematical methods that the weighted sum of the squares of the deviations of the group means from the total mean, that is the intergroup variance *d*, ranged from 238 to 1546. It is caused by the heterogeneity of the sample, which is related to conducting a pedagogical experiment in different groups, which included students from different higher educational institutions.

In turn, the standard deviation from the mean for the same question of the questionnaire in different educational institutions of the sample was different. In this case, the intergroup variance, which describes the fluctuations of these groups, and intragroup, which describes the fluctuations due to random factors which were not taken into account, are not equal, thus indicating the invalidity of the null hypothesis.

Having applied Pearson’s chi-squared test to the survey results, we found that the values of χ^2_1 obtained for all four experimental groups are greater than χ^2_{12} calculated for the control group. Therefore, we can argue that there is a connection between the methods used in all four experimental groups in the study of English and the intercultural communication skills acquired by students.

Table 5. The Results of Evaluation of the Level of Foreign Language Communicative Competence

The average score obtained for the test									
Exp. group I		Exp. group II		Exp. group III		Exp. group IV		Control group	
before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after
43	51	42	57	43	61	41	68	42	47
beginner level	beginner level	beginner level	beginner level	beginner level	lower intermediate	beginner level	lower intermediate	beginner level	beginner level

In order to check whether the acquired intercultural communication skills affected the English-language communication skills of students, the latter were tested (Table 5).

As Table 5 shows, the average score for the level of communicative competence increased in students of all four experimental groups and in the control group. However, students of Experimental group IV were able to raise the level. The calculated Cohen coefficient in the experimental groups ranged from 0.8 to 1.0. This indicates the high effect of using the methods of learning English introduced in these groups for the development of English-language communicative competence. The Cohen coefficient in the control group, which studied with the use of the traditional forms, was 0.5, which indicates a medium effect.

The correlation between the level of English-language communicative competence and the intercultural communication skills is shown in Figures 3 and 4.

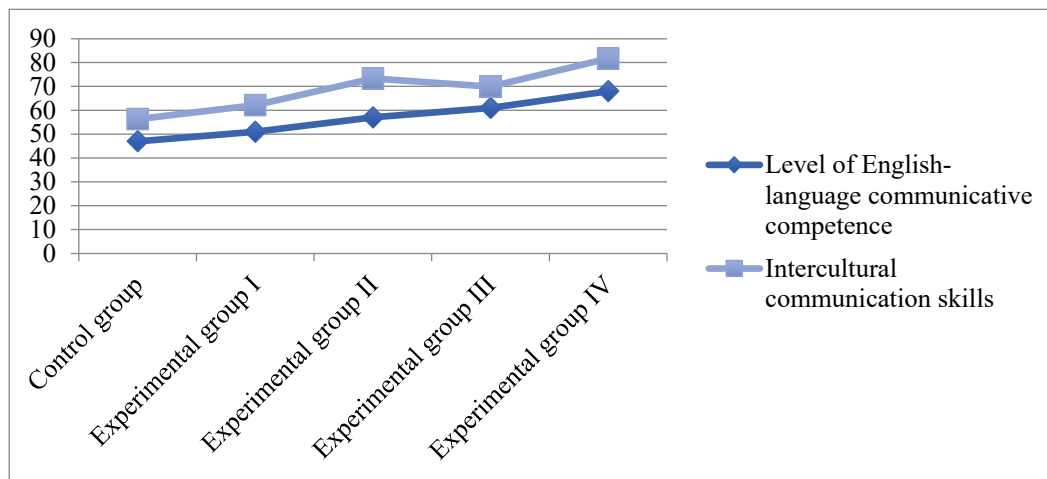


Figure 3. Comparison of the Level of English-Language Communicative Competence and Intercultural Communication Skills

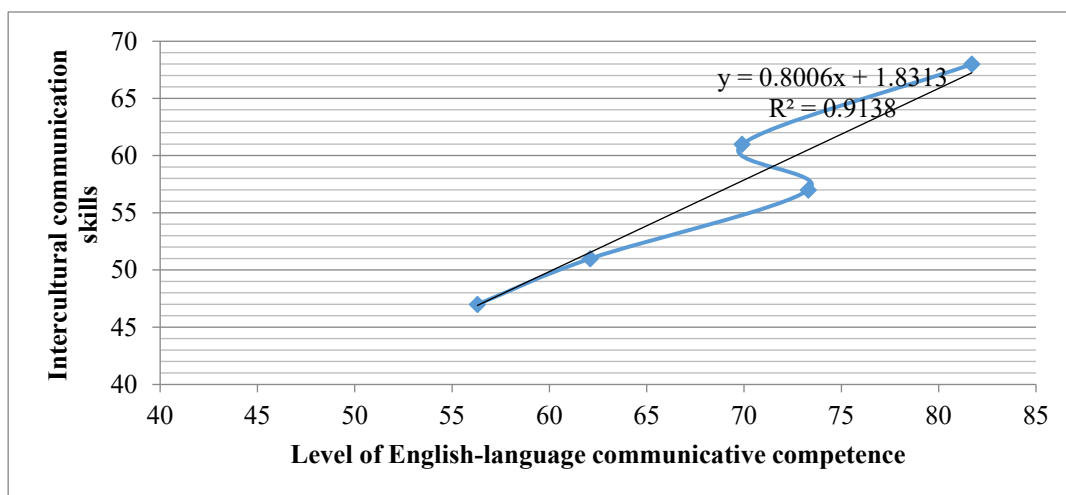


Figure 4. Dependence of Intercultural Communication Skills on the Level of English-Language Communicative Competence

As Figure 4 demonstrates, there is a linear correlation between the intercultural communication skills and the level of English-language communicative competence with an angular coefficient $k = 0.8$, $d < 0.5$. This gives grounds to assert that the intercultural communication skills can serve as a tool in the development of English-language communicative competence.

4. Discussion

In this paper, for the first time, the experience of learning English in the countries that occupy the first places in the world in mastering English as a foreign language (Netherlands, Singapore, and Belgium) is compared and the results of its application in higher education institutions of Ukraine are investigated. It is established that watching English-language films and reading English art works in the original in English and literature classes, live communication between students and foreign English-speaking classmates, virtual exchange, and a combination of these methods can improve intercultural communication skills from 10% to 29%. This is important from the point of view of increasing the effectiveness of foreign language learning, developing intercultural communication skills, and improving English communication skills. A correlation between the development of communicative English-language competencies and the ability of intercultural communication was also found. In this work for the first time it was proved on the example of Ukrainian students that the intercultural communication skills can be used as a tool for the development of English-language communicative competencies.

Tosuncuoglu (2019) found that students of Turkish educational institutions are more interested in selecting those subjects that develop intercultural communicative competencies, rather than attending speech development classes. This necessitates revision of the curriculum and introduction of a greater number of subjects and hours for the development of intercultural communication competence. According to the international EF EPI ranking, Turkey ranks 70th in the group of countries with a low level of English proficiency.

Thai researchers (Chaya & Inpin, 2020) found a positive impact of mobile learning and the use of films as a learning tool to improve students' communication skills and intercultural communication skills. Students improved their knowledge about different cultures, intercultural knowledge, and the ability to interpret differences between cultures. The study conducted in this paper showed, the effectiveness of the methods proposed by Thai researchers is low. In the first experimental group, students improved their intercultural communication skills by only 10%.

There were 98% of the 650 university surveyed students majoring in linguistics confirmed their understanding of the importance of developing intercultural communicative competence; 63% of them believe that information from textbooks is not enough for its development (Pudikova et al., 2019). To develop the latter, researchers (Pudikova et al., 2019) proposed to change previously used strategies and teaching methods, as well as to select additional sources of information on intercultural differentiation. It is appropriate to arrange a virtual exchange or online meetings of students from different countries and develop appropriate programmes. Among the resources that promote the development of intercultural communicative competence, almost half of the respondents indicated Internet forums and online conferences, two thirds indicated social networks, more than 90% — exchange programmes, a third — online learning and chat sessions. Russia ranks 51st in the EF EPI rankings. According to the research conducted in this paper, the exchange method is not effective enough, because students experience stress, which does not contribute to the development of English-language communicative competencies. Students' opinion on the need to increase intercultural competence to improve verbal and non-verbal communication with people from other cultures also separated (Madina & Zamira, 2020). There were 19% of students who found the differences between Eastern and Western cultures difficult, while 16% of students believed that it was impossible to acquire intercultural communicative competence without real practice.

Godwin-Jones (2019) found the effectiveness of the use of telecommuting between students in North America and Europe. It was implemented between representatives of two cultures, two languages during the semester. Communication between peers proved to be more effective in acquiring intercultural competence than communication between teachers and students. But such communication involves a long process of finding ways to win the mutual trust of opponents despite cultural differences.

There were time limitations for virtual communication in the study conducted in this paper. Probably because the time allocated for learning was spent mainly on overcoming stress and adaptation. This led to a slight increase in the level of intercultural communication skills in Experimental group III.

A study conducted in Malaysia among 108 Arab students from 9 countries in Asia and Africa revealed a link between English language skills and intercultural communicative competence (Sarwari & Wahab, 2018; Zhuravlova et al., 2022). The scores on the English language test were higher for foreign students with a higher level of intercultural communicative competence. Besides, it was found that half of the students in international universities communicate in English 60% of the time with foreign students on a daily basis; 53% of them have almost no problems with understanding. Such communication enriches students' understanding of the culture of the peoples to which their classmates belong. It also has a positive effect on English language skills, students' self-confidence, introduces them into different ways of oral communication, and teaches them to place accents correctly when communicating with

people from different countries (Bondar et al., 2021a).

Distance learning and communication have widely been used during a pandemic to enable intercultural communication. Sandorova and Betak (2021) found that 11% and 40% of students believe that this way of developing intercultural communicative competence has a very high and high efficiency, respectively, 40% of students indicated a medium efficiency. However, 44% of learners would choose offline learning as more effective for acquiring intercultural communicative competence in a non-pandemic context.

English teachers' intercultural communicative competence is a necessary condition for the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. A study of 30 teachers in Turkey found that one-fifth of those surveyed did not attend any English intercultural communication courses. But teachers believe that other subjects they have studied in universities have provided them with the necessary knowledge on cross-cultural communication (Gedik & Perihan, 2020).

In many countries (Gholami & Ghasemi, 2018; Liu, 2019), English language textbooks have been modified to introduce the intercultural differences in order to present different situations that emphasize cultural differences and demonstrate how other cultures should behave in those situations.

5. Conclusion

The transformation of society has caused an intensive mixing of the population of the world, which not only speak different languages but also represent different cultures. The development of English-language communication skills along with intercultural ones is an urgent task today, which will help to avoid misunderstandings and facilitate the process of interaction between people from different cultures. As this study showed, the use of English textbooks alone is not enough to develop intercultural communication skills. The methods used in such countries as the Netherlands, Singapore and Belgium are effective. They include watching English-language films, reading English-language works, live and online communication in English with people from other cultures. This allows to increase the development of English communicative competence by 10-20%. The highest results in the development of relevant skills and competencies can be achieved by consistent use of all these methods на 29 %. The correlation between English-language communication skills and the ability to communicate with the representatives of different cultures was established. This gives grounds to claim that the intercultural communication skills can be used as a tool in the development of English-language communicative competencies. The results of this study can be useful for researchers and educators working to find new ways and methods of developing English-language intercultural communicative competences. In this work, we limited ourselves to the consideration of intercultural communication as a tool for the development of English-language communicative competence. At the same time, they did not take into account that the latter is a tool for developing intercultural communication skills. We also limited ourselves to considering the impact on the formation of English-language communicative competence of such methods as watching films and reading works of art, communicating with foreigners and virtual exchange. Future research should focus on the development of effective teaching methods that would promote the development of intercultural communication skills and, consequently, the development of English-speaking communicative competencies.

References

- Akimova, N., Akimova, A., & Akimova, A. (2022). The study of the genesis of internet texts understanding in adolescence depending on the level of mental and speech development. *Psycholinguistics*, 31(1), 6-24. <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2022-31-1-6-24>
- Batra, S., & Kumar, S. (2022). Amalgamation of ICT in education during Covid-19. *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 7(2), 71-74. <https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2022.v07.i02.011>
- Bondar, I., Gumenyuk, T., Horban, Y., Karakoz, O., & Chaikovska, O. (2021a). Distance e-learning in the system of professional development of corporation managers: Challenges of COVID-19. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 7(4), 456-463.
- Bondar, I., Humenchuk, A., Horban, Y., Honchar, L., & Koshelieva, O. (2021b). Conceptual and innovative approaches of higher education institutions (HEIs) to the model of training a successful specialist formation during a Covid pandemic. *Journal of Management Information and Decision Sciences*, 24(3), 1-8.
- Chaya, P., & Inpin, B. (2020). Effects of integrating movie-based mobile learning instruction for enhancing Thai university students' speaking skills and intercultural communicative competence. *English Language Teaching*,

- 13(7), 27-45. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n7p27>
- Dvorianchykova, S., Bondarchuk, J., Syniavska, O., & Kugai, K. (2022). Development of intercultural communicative competence in the process of teaching English to future interpreters. *Arab World English Journal*, 3(2), 50-61.
- EF EPI. (2021). *Ranking 112 countries and regions by English proficiency*. Retrieved from <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8Rmd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2021/ef-epi-2021-russian.pdf>
- EQF Recommendaton. (2017). Retrieved from [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)&from=EN#d1e32-20-1](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN#d1e32-20-1)
- Esen, M. (2021). Critical thinking and intercultural competence: Review, use, and classification of the 21st century skills in intercultural EFL education. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(1), 23-32. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijelt.v8n1p23>
- Gedik, B. N., & Perihan, S. (2020). Intercultural competence in the eyes of state school English language teachers in Turkey. *Journal of Language and Education*, 6(2), 56-75. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2020.10327>
- Ghasemi, M. M., Yazdanimoghaddam, M., & Mohseni, A. (2020). Interculturalizing English language teaching: An attempt to build up intercultural communicative competence in English majors through an intercultural course. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 7(2), 77-100. <https://doi.org/10.30479/jmrels.2020.11474.1426>
- Gholami, P. P., & Ghasemi, A. A. (2018). An intercultural analysis of English language textbooks in Iran: The case of English prospect series. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 12(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.17011/apples/urn.201804172107>
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2019). Telecollaboration as an approach to developing intercultural communication competence. *Language Learning & Technology*, 23(3), 8-28. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/44691>
- Griva, E., & Kofou, I. (2020). The intercultural portfolio as a tool for developing/assessing learners' multilingual and multi/intercultural skills and strategies. In *Education in the 21st Century: Challenges and Perspectives-4th International Conference Education Across Borders*. University of Western Macedonia, Macedonia. Retrieved from https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/64940672/Griva_Kofou_Intercultural_Portfolio_Intercultural_Strategies-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?
- Gumenyuk, T., Frotveit, M., Bondar, I., Horban, Y., & Karakoz, O. (2021a). Cultural diplomacy in modern international relations: The influence of digitalization. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, 99(7), 1549-1560.
- Gumenyuk, T., Palchynska, M., Herchanivska, P., Kozak, Y., & Kobyzhcha, N. (2021b). Overcoming the modern socio-cultural crisis – From postmodern to post-postmodern: Theoretical aspects. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, 10, 745-752.
- Heggernes, S. L. (2021). A critical review of the role of texts in fostering intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom. *Educational Research Review*, 33, 100390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100390>
- Hřebačkov, M. (2019). Teaching intercultural communicative competence through virtual exchange. *Training, Language and Culture*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.29366/2019tlc.3.4.1>
- OM PERSONAL MULTIMEDIA ENGLISH. (n.d.). *OM PLACEMENT TEST*. Retrieved from <http://www.ompersonal.com.ar/omtest/contenidotematico.htm>
- Ibrahim, H. B. (2019). How can integrating intercultural communicative competence in the English language classroom motivate learners and develop their intercultural awareness? A case study in a Private School for girls in Jordan. In *International Conference on Advanced Research in Education*. London, UK. Retrieved from <https://www.dpublication.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/EDUCATIONCONF-1-113.pdf>
- Idris, M. M., & Widiantoro, A. (2019). Intercultural communicative competence (ICC): What should Indonesian EFL teachers have related to ICC's elements. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 4(1), 67-76.
- Jitpranee, J., Lisec, A., & Songsirisak, P. (2020). Using the interdisciplinary approach to enhance students'

- intercultural communication competence in English language training program. *Journal of Community Development Research (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 13(4), 25-37. <https://doi.org/10.14456/jcdr-hs.2020.33>
- Kato, C. (2018). English as lingua franca: A vehicle for promoting intercultural communication competence. *Chubu Gakuin University and Chubu Gakuin College Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 3, 29-42. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/235721297.pdf>
- Korosidou, E. (2020). *Digital storytelling as a tool for the development of intercultural communication competence in educational settings*. Retrieved from http://mdu.in.ua/Nauch/Konf/2020/ch-1_zbirka_2020_fenomen_kulturi.pdf#page=115
- Lei, W. (2021). A survey on preservice English teachers' intercultural communicative competence in China. *English Language Teaching*, 14(1), 37-47. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n1p37>
- Liu, J. (2019). Strategies for developing intercultural communicative competence in college English education based on situational cognition theory. In *2019 5th International Workshop on Education, Development and Social Sciences (IWEDSS 2019)*. Retrieved from https://webofproceedings.org/proceedings_series/ESSP/IWEDSS%202019/IWEDSS19106.pdf
- Minh, T. Q., Dan, T. C., Han, T. P., Hang, H. T., Yen, P. H., Chau, P. T., & Tai, N. V. (2019). EFL student-teachers' perceptions and practices of intercultural communication competence in High School English language teaching: A case in a University in Vietnam. In *RSU International Research Conference 2019*. Retrieved from <https://rsucon.rsu.ac.th/files/proceedings/inter2019/IN19-076.pdf>
- Madina, I., & Zamira, T. (2020). Integrating multimedia technology into teaching intercultural communication. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 6(4), 428-433. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/53/49>
- Mai, H. T. N. (2018). Fostering learners' intercultural communicative competence through EIL teaching: A quantitative study. *Journal of English as an International Language*, 13, 133-164.
- Mehrpouyan, A., & Zakeri, E. (2022). Virtual education in English literature courses during pandemic COVID-19: Merits and demerits, and needs. *Journal of Critical Studies in Language and Literature*, 3(1), 41-46. <https://doi.org/10.46809/jcsll.v3i1.125>
- Mekheimer, A., & Amin, M. (2019). Developing and assessing the relationship between intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity in the EFL classroom. *Journal of Research in Curriculum Instruction and Educational Technology*, 5(3), 107-134. <https://doi.org/10.21608/JRCIET.2019.54145>
- Mekheimer, M. (2021). Assessing intercultural communicative competence in EFL college learners: A validation study. *King Khalid University Journal for Humanities*, 5(1), 11-41.
- Ou, A. W., Gu, M. M., & Lee, J. C. K. (2022). Learning and communication in online international higher education in Hong Kong: ICT-mediated translanguaging competence and virtually translocal identity. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.2021210>
- Poplavskiy, M. (2019). Entrepreneurship in the field of art business in the European Union. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 22(6). Retrieved from <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/entrepreneurship-in-the-field-of-art-business-in-the-european-union-8819.html>
- Pudikova, G., Kurilova, A., Movchun, V., Medvedeva, E., & Kochetkova, G. (2019). Emerging technologies for developing cross-cultural competency. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 14(21), 46-60. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i21.11194>
- Rezaei, S., & Naghibian, M. (2018). Developing intercultural communicative competence through short stories: A qualitative inquiry. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 6(2), 77-96. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1183791>
- Ruiz, M. R., & Spínola, N. O. V. (2019). Improving the intercultural communicative competence of English language students. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 49. Retrieved from <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/nr49/ruiz.html>
- Sandorova, Z., & Betak, N. (2021, July). Tourism undergraduates' views on distance learning in general and on the lessons fostering communicative competences in the English language and intercultural skills during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. In *13th International Conference on Education and New Learning*

Technologies. <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2021.1097>

- Sarwari, A. Q., & Wahab, M. N. (2018). A study on the relationship between English language proficiency and intercultural communication competence among Arab students in Malaysia. *Arab World English Journal*, 9(1), 419-432. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no1.29>
- Sevimel-Sahin, A. (2020). A survey on the intercultural communicative competence of ELT undergraduate students. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 141-153. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.775793>
- Syzenko, A., & Diachkova, Y. (2020). Building cross-cultural competence in a foreign language through technology-enhanced project-based learning. *Amazonia Investiga*, 9(27), 411-418. <http://dx.doi.org/10.34069/AI/2020.27.03.45>
- Tosuncuoglu, I. (2019). Intercultural communicative competence awareness of Turkish students and instructors at university level. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(1), 44-54. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n1p44>
- Vu, N. T., & Dinh, H. (2022). College-level students' development of intercultural communicative competence: a quantitative study in Vietnam. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 51(2), 208-227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1893207>
- Wang, Q. (2019). Intercultural communication in college English teaching. In *5th International Workshop on Education, Development and Social Sciences (IWEDSS 2019)* (pp. 746-748). <https://doi.org/10.25236/iwedss.2019.161>
- Zhuravlova, Y., Kichuk, Y., Yakovenko, O., Miziuk V., Yashchuk, S., & Zhuravska, N. (2022). Innovations in education system: Management, financial regulation and influence on the pedagogical process. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, 11(1), 163-173.
- Zilola, A., Umirahon, T., & Malika, K. (2019). The role of media technologies in developing intercultural competence of student's. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 5(4), 462-465. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/41/68>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).