Intercultural communication experience of foreign students in the host community

By

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of intercultural communication in the educational environment of the university. The ideas of foreign students about their ethnic group characteristics and the image of the ethnic groups of the host community are considered. The authors relied on the sociocultural approach of Pitirim Sorokin, as well as the representative of symbolic interactionism Herbert Bloomer. The research tasks were to study the ideas of foreign students about the characteristics that determine intercultural interaction in the student environment, the influence of stereotypes on social behavior of an individual. The results obtained allowed us to formulate conclusions:

1. Intercultural communication depends on the stereotypes of perception one's own group and groups of the host community.

2. The image of other ethnic groups influences the communicative properties and communicative activity, determines the interaction with the social environment.

3. The results of the study showed, firstly, the positive characteristics assessment of their ethnic group in comparison with the characteristics of the ethnic groups of the host community. Secondly, the ratio of characteristics in the image "own ethnic group" is 59% of positive, 15% of neutral and 26% of negative qualities; the ratio of characteristics in the image "ethnic group of the host community" - 46% of positive, 18% of neutral and 36% of negative qualities.

4. Intercultural communication is based on confessional factors common for ethnic groups, the principles of interethnic interaction declared by the republic, the interethnic

policy of the university, social and economic opportunities of the region in the adaptation of foreign citizens.

The research results can be used in scientific research of migration processes, as well as in determining priorities in planning higher education curricula. The results obtained will affect the factors and mechanisms of socialization of foreign citizens-students in the conditions of higher education.

Keywords: intercultural communication, student youth, foreign students, host community, stereotypes, ethnic group, internationalization.

1. Introduction

The inflow of foreign citizens - educational migrants requires increased attention to foreign students who experience not only linguistic and cultural difficulties, but also adaptation problems of learning in the new educational environment (Fursova et al., 2019). Communication barriers prevent students from adapting to the host community (Minzaripov et al., 2020).

According to research results, large cities of the republic observe tendencies towards an increase in ethno-confessional risks (Zinurova et al., 2019). There is a need to study the level of intercultural communication, which will further contribute to the development and implementation of educational and communication technologies in the learning process (Karimova, 2015).

Intercultural communication implies the exchange of information carried out by different cultures representatives (Guzikova & Fofanova, 2015). Intercultural communication has become an independent area of knowledge since the 1970-80s. The scientific community developed the communication theories of Barnow, Gerbner, Schramm, R. L. Shane. That time the International Encyclopedia of Communications was published [6]. In sociological science, the theories of Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, Robert Merton, William Rivers become dominating.

In Russia, the studies on intercultural communication are based on the classical school of A. Sadokhin (2014). N. Bogolyubova, Yu. Nikolaeva highlight the specifics of modern cultural exchange and intercultural communication, their main forms and directions (Bogolubova & Nikolaeva, 2009).

In modern conditions, intercultural interaction is studied as part of sociological paradigms and concepts of our time. These include the concepts of E. Giddens (Giddens, 2004), W. Beck, Z. Bauman, J. Baudrillard.

The psychological and sociocultural adaptation of young people and the development of intercultural relations, in general include the acculturation expectations of the majority group, which has great resources and influence, the coincidence or non-coincidence of the acculturation expectations of the majority and the attitudes of foreign citizens themselves, the socio-political context of society, the time of foreign citizens residence in the country (Hoang-Van et al., 2020; Jammeh, 2022a, 2022b).

Foreign authors devote their studies to intercultural communication of young people in relation to value orientations and social mobility, digitalization and the influence of social media on the acculturation process of foreign students, survival strategies and psychological

consequences, modeling of intercultural communication based on modern information technologies (Zakirova et al., 2020). Lou, N.M., Noels, K.A. studied the linguistic integration of immigrants and attitudes towards their language learning (Lou & Noels, 2019).

The aim of the research is to study the categorical structure of individual consciousness, including ideas about one's own ethnic group and the ethnic groups of the host community as the basis for intercultural communication at a university.

The research included 200 Kazan universities students, with average age of 20.3 years. The survey was conducted in student groups with Tatar and Russian representatives, i.e. host community ethnic groups and Turkmen ethnic group representatives. Gender distribution is 100 girls, 100 boys. By confession, students belong to the following groups - Islam (153), Orthodoxy (47). By ethnicity - Russians (50), Tatars (50), Turkmens (100).

Participants were asked to rank the characteristics of ethnic groups (their own and those in the host community). They answered the formalized interview questions on the topic: "Your ideas about the nature of intercultural communication".

2. Methods

The main method of our research is the method of semantic differential, which makes it possible to oppose the subjective perception of a person to the objective, i.e. interpersonal or cognitive. The content area of the research included categories, understood as personality characteristics, which became points of coordinates located in space. We developed a model of the categorical structure of individual consciousness, described as a classification and assessment of personality characteristics. The characteristics placed in the semantic space made it possible to analyze the ideas of young people about the ethnic groups of the host community, focusing attention on their own.

The relevance of the work is in the synthesis of the theoretical basis of symbolic interactionism and sociocultural approach for the analysis of research information. The first foundation is the cultural ideas of P. Sorokin. Culture is interpreted as the entire set of human-created cultural objects throughout history, as well as the set of values, norms and meanings.

3. Results and Discusions

The republic carries out purposeful work to develop a multicultural model of education and the formation of an all-Russian civic identity. The younger generation is traditionally brought up in the spirit of respect for the culture, language, traditions and customs of the representatives of the peoples living in the Republic of Tatarstan. Measures are being taken to enhance the role of the humanitarian direction in the education process, to develop curricula to study the centuries-old experience of interaction between the peoples of the Russian Federation; to create legal and material conditions for the development of the education system and upbringing in the national languages in the republic. At the same time, legal education of foreign citizens, work on their socio-cultural adaptation and integration in society are insufficiently organized. There is a low level of intercultural communication and trust between the host community and migrants.

The choice of the strategy of a person's behavior in a foreign ethnic environment is historically and socially conditioned by the experience of contacts between ethnic groups.

Stereotypical behavior is dominant in the choice of behavior. But in the current situation, associated with the increasing of migration flows and strengthening of interethnic, cultural, political, economic contacts between countries, it is not enough to navigate in the new social environment, based only on ethnic self-awareness or the actualization of one's own ethnic characteristics. To establish trust-based relationships, knowledge of the ethnic groups of the host community is necessary. Ethnic stereotypes affect intercultural interaction both positively and negatively.

In our study, we have proposed bipolar seven-point scales: "joyful-sad"; "weak-strong"; "bad-good"; "independent-dependent"; "talkative-uncommunicative"; "irresponsible-diligent"; "stubborn-compliant"; "reserved-open"; "kind-selfish"; "irritable-self-composed"; "unsociable-sociable"; "hostile-friendly"; "confident-uncertain"; "honest-insincere"; "not self-supporting-self-supporting"; "energetic-unemotional"; "callous-responsive"; "decisive-indecisive"; "fair-unjust"; "relaxed-tense"; "fussy-calm"; "cheerful-depressed"; "stupid-intelligent"; "emotional-rational"; "dangerous-safe"; "merry-sorrowful"; "healthy-sickly". In response to the adjective, the subjects have a reaction that is more or less similar to a behavioral reaction.

The authors asked the following questions. What ideas do the representatives of foreign youth studying at the universities of the Republic of Tatarstan have regarding the ethnic groups of the host community? What ethnic characteristics determine the nature of intercultural communication? Will the introduction of educational technologies affect the nature of intercultural communication in the university environment?

As part of the study, the results were processed, the characteristics included features that were chosen by at least 75 percent of the respondents (interpretation of the method by E.Yu. Artemyeva). They have become semantic universals of characteristics of ethnic groups representatives. We studied the characteristics; we identified in factor analysis using the system of factors by A.G. Shmelev. The study identified 5 clusters of characteristics of ethnic groups: 1) Vigour (or extroversion) - assertiveness (or extraversion); 2) friendliness (agreement); 3) Conscientiousness - conscience (consciousness); 4) Emotional stability - emotional stability; 5) Intelligence (or Culture) - "openness" to new experience (openness).

Below are the results of the analysis and social ideas about ethnic groups obtained using the method of semantic differential. The matrix of average values when evaluated by the method of semantic differential of the ethnic group is as follows (Tables 1-5):

Table 1: *Vigour (extroversion)*

Characteristics	Turkmen ethnic group	Russian ethnic group	Tatar ethnic group
«weak-strong»	-1,40	-1,26	-1,36
«reserved-open»	1,28	0, 87	- 0,36
«independent-dependent»	1,46	-1,18	0,98
«talkative-uncommunicative»	-0,91	-1,48	0,96
«unsociable-sociable»	0,12	0,12	0,62
«decisive-indecisive»	1,39	-0,56	0,94
«healthy-sickly»	1,48	1,28	1,32
«relaxed-tense»	-0,76	1, 26	0,36
Average value	0,33	-0,12	

Table 2: *Friendliness (understanding)*

Characteristics	Turkmen ethnic group	Russian ethnic group	Tatar ethnic group
«kind-selfish»	1,36	1,12	1,48
«bad-good»	-1,39	-1,22	-1,48
«hostile-friendly»	-1,46	-1,24	-1,46
«dangerous-safe»	-1,25	0, 12	-1,12
«callous-responsive»	-1,02	0, 12	-1,37

Table 3: *Conscientiousness*

Characteristics	Turkmen ethnic group	Russian ethnic group	Tatar ethnic group
«stubborn-compliant»	-0,12	0,36	0,08
«irresponsible- diligent»	-0,98	-1,29	-1,36
«honest-insincere»	1,28	0, 58	1,02
«fair-unjust»	1,46	0,47	1,08

Table 4: *Emotional stability*

Characteristics	Turkmen ethnic group	Russian ethnic group	Tatar ethnic group
«joyful-sad»	**1,44**	**-0,89**	**0,64**
«irritable-self-composed»	-0, 98	0,76	1,12
«confident-uncertain»	0,32	1,14	0,98
«fussy-calm»	-0,62	0, 94	0,48
«cheerful-depressed»	0,36	-0, 84	1,14
«emotional-rational»	0,89	1,46	-0,38
«merry-sorrowful»	0,87	-0,76	0,94

Table 5: *Intellect (Culture)*

Characteristics	Turkmen ethnic group	Russian ethnic group	Tatar ethnic group
«Not self-supporting-supporting»	self-0,89	-0,98	-1,36
«energetic-unemotional»	1,28	-0,87	1,29
«stupid-intellingent»	-1,39	-1,48	-1,46

4. Summary

1. The study of ethnic ideas is due to the heterogeneity of the student environment and the need to build intercultural communication in the unified educational space. The modern education system is characterized by close regular interactions between representatives of different ethnic groups in the educational process. Knowledge of ideas about ethnic stereotypes is necessary for the prevention and averting of interethnic conflicts in the university environment.

2. Based on the content analysis of scientific literature, the dual characteristics of ethnic stereotypes that determine intercultural communication were identified. The method of semantic differential revealed the system of perceptions of ethnic groups about themselves and the "other" ethnic group, showed efficiency in the study of ethnic stereotypes.

3. Representatives of the Turkmen ethnic group were chosen as respondents in the study of intercultural interaction. Turkmenistan is a fairly homogeneous state. According to

estimates for 2020, only 2.2% of the Russian population lives there, which indicates the insignificant experience of communication between Turkmens and representatives of the Russian ethnic group (https://meteojurnal.ru).

4.   Representatives of the Turkmen ethnic group assessed their own group and those of the host community, united in 5 clusters: energy, emotional stability, conscientiousness, friendliness, intelligence. The results of empirical research show a significant difference in the Turkmen youth perception of the characteristics of their ethnic group and the ethnic groups of the host community. Stereotypes in the perception of various ethnic groups were identified in the course of study.

5.   Analysis of the results obtained showed that representatives of the Turkmen group ascribe to themselves the following basic qualities in descending order: "strong", "sociable", "honest", "responsive" and "energetic". The proportion of positive qualities is 59% among the main characteristics of the ethnic group. According to the respondents, the following characteristics are not typical for the representatives of the Turkmen ethnic group: "weak", "bad", "unsociable", "insincere", "dependent", "passive", "callous" and "sickly".

6.   For the ethnic group "Russians" more often than others were given the characteristics of "irritable", "depressed", "sad", "good", "uncommunicative", "open", "friendly", "decisive", "intelligent", " healthy". For the ethnic group "Tatars" the following characteristics were given: "honest", "fair", "decisive", "talkative" and "energetic".

7.   The greatest similarities between the ethnic groups "Turkmens" and "Tatars" are determined by four positive characteristics: "safe", "strong", "kind", "energetic". The greatest similarity of the three studied ethnic groups, according to the respondents, is observed in two main parameters: "healthy" and "intelligent".

8.   5. Conclusion

The peculiarities of perception of each culture are based on auto- and heterostereotypes. In general, similar characteristics are attributed to the receiving community, although the study deals with two dominant ethnic groups of the receiving community - Russian and Tatar. However, in the Turkmens' perception, they have similar characteristics. At the same time, characteristics that demonstrate a loyal attitude towards the Tatar ethnos, due to the confessional factor are highlighted.

Migration flows actualize the problem of getting education jointly by representatives of different ethnic groups. Ethno-cultural development and intercultural interaction are important components of the development of the entire multi-ethnic region, including the socio-demographic group - student youth. The study of ethnic stereotypes that determine intercultural communication continues to be relevant.

Acknowledgements

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