

UDC 378.147:004.77

IRSTI 14.35.09

<https://doi.org/10.48371/PEDS.2024.73.2.001>

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERLINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES IN DIGITAL AND STUDY ABROAD CONTEXTS WITH FOREIGN LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract. This article explores the development of interlingualism and intercultural competence in foreign language learning within digital and study abroad contexts. It compares cultural contexts and the transformation of intercultural identity in a foreign-language modern world. The study examines the concept of intercultural competence, encompassing the ability to function effectively across cultures, think and act appropriately, and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds. The research involved collaboration between Polish Master's students of English, Business, and Translation, and non-language majors from the University of Houston Downtown (USA), using the TAPP online platform. The project also included ERASMUS study abroad experiences. Drawing on Interaction Hypothesis, the article highlights the significance of interaction in language acquisition. It identifies common language problems faced by non-native English speakers and native Polish students translating English essays. The study further explores the transformations in student self-identity judgments, including a rise in foreign language competence, trust, openness, self-authorship, and self-understanding. Digital challenges posed by automation and the need for adaptable language policy are addressed. The article explores the use of language corpora for clarifying synonyms and introduces digital tools like the SKETCH ENGINE KAZAKH CORPUS and Qazcorpora.kz. The research emphasizes the importance of intercultural and digital skills, including translation and localization as identity-shaping tools. It highlights the growing role of technology and individual agency in a globalized world. The article concludes by advocating for a shift from analog to digital language practices, and underscores the need for educational policy to prioritize digital skills and intercultural contacts for professionalization and employability.

Keywords: Interlingualism, intercultural competence, digital context, study abroad, foreign language learning, student identity, digital skills, development

Basic Provisions

This study investigates the development of interlingual and intercultural competences in foreign language learning. It focuses on two primary contexts: digital environments and study abroad programs. The research compares the impact of these contrasting cultural contexts on students' intercultural development within a foreign language framework.

The core concept explored is intercultural competence, defined as the ability to function effectively across cultures, think and act appropriately, and communicate with individuals from diverse backgrounds. The study examines how digital and physical intercultural interactions contribute to this competence.

The research employed a collaborative project involving Polish Master's students of English, Business, and Translation, and non-language majors from the University of Houston Downtown (USA). These students interacted through the TAPP online platform. Additionally, the study incorporates data from ERASMUS study abroad experiences. Building upon the Interaction Hypothesis, the research emphasizes the importance of interaction for language acquisition. It identifies common language challenges faced by both non-native English speakers and native Polish students translating English essays. The study underscores the critical role of intercultural and digital skills in today's world. It highlights the importance of translation and localization as tools that not only facilitate communication but also shape intercultural identity. The research aligns with Friedman's (2007) perspective on the evolving nature of globalization, emphasizing the growing role of individual agency and technology.

Introduction

The contemporary world is characterized by increasing interconnectedness, with digital technologies playing a pivotal role in facilitating communication and fostering intercultural exchange. Foreign language learning has become more crucial than ever, not only for acquiring linguistic skills but also for developing intercultural competence. This competence allows individuals to navigate diverse cultural contexts effectively, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

This article delves into the development of interlingualism and intercultural competence within the realm of foreign language learning. It examines two distinct, yet complementary, learning environments: digital platforms and study abroad programs. Digital platforms provide a virtual space for collaboration and communication with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. Study abroad programs, on the other hand, offer immersive experiences within a foreign culture, allowing students to directly engage with the language and customs firsthand. This research investigates the comparative impact of these contrasting environments on the development of intercultural competence in foreign language learners. By analyzing student experiences in both digital and physical contexts, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to effective intercultural learning. The concept of intercultural competence forms the cornerstone of this investigation. Defined as the ability to function effectively across cultures, think and act appropriately, and communicate with individuals from diverse backgrounds, intercultural competence equips learners with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of a globalized world.

Throughout the article, the research explores how both digital and physical interactions contribute to the development of this crucial competence. Drawing on the Interaction Hypothesis, the study emphasizes the importance of active engagement and exchange in fostering language acquisition and intercultural

understanding. This article further delves into the challenges faced by learners in both digital and study abroad contexts. It identifies common language difficulties encountered by non-native speakers and explores the transformations in student self-identity triggered by intercultural experiences. By examining the impact of digital and physical contexts on foreign language learning and intercultural development, the research aims to provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum developers. The findings can inform the creation of more effective foreign language learning programs that equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in a culturally diverse world.

Methods and Materials

Interlingual competence encompasses the ability to use knowledge of different languages for effective communication and understanding. Intercultural competence is related to the ability to interact with representatives of other cultures, understand their values and norms, and adapt to different cultural contexts.

Research on this topic shows that the development of these competences contributes to successful communication and integration into the international community. For example, studies by Byram (1997) and Dearsorff (2006) emphasize the importance of intercultural competence for globalization and international interaction. In the context of digital technologies and studying abroad, interlingual and intercultural competences become even more significant, as the digital environment provides new opportunities for interaction and learning, as demonstrated in the works of O'Dowd (2007) and Belz & Thorne (2006).

Interlingual competence refers to the ability to understand and use multiple languages effectively. Digital platforms such as social media, online forums, and language learning applications have revolutionized the way people acquire and practice new languages. These platforms offer immersive and interactive experiences, enabling users to engage with native speakers and authentic content.

One of the prominent scholars in this area is Claire Kramsch, whose work emphasizes the importance of cultural context in language learning. Kramsch argues that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a means of understanding and experiencing different cultures [1]. Her book, "The Multilingual Subject", explores how digital technologies can enhance language learning by providing access to diverse cultural narratives and perspectives.

Digital language learning tools such as Duolingo, Babbel, and Memrise incorporate gamification and adaptive learning technologies to make language acquisition more engaging and personalized. These tools utilize artificial intelligence to tailor lessons to individual learners' needs, providing immediate feedback and tracking progress over time. Research by Zhao and Lai (2019) indicates that these digital tools can significantly improve language proficiency, especially when combined with traditional language learning methods [2].

Intercultural competence involves understanding, appreciating, and effectively interacting with people from different cultures. The digital age has expanded the opportunities for intercultural exchanges through platforms such as global social networks, online communities, and virtual collaboration tools.

Geert Hofstede's work on cultural dimensions theory provides a framework for understanding how cultural differences impact communication and interaction in digital environments. Hofstede identifies key dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism and power distance, which influence how people from different cultures perceive and engage in online interactions [3].

Digital literacy and critical thinking are essential components of intercultural competence. As individuals navigate the vast amount of information available online, they must develop the ability to discern credible sources, understand diverse viewpoints, and engage in respectful and constructive dialogues. The concept of “transcultural digital literacy”, as discussed by scholars like Weninger and Kiss (2013), highlights the need for educational initiatives that foster these skills in digital environments [4, p. 694].

Online platforms also facilitate intercultural competence through virtual exchange programs, such as those promoted by the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange initiative [5, p. 15]. These programs connect students and professionals from different countries, allowing them to collaborate on projects, share experiences, and develop a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. Studies have shown that participants in virtual exchange programs demonstrate increased empathy, cultural awareness, and global citizenship skills.

While digital technologies offer numerous benefits for developing interlingual and intercultural competences, they also present challenges. The digital divide remains a significant barrier, as access to technology and internet connectivity is unevenly distributed across the globe. Additionally, online communication can sometimes reinforce cultural stereotypes and biases if not approached with a critical and open mindset.

Future research and educational initiatives should focus on creating inclusive digital environments that promote equitable access and encourage positive intercultural interactions. Policymakers, educators, and technology developers must collaborate to design and implement strategies that leverage digital tools to enhance interlingual and intercultural competences while addressing the associated challenges.

To investigate the development of interlingual and intercultural competencies in the context of digital technologies and studying abroad, standardized questionnaires were used to assess students' competency levels. Semi-structured interviews provided deeper insights into students' experiences using digital technologies to develop these competences. Additionally, observations of students in educational environments abroad and on digital platforms were conducted to analyze their interactions and application of acquired knowledge. Finally, content analysis of online courses and educational

platforms utilized by students identified elements that contribute to the development of interlingual and intercultural competences.

The following materials were used for the study: standardized questionnaires, including both closed and open-ended questions, developed based on existing models of interlingual and intercultural competencies; semi-structured interview questions designed to delve deeper into students' individual experiences; and online courses and educational platforms such as Coursera, edX, and Moodle, which were used by students to develop language and cultural skills. The use of these methods and materials allows for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of digital technologies and studying abroad on the development of interlingual and intercultural competencies among students of foreign language universities.

The hypothesis of the study is that the use of digital technologies and studying abroad contributes to more effective development of interlingual and intercultural competencies among students of foreign language universities. This is because digital technologies provide extensive opportunities for interaction with native speakers and cultural immersion, while studying abroad immerses students in a real cultural environment, facilitating a more profound and comprehensive acquisition of competencies.

Results

The study emphasized the importance of intercultural competence, defined as the ability to function effectively across cultures by thinking and acting appropriately, and communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. The collaboration involved Polish MA students in English, business, and translation at the University of Applied Sciences in Konin, working with students from the University of Houston Downtown, North Dakota State University, and the University of Minnesota. This cooperation was facilitated through regular online collaboration, face-to-face talks, and video recordings, leading to enhanced intercultural understanding and competence. This concept is illustrated in Figure 1, which is supported by authors' findings as Leung et al. (2014) [6] and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2018, 2019) [7],[8]. The collaboration involved Polish MA students in English, business, and translation at the University of Applied Sciences in Konin, working with students from the University of Houston Downtown, North Dakota State University, and the University of Minnesota. This cooperation was facilitated through regular online collaboration, face-to-face talks, and video recordings, leading to enhanced intercultural understanding and competence.

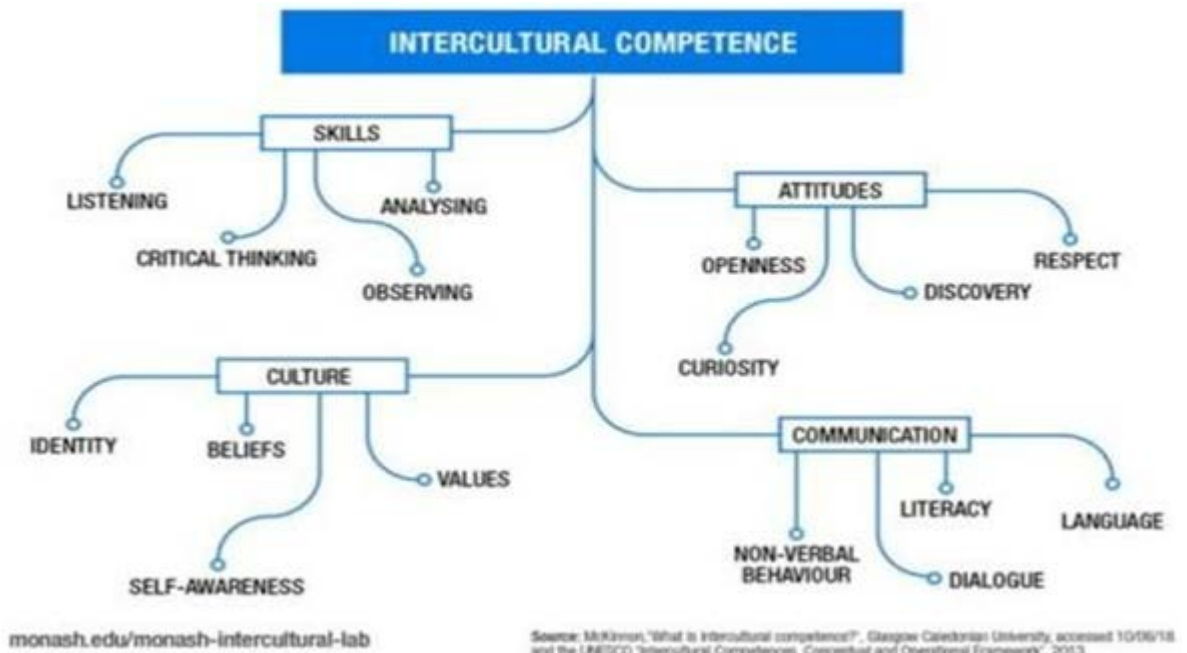


Figure 1 - Intercultural competence

According to Michael Long’s Interaction Hypothesis, meaningful exchanges facilitate language learning and comprehension. The collaborative tasks and interactions between the Polish and American students validated this hypothesis, showing that turns in discourse lead to better understanding and language acquisition. This is visually represented in Figure 2, which likely depicts the importance of interaction in language learning through discourse exchanges.

The human migration that occurred a thousand and five hundred years ago had an impact on the shape of the present-day Europe

The consequence of the great human migration that occurred a thousand and five hundred years ago - that is visible today - is the political division of Europe. Amongst scientists there are constant disputes over the matter of how that turbulent period of history looked like within the boundaries of the present territory of Poland.

According to Andrzej Michałowski, PhD, from the Institute of Prehistory (IP), UAM, Poznan, the extraordinary mobility of peoples is rooted in our human nature. "That perseverance regarding travelling, undoubtedly inherited from the first wandering ancestor of ours, that is homo erectus, basically creates the whole human history. Starting from the very moment of forming our species in Africa, circa two hundred thousand years ago, until the contemporary times, as we observe another great exodus from the early 20th century." - explains the scientist who deals with the Migration Period on a daily basis. This way the sequence of events that was present in Europe from the 4th to 7th century is defined.

Michałowski summarized the topic from the perspective of research excavation in Wielkopolska in an article "After, before, or in between," which was published in a periodical "The Studies on the Early Poland" (Vol. 4), released by the Museum of the Polish State Origins in Gniezno.

Komentarz [MC1]: You can omit the "and" it's not needed in numbers

Komentarz [MC2]: Can change the "a" to "one"

Komentarz [MC3]: You can get rid of this "and" as well for the same reason

Komentarz [MC4]: Can change "that" to "this" as it is your main subject

Komentarz [MC5]: Sentence establishing credibility to the quoted person, adding "explained" to a 5 line quote is pushing the limit a little. You might want to cut out "explains the scientist who" and just refer to them by name again.

Komentarz [MC6]: Change "an" to "the or his/her"

Figure 2 - The example of language learning and acquisition

For non-native English speakers, local grammar inadequacies, incorrect preposition/particle selection, punctuation errors, and issues with textual cohesion were identified. In translating English essays into Polish, native Polish speakers faced challenges due to weak metalinguistic competence and English language interference, resulting in clumsy syntax.

Students reported significant transformations in their self-identity judgments. There was an increase in foreign language competences, trust, openness, self-authorship, and self-understanding. The collaborative environment encouraged students to make independent choices and become more tolerant and open to new ideas, boosting their confidence and creativity. Figure 3 discusses the use of language corpora, specifically Pelcra and translation corpora (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik, 2018) [7], which help clarify synonymy in language. In translating English essays into Polish, native Polish speakers faced challenges due to weak metalinguistic competence and English language interference, resulting in clumsy syntax. Figure 4 pertains to a specific language corpus tool (Sketch Engine) for analyzing the Kazakh language, demonstrating the application of digital tools in linguistic studies.

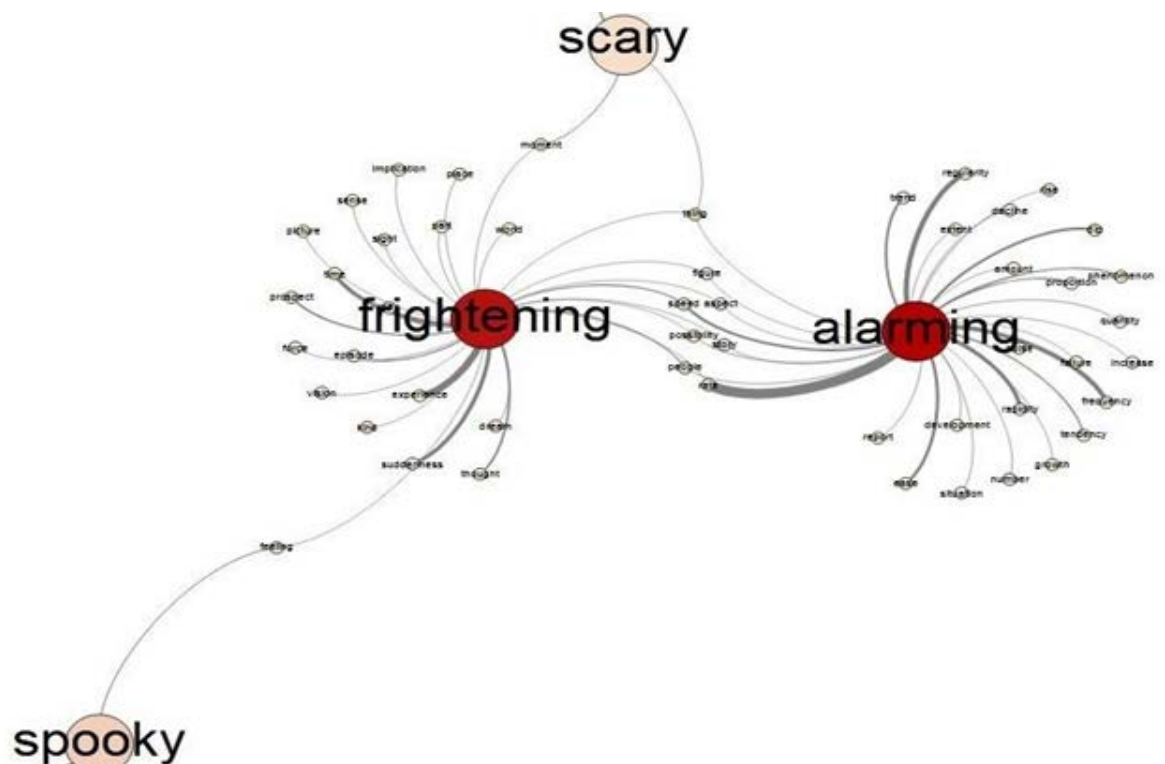
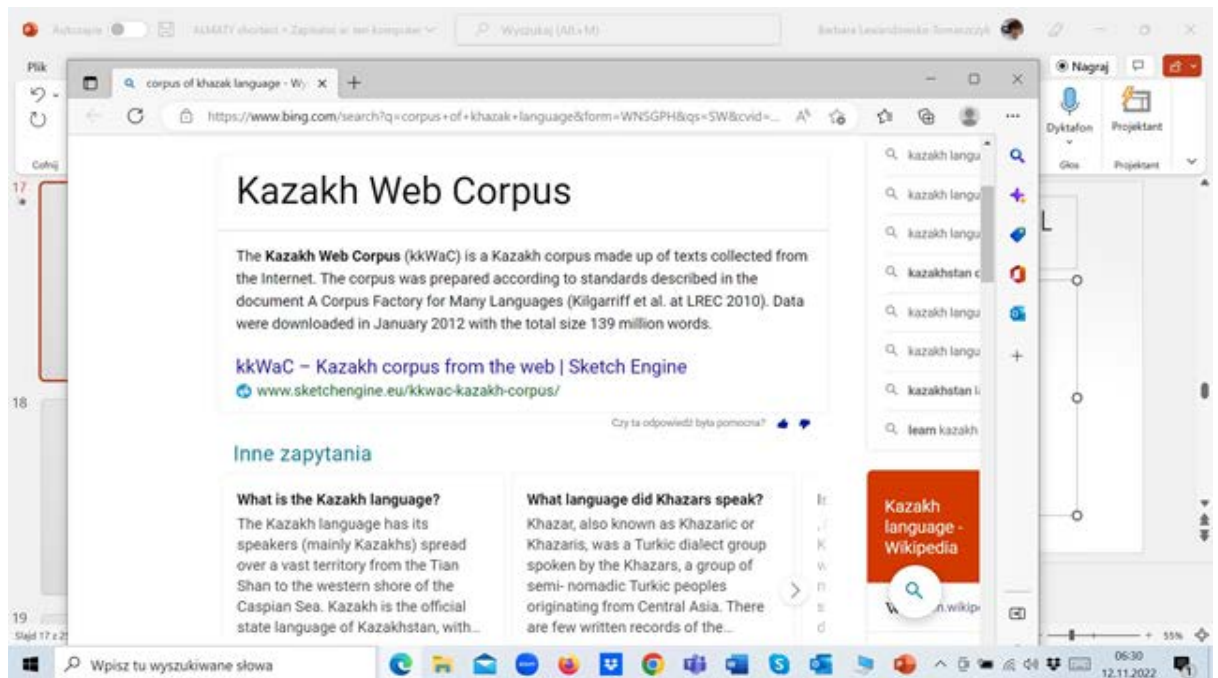


Figure 3 - Language corpora – authentic language (Pelcra & translation corpora Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk & Pęzik 2018)

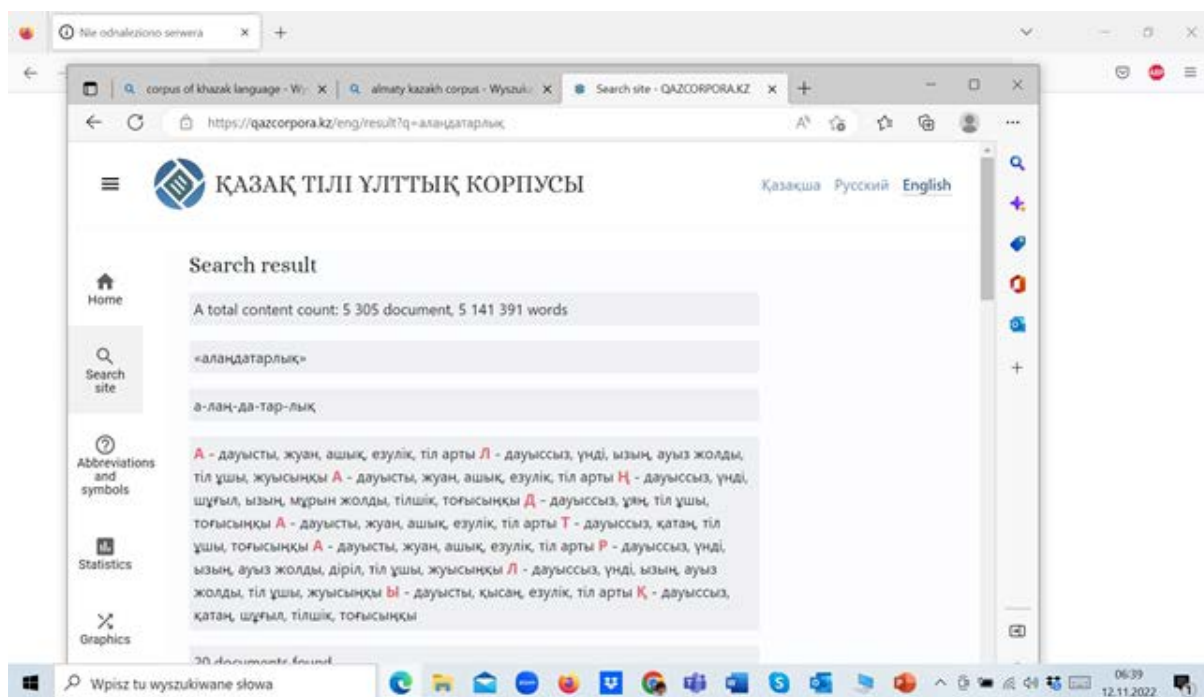
Students reported significant transformations in their self-identity judgments. There was an increase in foreign language competences, trust,

openness, self-authorship, and self-understanding. The collaborative environment encouraged students to make independent choices and become more tolerant and open to new ideas, boosting their confidence and creativity.

The study also highlighted the digital challenges posed by automation. Key questions included readiness for the era of automation, the suitability of current tools, concepts, and methods, and how language policy can be shaped to meet these new conditions. Tools like language corpora and translation corpora were discussed for their role in enhancing language practice and digital skills. Figure 4 shows the use of a specific language corpus tool (Sketch Engine) for analyzing the Kazakh language, demonstrating the application of digital tools in linguistic studies. Additionally, Figure 5 references Qazcorporaz.kz, illustrating examples of alignment pairs in a trilingual context (Czech-English-Russian), and highlighting the quality of alignment between source and target sentences.



Picture 1 - SKETCH ENGINE KAZAKH CORPUS



Picture 2 - Qazcorporakz

The integration of digital tools and intercultural contacts in language education was emphasized. Translation and localization were seen as recreating linguistic action and knowledge, facilitating mediation, and developing intercultural identity. The study used terminological databanks and sentiment analysis for applications in business, marketing, and media.

Discussion

The intercultural collaboration between students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds proved beneficial in enhancing their intercultural competence, as shown in Figure 1. The study supported the Interaction Hypothesis, as illustrated in Figure 2, demonstrating that interactive discourse improves language comprehension and acquisition. The findings align with previous research by Leung et al. (2014) [6] and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2018, 2019) [7], [9], highlighting the importance of intercultural interactions in educational settings. Figures 1 and 2 support the discussion on how intercultural interactions and meaningful discourse exchanges facilitate language learning and comprehension.

The identified language problems, shown in Figures 3 and 4, highlight the need for targeted language instruction that addresses specific grammar, punctuation, and cohesion issues. For Polish students, the interference of English on their native language underscores the complexity of bilingual education and the need for strategies to strengthen metalinguistic competence. Language Learning Challenges: Figures 3 and 4 highlight the identified language problems and the role of digital tools and language corpora in addressing these issues.

The digital challenges discussed by Friedman (2007) [10] and Kelly-Holm (2020) [11] are increasingly relevant in today's educational landscape. The study indicates that language education must adapt to digital advancements and automation. The use of language corpora, translation tools, and collaborative online platforms, as depicted in Figures 4 and 5, shows promise in enhancing both digital and intercultural skills, preparing students for the globalized, technologically-driven world. Digital and Intercultural Skills: Figures 4 and 5 emphasize the importance of digital tools like corpora and alignment pairs in enhancing language practice and intercultural contacts.

By integrating these figures, the study illustrates key points and provides empirical data to support its conclusions on the importance of intercultural competence and digital skills in education.

The TAPP collaborations and ERASMUS programs demonstrated substantial improvements in students' abilities to navigate different cultural contexts. This aligns with Leung et al.'s (2014) [6] findings on the significance of intercultural communication skills.

Michael Long's (1981) Interaction Hypothesis supports the idea that meaningful exchanges lead to better language learning and acquisition. The observed improvements in foreign language competences and self-identity transformation among students corroborate this hypothesis.

The issues identified among non-native English speakers and native Polish speakers underscore the need for targeted language support programs. Addressing these specific challenges through tailored interventions can enhance students' overall language proficiency.

The translation challenges faced by Polish students highlight the importance of strengthening metalinguistic skills to minimize language interference.

Automation and Education: The readiness for automation and effective use of digital tools in education are critical challenges. As education increasingly integrates technology, it is essential to ensure that tools and methods are fit for purpose and align with educational objectives.

Policy Implications: Shaping language policy to accommodate digital advancements and intercultural interactions is crucial for modern education systems.

The integration of translation, localization, and digital tools into the curriculum has shown positive outcomes in developing students' intercultural competence and language skills. This approach aligns with contemporary educational goals of enhancing professionalization and employability.

Conclusion

The study underscores the critical role of intercultural competence and digital skills in modern education. Through collaborative projects and the use of digital tools, students can significantly improve their language skills, intercultural

understanding, and self-identity. Addressing the identified language problems through targeted instruction and leveraging technology for language practice are essential steps in achieving educational objectives. The findings suggest that integrating intercultural and digital skills into the curriculum enhances professionalisation, employability, quality assessment, and competences, ultimately preparing students for the demands of a globalized and automated world.

The study demonstrates the significant role of intercultural competence and digital skills in modern education. Initiatives such as TAPP collaborations and ERASMUS programs have proven effective in enhancing students' abilities to function in diverse cultural contexts.

Integrating intercultural and digital skills into the curriculum is essential for preparing students for a globalized and automated world. Educational policies should focus on fostering these competences to enhance professionalization and employability.

Further research is needed to explore innovative methods for improving language competence and intercultural skills. Continued international collaborations and the adoption of advanced digital tools will be vital in this endeavor.

Embracing both face-to-face and digital interactions in educational settings enriches students' learning experiences and prepares them for the challenges of a globalized world. The study highlights the importance of integrating technology and intercultural competence throughout the educational process.

The study was limited to a specific number of participants and institutions. Broader research involving more diverse populations and educational settings is necessary to generalize the findings.

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ШЕТ ТІЛДІ ЖОҒАРЫ ОҚУ ОРЫНДАРЫНЫҢ СТУДЕНТТЕР АРАСЫНДАҒЫ ЦИФРЛЫҚ ТЕХНОЛОГИЯЛАР МЕН ШЕТЕЛДЕ ОҚЫТУ ЖАҒДАЙЫНДА ТІЛАРАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ МӘДЕНИЕТАРАЛЫҚ ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІКТІ ДАМУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада шетел тілдерін цифрлық және шетелде оқыту контекстінде оқыту кезінде тіларалық және мәдениетаралық құзыреттілікті дамыту қарастырылады. Сонымен қатар қазіргі көптілді әлемдегі мәдени контексттер мен мәдениетаралық сәйкестіктің өзгеруін салыстырады. Зерттеу әртүрлі мәдениеттерде тиімді жұмыс істеу, барабар ойлау, әрекет ету және әртүрлі ортадағы адамдармен қарым-қатынас жасау қабілетін қамтитын мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік тұжырымдамасын қарастырады. Зерттеуге Хьюстон университетінің (АҚШ) ағылшын, бизнес және аударма магистратурасының поляк студенттері мен тілдік емес студенттерінің Тарр онлайн платформасын пайдалана отырып ынтымақтастығы кірді. Жоба сонымен қатар

ERASMUS бағдарламасы бойынша шетелде оқу тәжірибесін қамтыды. Өзара әрекеттесу гипотезасына сүйене отырып, мақала тілді меңгерудегі өзара әрекеттесудің маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Онда ағылшын тілінде сөйлемейтін студенттер мен ағылшын эсселерін аударатын поляк тілінде сөйлейтін студенттер кездесетін жалпы тілдік мәселелер анықталды. Өрі қарай зерттеу студенттердің өзіндік ерекшелігі туралы пікірлердегі өзгерістерді, соның ішінде шет тілі, сенім, ашықтық, өзін-өзі авторлық және өзін-өзі түсіну саласындағы құзыреттіліктің өсуін қарастырады. Автоматтандырудан туындаған цифрлық мәселелер және бейімделетін тіл саясатының қажеттілігі қарастырылады. Мақалада синонимдерді нақтылау үшін тілдік корпорацияларды қолдану қарастырылады, сондай-ақ sketch ENGINE KAZAKH CORPUS және т. б. сияқты сандық құралдар ұсынылған Qazcorp.kz. Зерттеу мәдениетаралық және цифрлық дағдылардың, соның ішінде аударма мен локализацияның жеке тұлғаны қалыптастыру құралы ретіндегі маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Ол Жаһанданған әлемдегі технологиялар мен жеке Тәуелсіздіктің өсіп келе жатқан рөлін көрсетеді. Мақаланың қорытындысында аналогтардан цифрлық тілдік тәжірибелерге көшу қажеттілігі туралы айтылады және білім беру саясаты біліктілікті арттыру және жұмысқа орналасу үшін цифрлық дағдылар мен мәдениетаралық байланыстарға басымдық беруі керек екендігі атап өтілді.

Тірек сөздер: интерлингвизм, мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік, цифрлық контекст, шетелде оқу, шетел тілдерін үйрену, студенттің жеке басы, сандық дағдылар, дамыту

РАЗВИТИЕ МЕЖЯЗЫКОВОЙ И МЕЖКУЛЬТУРНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В ЦИФРОВОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ И ОБУЧЕНИИ ЗА РУБЕЖОМ СО СТУДЕНТАМИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ ВУЗОВ

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается развитие межъязыковой и межкультурной компетенции при изучении иностранных языков в цифровом контексте и в контексте обучения за рубежом. В ней сравниваются культурные контексты и трансформация межкультурной идентичности в иноязычном современном мире. В исследовании рассматривается концепция межкультурной компетенции, включающая в себя способность эффективно функционировать в разных культурах, мыслить и действовать адекватно, а также общаться с людьми из разных слоев общества. Исследование включало в себя сотрудничество польских студентов магистратуры английского языка, бизнеса и перевода и студентов неязыковых специальностей из Университета Хьюстона (США) с использованием онлайн-платформы TAPP. Проект также включал опыт обучения за рубежом по программе ERASMUS. Опираясь на гипотезу взаимодействия, статья подчеркивает важность взаимодействия в овладении языком. В ней выявлены общие языковые проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются студенты-носители английского языка и студенты-носители польского языка, переводящие английские эссе. Далее в исследовании рассматриваются изменения в суждениях о самоидентичности студентов, включая рост компетенции в области иностранного языка, доверия, открытости, самоавторства и самопонимания. Рассматриваются проблемы цифровых технологий, вызванные автоматизацией, и необходимость адаптируемой языковой политики. В статье рассматривается использование языковых корпораций для уточнения синонимов, а также представлены такие цифровые инструменты, как SKETCH ENGINE KAZAKH CORPUS и Qazcorp.kz. В исследовании подчеркивается важность межкультурных и цифровых

навыков, включая перевод и локализацию, как инструментов формирования идентичности. В нем подчеркивается растущая роль технологий и индивидуальной самостоятельности в глобализированном мире. В заключении статьи говорится о необходимости перехода от аналоговых к цифровым языковым практикам и подчеркивается, что образовательная политика должна уделять приоритетное внимание цифровым навыкам и межкультурным контактам для повышения квалификации и трудоустройства.

Ключевые слова: интерлингвизм, межкультурная компетенция, цифровой контекст, обучение за рубежом, изучение иностранных языков, идентичность студента, цифровые навыки, развитие

Статья поступила 22.05.2024