

GOCE DELCEV UNIVERSITY – STIP
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY



BILJANA IVANOVSKA, BRIKENA XHAFERI,
NATKA JANKOVA ALAGJOZOVSKA, GËZIM XHAFFERRI
(EDS.)

Contemporary Approaches to
Intercultural Pragmatics Research and its
Application in Language Teaching

From Scientific Concepts to Practical Implementation

*Contemporary Approaches to
Intercultural Pragmatics Research
and its Application in Language Teaching –
From Scientific Concepts to
Practical Implementation*

Editors

Biljana Ivanovska, Brikena Xhaferi,
Natka Jankova Alagjozovska, Gëzim Xhaferri

Reviewers

Andrew Goodspeed
Dragana Kuzmanovska

Language Editors

Brikena Xhaferi
Sashka Jovanovska
Ana Koceva

Technical Editor

Slave Dimitrov

Collaborators

Simona Serafimovska
Marija Grkova Belder
Aleksandra Minkova
Katerina Harbova
Hana Hasanicaaj

Cover Image

Generated with ChatGPT

Publisher

Goce Delcev University, Stip

Printing House

“2 August”, Stip

Year of publication

2026

Print run

50 copies

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација
Национална и универзитетска библиотека “Св. Климент Охридски”, Скопје

81'27-028.46:[37.016:81'243](082)

CONTEMPORARY approaches to intercultural pragmatics research and its application in language teaching – from scientific concepts to practical implementation / [editors Biljana Ivanovska ... и др.]. - Stip : Goce Delcev University, Stip, 2026. - 153 стр. ; 25 см

Фусноти кон текстот. - Други уредници: Brikena Xhaferi, Natka Jankova Alagjozovska and Gëzim Xhaferri. - Библиографија кон трудовите

ISBN 978-608-277-149-6

а) Интеркултурна прагматика -- Изучување јазици -- Собири

COBISS.MK-ID 68587525

**Biljana Ivanovska, Brikena Xhaferi,
Natka Jankova Alagjovska, Gëzim Xhaferri**

***Contemporary Approaches to Intercultural Pragmatics Research
and Its Application in Language Teaching –
From Scientific Concepts to Practical Implementation***



Goce Delcev
University, Stip



Ministry for Education and
Science, R. North Macedonia



South East European
University, Tetovo

This project was financed by the Ministry of Education and Science,
Government of the Republic of North Macedonia
(Agreement No. 15-6171/15 dated 07.08.2025)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

9 FOREWORD

Biljana Ivanovska

11 PROJECT DESCRIPTION: “CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS RESEARCH AND ITS APPLICATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING – FROM SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS TO PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION” (2025-2026)

Biljana Ivanovska

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

21 Natka Jankova Alagjovska

THE INTERPLAY OF INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

35 Brikena Xhaferi, Simona Serafimovska

PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF EMOJIS AND EMOTICONS IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

47 Biljana Ivanovska, Gëzim Xhaferri

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINT STRATEGIES IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: EVIDENCE FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ INTERACTIONS

67 Brikena Xhaferi, Natka Jankova Alagjovska,

Sashka Jovanovska, Simona Serafimovska, Ana Koceva
POLITENESS IN ACADEMIC EMAILS: PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AND POWER IN TEACHER–STUDENT COMMUNICATION

95 Marija Leontik

THE SPEECH ACT OF APOLOGIZING IN MACEDONIAN AND TURKISH

117 Sashka Jovanovska, Ana Koceva

PRAGMATIC PATTERNS OF DISAGREEMENTS AMONG EFL STUDENTS

131 Marija Grkova-Beader, Ana Koceva

THE SPEECH ACT OF CONGRATULATING IN THE MACEDONIAN DIGITAL LANGUAGE

141 Aleksandra Minkova, Katerina Harbova,

Biljana Ivanovska, Gëzim Xhaferri
THE ACT OF THANKING AND THE ROLE OF MODAL VERBS IN TEACHING GERMAN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE INTERPLAY OF INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Natka Jankova Alagozovska

Faculty of Philology, Goce Delcev University, Stip
natka.alagozovska@ugd.edu.mk

Abstract

The link between Intercultural Pragmatics (IP), Intercultural Communication (IC), and Intercultural Competence (ICC) is examined in this chapter, emphasizing how these three concepts work together to promote successful cross-cultural communication. The study of intercultural pragmatics focuses on how speakers from various cultural backgrounds use language in context. It pays close attention to speech acts, politeness techniques, and turn-taking conventions, which may lead to misunderstandings because they often vary across cultures. People's interpretations of meaning during interactions are influenced by these pragmatic norms, which mirror societal expectations. By highlighting communication as a socially situated process influenced by cultural identity, worldview, and values, intercultural communication broadens this viewpoint. IC is now crucial for negotiating a variety of social, professional, and educational contexts in a world that is becoming more technologically connected and globalized. The attitudes, abilities, and knowledge required to communicate with people from different cultures in an appropriate and productive manner are all included in intercultural competence. Important approaches that show how to develop ICC include Livermore's educator-focused paradigm and Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. It has been demonstrated that ICC is essential for social cohesiveness, promoting inclusivity, and lowering bias in addition to language acquisition. Together IP, IC, and ICC form a complementary framework. IP gives pragmatic and linguistic skills for interaction, ICC helps people deal with cultural differences, and IC supplies larger communication context. According to the chapter's conclusion, effective intercultural communication depends on the combination of these elements, allowing people to turn cultural variation into chances for comprehension, cooperation and personal development.

Key words: *Intercultural pragmatics, intercultural communication, intercultural competence, foreign language teaching*

1. Intercultural Pragmatics (IP)

A subfield of linguistics known as pragmatics examines how meaning is created and understood in context as opposed to being exclusively derived from word meanings. It focuses on how people use language in everyday communicative setting, considering factors such as the speaker's intentions, participant relationships, cultural norms, and the social and physical communication setting. To show how humans frequently convey meanings that go beyond what is expressed, pragmatics studies phenomena including

speech acts, politeness, deixis, and conversational conventions. According to Merchant, Saima, Adnan, Ghazal, & Rohilla (2025), pragmatics is the study of how people from different cultural backgrounds use language in social interaction and the effects of their differing pragmatic norms. Key aspects include:

- Speech acts: how we make requests, give feedback, apologize, disagree.
- Politeness strategies: directness vs. indirectness.
- Turn-taking: in meetings, seminars, and classrooms.

The speech act theory, which describes how utterances operate as actions in communication is a key concept in pragmatics. This theory proposes that that speakers perform actions through speech acts including begging, apologizing, promising, and demanding when they communicate. The locutionary act (the literal utterance), the illocutionary act (the intended function of the utterance), and the perlocutionary act (the effect the utterance has on the listener) are traditionally analyzed at three levels at which speech acts actually function. When combined, pragmatics and speech act theory show how social norms, cultural norms, and shared contextual knowledge are essential to effective communication.

An interesting model connected to politeness strategies is Srisuruk's model. According to Srisuruk (2011), politeness is a crucial pragmatic tactic speakers employ to uphold societal harmony and manage interpersonal relationships throughout communication. This theory emphasizes how speakers use language to shield their own and others' faces (public self-image), mostly based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Positive face, which is the need to be liked and accepted, and negative face, which is the need for autonomy and non-imposition, are the two types of face that the author addresses.

According to Casillas (2014), turn-taking is the process by which speakers switch places throughout a conversation to guarantee efficient and successful communication. She states that conversation is a structured, joint action for which children need to learn a specialized set skills and conventions. Turn-taking helps control participation, avoids disruptions, and gives everyone a chance to speak at meetings, seminars, and classes. Speakers indicate when they want to talk using both verbal and nonverbal indicators, such as pauses, intonation, eye contact, or hand raising. Turn-taking is typically regulated by the teacher to preserve structure and concentration in classrooms, but it is frequently governed by clear rules or a chairperson in formal situations like meetings and seminars.

Intercultural pragmatics takes the point of view that individuals from different societies or communities interact according to their own pragmatic norms, often resulting in a conflict of expectations and, ultimately, misunderstandings between the groups. Because intercultural interaction has the potential to bring up stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination against entire groups of people, research in intercultural pragmatics is made necessary to reduce these consequences. The consequences of world view differences can be serious for minority groups whose world views are devalued, resulting in their own loss of self-esteem and group esteem.

Intercultural pragmatic problems are apt to interfere with the senses of solidarity and harmony between interlocutors from societies with different norms of speech behavior. Intercultural pragmatics enhances academic communication by addressing diverse pragmatic styles and fostering mutual respect among students. Pragmatic diversity is a reality in global academia, not a deficit. The comprehension of differences in communicative conventions, world views, norms of speech behavior and interpretations, together with one's background, establishes social, educational and workplace networks, supporting successful communication. This understanding ought to start in our surroundings, among families, friends and neighbors.

Successful intercultural communication depends on interlocutors' pragmatic knowledge. The appropriate use of language is shaped by the sociocultural and contextual factors within a speech situation (Koceva, 2022). Intercultural competence and Intercultural pragmatics are deeply related but different concepts. However, all together they lead towards successful intercultural communication. While intercultural communication (IC) and intercultural competence (ICC) aim to promote education and global citizenship and represent a broader framework of language use, intercultural pragmatics is a field of linguistics that studies how language is used in social interactions between speakers from different cultural backgrounds. Their focus is on speech acts, politeness strategies, management of conversation, etc. It analyzes the communicative features of intercultural encounters. Intercultural pragmatics is focused on concrete content for intercultural development. This means that you cannot teach someone to be interculturally competent, but you must teach them the pragmatic norms of the target culture (Liddicoat, 2024).

Thus, intercultural competence (ICC) and intercultural pragmatics (IP) are interconnected. Intercultural pragmatics is the engine room of communicative action in intercultural settings. Intercultural competence is the navigation system and the skills needed for the engine to reach the desired destination effectively and appropriately. Finally, it can be summed up that one cannot have successful intercultural communication without the integration of intercultural pragmatics. Its importance stems from the danger of misperceptions of entire group of people due to differences in world view and language use.

2. Intercultural Communication (IC)

Since the beginning of the 20th century, foreign language methodology has been brought into relation with intercultural communicative competence especially in countries where different cultures live and different languages are spoken. It is believed that learning a foreign language is no longer about knowing how to use language for the purpose of speaking and reading, but about knowing how to communicate with people who have different cultural identities. Hence, the foreign language lessons can be an effective platform for developing intercultural communication competence (ICC) among students, but they must be tailored by the teachers themselves.

Intercultural communication nowadays is present in different spheres of life. It has become a language for international communication due to globalization, immigration and diverse societies. The *UNESCO World Report* in the field of cultural diversity, defines this notion as a mere fact: there exists a wide range of distinct cultures, which can be readily distinguished based on ethnographic observation, even if the contours delimiting a particular culture prove more difficult to establish than might at first sight appear (2009). Thus, the increased contacts of different cultures give another dimension of the cultural diversity along with the linguistic practices because of the technological developments.

As quoted in my earlier research, intercultural communication has been an important issue since 1959, when Hall introduced this term in his book *The Silent Language*. This book is sometimes called “the field’s founding document” (Alagjozovska, 2021). This book is sometimes called “the field’s founding document”. He was one of the first researchers to differentiate cultures based on how communications are sent and received and managed to define intercultural communication as communication between people of different cultures. Within the literature on this field, intercultural communication competence is almost synonymous with communicative competence but gives emphasis on the cultural context (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

Today’s immigration around the world, and the challenges that it brings in terms of multicultural and intercultural policies, is another reason to study and implement intercultural communication in everyday teaching and learning. According to Fiske, communication involves interaction and it can be defined as “social interaction through messages” (Fiske, 1990). So, communication as a dynamic and systematic process always occurs in a certain context and depends on contextual rules of a certain culture. Gibson (2002) states that “communication is defined as the exchange of meaning”.

It involves sending and receiving information between a sender and receiver. Intercultural communication takes place when the sender and the receiver are from different cultures. Hall states that if “we are freed from ignorance and negative attributions, we will be able to build better relationships with a wide variety of people” (Hall as cited in Gibson, 2002, p.26).

Intercultural communication is interdisciplinary and integrates disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, geography, arts, music etc. Alagjozovska (2022), citing Sadri and Flammia (2013), defines intercultural communication as interactions with members of other cultures in which an individual strives to understand the cultural values, beliefs, and norms of others and uses that understanding to adapt their communication style in order to achieve a meaningful exchange and a mutually beneficial outcome. When people have mutual experiences, this leads to deeper understanding of the group. It is not surprising that idioms, proverbs and non-verbal gestures are very often misunderstood by people who are outside the group, i.e. from a different culture. If people are from a different culture, they do not just need a mutual language, but they should also try to understand the culture to communicate properly.

One of the most important guidelines in contemporary foreign language learning is to create the necessary conditions in the classroom for students to systematically prepare for a natural and free communication. Other important aspects of this training are knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the foreign culture. The development of globally competent people with a comprehensive education who will become productive global citizens of the world and will be able to work in groups of different people and in different regions should start from early school age. Respect and tolerance to otherness is lifelong learning in which one develops a better understanding and respect for his/herself and others. In the context of his/her own cultural identity, including their own racial, ethnic and religious traits, he/she learns about empathy, cooperation with others, and evaluates both his/her own point of view and the different worldview. In the context of increasing multicultural exchange in the modern world and the dynamic globalization processes, the issue of intercultural competence and multiculturalism is particularly relevant both in terms of the importance of personal realization and in terms of ensuring social cohesion in a democratic society. Therefore, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), “the ability to effectively tackle cultural differences inherent in communication becomes more than a competitive advantage in the modern world” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 11). This highlights the priority of intercultural competence within the concept of key competences for lifelong learning. This emphasis aligns with the broader goal of uniting member states, namely “to achieve greater unity among member states”, which is pursued “by adopting a common approach in the field of culture” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 11).

In order to incorporate intercultural communication in the foreign language classroom these three things should be considered:

1. If students enter an intercultural classroom, the teachers must guide them and describe the environment and when this happens then the learning becomes learner-centered, engaging, interactive, participatory and cooperative.
2. A language course concerned with culture broadens its scope from a focus of improving the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking in order to acquire *cultural skills* – the intercultural learner serves as a mediator b/n different social groups that use different languages and varieties (Corbett, 2003, p. 11).
3. If teachers become aware that language skills and knowledge need to be connected to the intercultural competence, students will feel that energy also and will show much better results. All of the above-mentioned facts highlight the importance of intercultural competence in achieving goals at the international level.

3. Intercultural Competence

As mentioned in a previous paper of mine considering the challenges and perspectives of Intercultural education in North Macedonia (2020), the biggest benefit of studying intercultural communication is to help people appreciate cultural differences by

seeing the value in the different worldviews and the way other people live. “Intercultural competence is a powerful tool in the fight against intolerance, xenophobia and ethnocentrism” (Mrnjaus, 2010, p.11). When people from different cultural backgrounds start a conversation and see themselves as representatives of their own country, cultural barriers to communication are likely to happen due to the differences in their patterns of life, social style, customs, world view, religion, and philosophy. On the one hand this accent of national identity leaves a possibility for them to rely on stereotypes and thus decrease the number of people to be taken as the representative stereotypical example of their country and culture. On the other hand, there are arguments that very often when students are taught a foreign language they are not introduced to the cultural dimension. Bennett (2004) claims that people often tend to overestimate their intercultural sensitivity and people do this “more than others, which means that they rate themselves relatively high in ethnorelativism while still having a high profile in ethnocentrism“ (p.7). His model of intercultural sensitivity rests on the core idea that as one’s experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, their potential for effective and appropriate behavior in intercultural situations increases. This means that to become more interculturally competent, one should go through the stages that move from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism. The phases are denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration. This model is still one of the most influential models for developing Intercultural competence.

Achieving unproblematic communication of a foreign language with a foreign culture is so far essential, whether communication is personal or professional. Studying the foreign culture is important because language remains the most important communication tool, although there are others. Scarino & Liddicoat (2009) assert that:

Understanding the nature of the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning another language. In actual language use, it is not the case that it is only the forms of language that convey meaning. It is language in its cultural context that creates meaning: creating and interpreting meaning is done within a cultural framework (p.18)

The prerequisites for successful intercultural communication are not only associated with the accumulation of certain grammatically correct expressions and phrases, as well as accumulation of vocabulary, but with real knowledge of the culture and society of that language. Internationally, foreign language learning is the most successful through a communicative approach, according to which foreign language learning is primarily considered as a means of communication. The knowledge of cultural differences and overcoming them by the learner of a foreign language can also be accomplished by moving from the context of textbooks and traditional stereotypes in the schools. This can also be done by introducing materials and didactic approaches that open minds to cultures in the world as a whole under a careful guidance of the teacher. However to achieve this, wider strategies for such training should be developed and implemented.

Another influential model besides the model of Bennett (1993), is the model for educators/teachers introduced by David Livermore (1998) who gives the definition of IC as the ability to facilitate learning in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains among students from cultures different from the teacher's culture. According to him, educators should possess intercultural competence in terms of knowledge, skills, relationships and behavior.

4. Why is ICC Important?

Intercultural competence is very important while learning a foreign language. Only by learning a language in conjunction with the target culture can one increase their intercultural competence. Moreover, learning a foreign language is the most effective way to understand and learn more about how the language shapes the worldview of the other and this becomes a central aim of intercultural competence. As Byram (1989) points out, culture has become a necessary tool in teaching a foreign language having in mind the following elements: raising awareness of one's identity and of the existence of difference, enhancing understanding of self and others and fostering appreciation of otherness (p.25).

Within intercultural communication, the participants are part of different communication systems and very often the differences may lead to conflicts in a verbal or non-verbal manner. Whether we speak about undesired discrimination or making improper gestures, frustrating situations easily occur. There are many definitions about identity within literature, and it is still difficult to find the proper definition. Fearon (1999) gives the following one:

Identity is presently used in two linked senses, which may be termed social and personal. In the former sense, an identity refers simply to a social category, a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes. In the second sense of personal identity, an identity is some distinguishing characteristic (or characteristics) that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but more-or-less unchangeable (p.2).

Thus, identity has a double meaning in this definition. It refers to social categories and the individual's dignity or national pride. Identity can refer to personal features in terms of social category and the idea of the social category which is bound up with individual self-respect. According to Luoma (2005) "individuals undergo self- and cultural identity transformation in order to achieve understanding, harmony and balance within themselves and their environment, and in their connection with others. Cultures also change in this process, because social, political, economic and historical influences affect cultural and intercultural interactions. Cultural groups reflect, re-create, unify, and maintain their ethnic and cultural identities" (p.130).

A famous scholar in this field Bonny Norton (2013) defined identity as “the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p.4). Negotiating identities can be very important in the foreign language classrooms where students state their beliefs, values, traditions from their cultural point of view.

Nowadays, people live in a digital era and contact more because of the emergence of the Internet and even AI recently. The Internet enabled people to communicate with other people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Communication is achieved because of different reasons: business, cooperation, science, education, mass media, entertainment, tourism but also because immigration brought about by labor shortage or political conflicts. Hence, the idea of intercultural communication is to break down the barriers among people of different cultures by learning and appreciating each other’s culture, avoid stereotypes and accept every culture as it is.

The development of the intercultural dimension revolves around the following aims: to give speakers intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence; to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviors; and to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience (Byram, 2002). Thus, foreign language teaching should focus on improving intercultural communication competence as a needed component.

The role of language in human life has been of great importance since ancient times to this day. In a rapidly developing multicultural world, it occupies an increasingly important place, and research in this area leads to awareness and emphasis on the important position that language has in human beings. Within language learning, language is perceived as a system of different rules and rarely draws attention to its particular link to intercultural communication. If we look at the language from a traditional point of view, we will find some well-known and widely discussed functions that it exercises: communication, creative interpretation, communication, expressing opinions, etc. However, it often appears as a mediator or bridge between different cultures. Research on language functions also reveals the diversity that exists in different languages and cultures. In language learning, diversity often exists on the one hand between learners themselves and on the other hand between learners and the teacher. There is always a great deal of creativity in this process, as each of them is studying the language and culture of the other, often interprets them, understands and uses them in their own individual way.

Culture is something that cannot simply be observed. It is something that consists of many levels. If you visit a community for a short time, you only see the surface i.e. the social etiquette but its deepest layers are not visible to the eye. In order to understand culture one needs to realize that cultures have different conducts, values, beliefs specific of that particular community. Many of the aspects that constitute a person are often shaped by his/her culture. According to Kohler’s study (2015):

Culture is a human phenomenon; it is the way we are, both physically and mentally. It is both a state in which each of us exists and a process which changes constantly according to the individual, the time, and the place. This combined state and process called culture affects us all as we respond to others, to events, and to the environment. (p. 14)

This means that individuals can see and observe the conduct of others through their own perception, which is very often shaped by culture. It influences how individuals interpret things. If an individual accepts and values different cultures without having certain prejudice about them it does not mean that they are happy with that. Nobody is obliged to share their habits and norms. What is needed is appreciation and showing respect for other people's languages and cultures (Bennett, 1993). If an individual is aware only of their own culture this gives them certain limitations of accepting different cultures. Hall points out that "We should never denigrate any other culture but rather help people understand the relationship between their own culture and the dominant culture. When you understand another culture or language, it does not mean that you have to lose your own culture". (Sorrells, 1998, p. 70).

In connection to this, the intercultural element of teaching foreign languages should require educators to pay attention and respect the home culture and language. The learning materials should implement aspects of the home culture and non-native teachers should possess the ability to move between the home culture and the target culture.

Another thing that should be considered when discussing intercultural communication is cultural awareness. Quappe and Canatore (2005) claim that cultural awareness becomes central when interacting with people from other cultures (p.1). As mentioned before, people see and observe the behavior of others in different ways, and this is very often shaped by their own culture. Misinterpretations of people's behaviors take place when people lack cultural awareness. Instead of finding out what is the reason for a certain activity which can be awkward to some people, these activities are criticized instead of taking the chance to learn about a certain culture. Some examples of that are when an Americans speak loud on the phone in a bus, or when they do business during lunch which very often people pertaining to other cultures find it inappropriate. There are four different levels of cultural awareness according to Quappe and Canatore (2005, p.2):

1. My way is the only way – At the first level, people are aware of their way of doing things, and their way is the only way. At this stage, they ignore the impact of cultural differences. (Parochial stage). During this stage the teachers who lack knowledge in intercultural communication will act like that, not accepting some new methods of increasing cultural awareness since they consider that their methodology is the best.
2. I know their way, but my way is better – At the second level, people are aware of other ways of doing things, but still consider their way as the best one. In this stage, cultural differences are perceived as source of problems and people tend

to ignore them or reduce their significance. (Ethnocentric stage). During this stage, it is predicted that teachers have heard about cultural awareness but they are still not ready to apply what they have heard or read considering cultural awareness.

3. My way and their way – At this level people are aware of their own way of doing things and others' ways of doing things, and they chose the best way according to the situation. At this stage people realize that cultural differences can lead both to problems and benefits and are willing to use cultural diversity to create new solutions and alternatives. (Synergistic stage)
4. Our way – This fourth and final stage brings people from different cultural background together for the creation of a culture of shared meanings. People dialogue repeatedly with others, create new meanings, new rules to meet the needs of a particular situation and this is the participatory stage. This stage can happen after successful intercultural training when teachers have experienced and applied some knowledge and are ready to share and discuss it with their colleagues.

In the effort to increase intercultural awareness these levels should be considered to realize that instead of taking cultural differences as something threatening the differences can also be a positive experience. Differences cause barriers in communication, create negative stereotypes. At the same time, they offer opportunities to learn from other cultures, including new working approaches, skills, and even languages. It can be concluded that there is no right way of increasing intercultural awareness but changing the view towards differences as something positive can be a big step.

There are different approaches to intercultural learning. In some, language is represented as an essential part, and in others it is neglected. Linguistic and intercultural competences do not exist in parallel and are not interchangeable. In some cases there is a high level of foreign language communicative competence, but not very well developed intercultural competence. However, in order to achieve successful intercultural communication and to use intercultural competence, it is very important that linguistic competence exists. This is especially true when there are problematic situations in intercultural interaction. It is then that linguistic competence becomes essential. Knowledge about foreign culture is not negligible, though it will hardly be sufficient without the necessary linguistic knowledge. It can be argued that the linguistic competence is good to overtake the intercultural competence in a way or acquire it in parallel with it.

Cultural awareness is very important when it comes to communication with people from different cultures. The reason is that people observe, assess and interpret things in another manner. Sometimes, cultural misunderstandings make the business harder to expand, develop or even make it impossible. It is by every means essential to increase cultural awareness and knowledge of intercultural communication because of the different aspects of people's lives and this can help people further increase the awareness

of their own culture. However, other important aspects of life are important when dealing with intercultural communication. According to Martin and Nakayama (2010), there are six imperatives for studying intercultural communication. The self-awareness imperative is about increasing understanding of one's own location in terms of political, social and historical context. The demographic imperative focuses on changing migration whereas diversity raises questions about class and religion. The economic imperative is about the issue of globalization and the need for intercultural understanding to reach the global market. Technology gives more information and increases contact with different people from all around the world. The peace imperative is about colonialism, economic disparities, racial, ethnic and religious differences. This issue asks the question "Can individuals of different genders, ages, ethnicities, races, languages, and religions peacefully coexist on the planet?". According to McLean "the peace imperative, or the consideration of conflict and how we resolve it, is an important aspect of intercultural communication" (McLean, 2015, p. 250). Conflict as an element of communication is not absent in communication but it is a state in which conflicts are resolved through negotiation and understanding. Finally, the ethical imperative strives to increase the understanding of the universalist, relativist and dialogic approach to ethical issues. When all these imperatives are taken into account, one develops self-reflexivity, a sense of social justice and responsibility and a greater curiosity and need to learn more about others and their cultures.

5. Conclusion

In today's so-called global village of the digitalized world, the differences should be negotiated, and the identities can be freed from prejudice, enabling communication without boundaries. Identity is perceived as being a multiple, dynamic, contextually situated and socially constructed phenomenon which requires language, and thus interaction in various communities, for its formation to take place. Furthermore, identities are considered ongoing narrative projects which consist of people's self-narratives reflecting their past, present and future (Romo, 2015, p.9).

The development of multiethnic identities has been dynamic in recent decades. However, today's educators everywhere in the world need to create radical pedagogical ways of teaching and learning through which they will give students the chance to use their own identities and to accomplish successful oral and written intercultural communication.

The development of intercultural competences includes aspects, such as:

- be aware of your own cultural identity;
- to know the dominant cultural models;
- to be able to define your own independent position, knowing that it is culturally influenced;
- to strengthen confidence in yourself and from such a position to seek a variety of interaction with others;
- to create interest and active curiosity about otherness, as well as a sense of personal enrichment;

- to maintain tolerance and equality in your interactions;
- the ability to develop and maintain relationships;
- the ability to communicate effectively and adequately with minimal loss and distortion of understanding;
- the ability to reach agreement and cooperation with others.

These qualities are necessary not only for intercultural interactions but also for interpersonal relationships. But at the intercultural level the requirements are much higher, because when the different cultures meet, common things are reduced and the differences are rising dramatically. Although the term intercultural competence is now widely used in the field of intercultural communication, there is still no common definition. There is only a consensus that the development of competencies about another culture enables a powerful reflection on their own views of the world. Or, as scientists in this field express “look out is looking into”. This idea is spread in the field of intercultural education and is repeated in the history of education, reflected in disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, arts. Moreover, the fact that each society is dynamic because of the advancement of technology, science, technology and the current immigration and finally the globalization are reasons plus to find it harder to define precisely what intercultural communication is. Someone who is interculturally competent has knowledge of one or more cultures and social identities as well as the capacity to relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly (Byram & Fleming, 1998, p. 9).

Apart from intercultural competence, intercultural pragmatics examines language used in social interaction between people from different backgrounds relying on speech acts, politeness strategies, conversational management and non-verbal communication and these were also mentioned previously (Keith, 2025). Both ICC and IP are of great importance because they prevent:

1. Miscommunication and conflict.
2. Important for business and diplomacy.
3. Enhance personal and social relationships.
4. Critical for education and student mobility.
5. Promote inclusivity and reduce bias.
6. Navigate the digital global sphere.

Therefore, both IP and ICC are not just soft skills but essential competences for the 21st century. The benefits of intercultural competence and intercultural pragmatics are many. But the most important thing in the long run is the acquired new understanding and view of the world. They transform cultural diversity from a potential source of friction into a powerful tool for collaboration, innovation and mutual understanding. Opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding are taken into account as benefits from all parties involved in the process, from specific actors to national institutions. It is known, although

it is difficult to quantify that once created relationships generate new collaborations, they reflect career and future development in personal and professional terms. When students return after training abroad, they bring their “personal capital”, which is expressed not only to receive formal education, but with the experienced cultural, intellectual, personal experience.

References

- Bennett, M.J., (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R.M. Paige (Ed.) *Education for the intercultural experience*. Yoarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Bennett, M. J., (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed.) *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education*. Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Byram, M. (1989). *Cultural studies and language learning: Teaching, language and culture*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., & Fleming, M. (Eds.). (1998). *Language learning from an intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography*. Cambridge University Press
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers*. Council of Europe.
- Casillas, M. (2014). Turn-taking. In D. Matthews (Ed.), *Pragmatic development in first language acquisition* (pp. 53–70). John Benjamins Publishing Company
- Corbett, J., (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, U.K: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Fearon, J. D. (1999). *What is identity (as we now use the word)?* Manuscript, Department of Political Science, Stanford University.
- Fiske, J., (1990). *Introduction to Communication Studies*. Routledge. New York.
- Gibson, Robert. (2002). *Intercultural Business Communication*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002
- Jankova Alagjozovska, N. (2020) *Intercultural Education in North Macedonia: Challenges and Perspectives*. *Knowledge – International Journal*, 38.2. ISSN 2545-4439
- Jankova Alagjozovska, N. (2021) *Intercultural Communication Cognition Of English Language Teachers In Our Country and Abroad*. *FILKO* 5.
- Jankova Alagjozovska, N. (2021) *Issues of Intercultural Communication in English Language Teaching*. *Book of Proceedings 4th International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*. ISSN 978-608-4868-16-3
- Keith, B. (2025). *Speech Acts in Intercultural Communication: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Politeness Strategies*. *International Journal of Linguistics*. 6. 1-16. 10.47604/ijl.3292.
- Koceva, A. (2022) *Pragmatic Aspects of Complaints, Requests and Apologies in the English and Macedonian Cultural Code*. Doctoral thesis, South-West University Neofit Rilski.
- Kohler, M. (2015). *Conceptualizing culture in English language teaching: Definitions and implications*. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 4(6), 10–18.
- Liddicoat, A. J. (2024). *Intercultural pragmatics*. In D. Z. Kádár & N. Taguchi (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1446.pub3>

- Livermore, D. A. (1998). Intercultural competency: A look at the relationship between learning and culture and the competencies needed in the cross-cultural training setting. *Sonlife International Forum*, Elburn, Illinois, 1–14.
- Luoma, I. (2005). Introduction to intercultural communication [Course material]. University of Jyväskylä. Retrieved from <https://moniviestin.jyu.fi/ohjelmat/hum/viesti/en/ics/11>
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2010). *Intercultural communication in contexts* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- McLean, S. (2015). *Intercultural communication (Version 1.0)* [Textbook]. FlatWorld.
- Merchant, Saima & Adnan, Ghazal & Rohilla, Atiya. (2025). The Role of Pragmatics in Cross-Cultural Communication. 4. 1395-1405. 10.55966/assaj.2025.4.1.081.
- Mrnjajus, K., Rončević, N., & Ivošević, L. (2013). (Inter)cultural dimension in education. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.
- Quappe, S., & Cantatore, G. (2005). What is cultural awareness, anyway? How do I build it? *Culturocity*. Retrieved from <http://www.culturocity.com/pdfs/What%20is%20Cultural%20Awareness.pdf>
- Romo, R. (2015). Identity as an ongoing narrative project: Integrating past, present, and future. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 36(2), 5–20.
- Sadri, H. & Flammia, M. (2011). *Intercultural communication: a new approach to international relations and global challenges*. New York: Continuum International Pub.
- Scarino, A. & Liddicoat, A. (2009). *Teaching and learning languages: a guide*. Carlton South, Vic: Curriculum Corporation
- Scarino, A., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2009). *Teaching and learning languages: A guide*. Curriculum Corporation.
- Sorrells, K. (1998). *Intercultural communication: The key concepts*. Routledge.
- Srisuruk, P. (2011). *Politeness and pragmatic competence in Thai speakers of English* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Newcastle University, UK.
- UNESCO. (2009). *World report: Investing in cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue*. UNESCO Publishing. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000182771>