ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under the educational program “8D01705 – Foreign language: two foreign languages” of Yuliya Rakhimova titled “Forming intercultural communicative competence of students using the “Unitandem” system (on the basis of Al-Farabi KazNU)”

Relevance of the research. The relevance of studying the formation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in the context of Kazakhstan's educational environment stems from the strategic focus on the internationalization of higher education and the integration of domestic universities into the global scientific and educational field. In the context of the implementation of the Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science for 2023–2029, the formation of ICC is becoming a primary task for training competitive personnel capable of interacting effectively in a multicultural professional environment. The contradiction between the increasing pace of academic mobility and the lack of didactic models that ensure students' seamless linguistic and sociocultural adaptation is particularly acute. In this regard, the use of the tandem method as a means of organizing authentic intercultural interaction is particularly significant, as it allows for the creation of conditions for the practical acquisition of language and culture through real-life communication with a native speaker of the target language. Learning foreign languages in tandem helps improve linguistic skills, assimilate the partner's cultural norms, develop empathy, respect, motivation, and develop intercultural skills. Unlike formal foreign language teaching, the tandem method creates conditions for genuine dialogue between cultures, which fosters a deeper understanding of differences and similarities. The tandem method effectively leverages the potential of the multinational environment of universities (such as Al-Farabi KazNU) to create natural dialogue platforms between domestic and international students. The development and implementation of the Unitandem system in the educational process acts as a catalyst for internal internationalization, ensuring the creation of a unified digital ecosystem for continuous intercultural interaction among students without the need to travel abroad. This study helps create conditions that facilitate not only the acquisition of language skills but also the development of intercultural communicative competence through direct and regular interaction with native speakers of the target language, as well as the integration of digital technologies into the educational process.

Object of the research is the process of foreign language teaching at a university.

Subject of the research is a methodology for developing intercultural communicative competence in students majoring in foreign languages at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University based on tandem learning using the Unitandem system.

Purpose of the research is to develop a theoretically sound and practically tested model for developing intercultural communicative competence in students majoring in foreign languages using the tandem method and the implementation of the Unitandem system.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

− to clarify the concept of "intercultural communicative competence" within the context of the modern paradigm of foreign language education and determine its component composition.

− to determine the psychological and pedagogical conditions for the successful development of intercultural communicative competence based on the tandem method.

− to develop an integrative model for developing intercultural communicative competence in language majors using the tandem method.

− to develop and substantiate the didactic content of the tandem course to develop intercultural communication skills.

− to develop and implement the Unitandem system in the educational process at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

− to experimentally test and prove the effectiveness of the proposed integrative model for the development of intercultural communicative competence through the implementation of the Unitandem system.

Research hypothesis. If the development of intercultural communicative competence among students majoring in language-related fields is carried out in a linguo-socio-cultural environment, under the conditions of the tandem method and with the use of the “Unitandem” system, then their readiness and ability to engage in appropriate interaction with representatives of other cultures will be formed. This is because competency-based and learner-centered approaches are implemented in this process.

Leading idea of the research. Competency-based and learner-centered approaches are implemented in the process of developing students’ intercultural communicative competence within a linguo-socio-cultural environment through the tandem method and the “Unitandem” system. This ensures the transition from the theoretical acquisition of language knowledge to learners’ practical readiness for appropriate intercultural interaction. This process is achieved through the activation of students’ reflective analysis of their own communicative experience, the acquisition of compensatory strategies for dialogue management, and the intensification of authentic language partnership.

Methods of the research. The following research methods were used in this dissertation: theoretical: study of domestic and foreign scientific and pedagogical literature, analysis of regulatory and program documentation of the Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan; general scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, classification, modeling; empirical methods: observation, questionnaire, interview, testing, experiment, method of statistical processing of research results.

Source base of the research. The pilot study was conducted at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University with the participation of 96 students majoring in language, reflecting the high demand for intercultural communication skills for their future professional careers.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the research.

– theories of intercultural communication as applied to language pedagogy in higher education (S.S. Kunanbayeva, A.M. Ivanova, M.K. Karmysova, A.K. Artykbayeva, T.K. Sattarov, P.K. Yelubayeva, S.G. Ter-Minasova, I.I. Khaleeva, M. Byram, A. Fantini, D. Deardoff, V.G. Yelizarova, I.L.Pluzhnik, etc.);

– competence-based modelling of foreign language education (I.A. Zimnyaya, A.V. Khutorskoy, V.V. Kraevsky, S.S. Kunanbayeva, D.N.Kulibayeva, A.T. Chaklikova, L.A. Vereshchagin, N.I. Almazova);

– the competence-based approach (A.V. Khutorskoy; I.A. Zimnyaya; V.D. Shadrikov; V.A. Bolotov, V.V. Serikov);

– the communicative-activity approach (E.G. Azimov, N.D. Galskova; G.V. Rogova; E.N. Solovova; A.N. Shamov; A.N. Shchukin, etc.);

– the culturological approach (M.M. Bakhtin, V.S. Bibler, I.Yu. Markovina, A.P. Sadokhin, Yu.A. Sorokin, I.I. Khaleeva);

– the personality-activity approach (I.A. Zimnyaya);

– the learner-centered approach / personality-oriented approach (I.L. Bim; T.Yu. Tambovkina, etc.);

– the concept of the dialogue of cultures (M.M. Bakhtin; V.S. Bibler, O.N. Kurakina, V.V. Safonova).

Scientific novelty of the research.

− the concept of ICC is clarified, and its components are defined in relation to the conditions of autonomous interaction between partners in tandem;

− a set of psychological and pedagogical conditions that ensure the effective development of students' ICC during tandem learning is identified;

− an integrative learning model aimed at developing ICC in the tandem method is proposed, including structural components, implementation stages, and a system of diagnostic tools;

− the didactic content of tandem training aimed at developing the ICC has been formed and scientifically substantiated;

− the "Unitandem" system was developed and implemented into the educational process at Al-Farabi KazNU on the website tandem.kaznu.kz;

− the effectiveness of the author’s integrative model for the formation of the ICC using the Unitandem system has been empirically proven.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Study. The theoretical significance lies in clarifying the conceptual framework of intercultural communication in the context of foreign language teaching, expanding the understanding of the tandem method as a pedagogical model of intercultural interaction, and revealing the pedagogical foundations for applying the tandem method in the development of intercultural communication. The practical significance of the study lies in the potential use of the developed model, algorithm, teaching materials, and the Unitandem digital system in the educational process of higher education institutions, as well as in the system of supplementary foreign language education. The dissertation materials can be recommended to foreign language teachers, developers of educational programs and digital learning resources

when designing courses and teaching materials on foreign languages and intercultural communication, and for integrating intercultural assignments into their curricula. The results of the study can serve as a basis for further research and for improving international education programs at al-Farabi Kazakh National University and other higher education institutions.

The main propositions submitted for defense:

1. Intercultural communicative competence is viewed as a holistic system structured through linguistic, communicative (discursive, sociolinguistic, strategic), and intercultural (sociocultural, social, reflexive) components, united by a mediation component, which acts as a system-forming mechanism, ensuring mutual understanding in intercultural interactions through the interpretation and coordination of meanings.

2. The process of effectively developing intercultural communicative competence in the tandem method requires adherence to a set of psychological and pedagogical conditions: creating a trusting atmosphere; institutional regulation; methodological support; pedagogical facilitation; interculturally oriented educational content; and the development of reflective and mediation skills. These conditions transform tandem from a leisure form of communication into a controlled educational environment.

3. The author's model for the formation of the ICC based on the tandem method is an integrative linguodidactic system implemented through the digital platform "Unitandem" as a technological basis for the strategy of “internationalization at home”. The model is based on the fundamental principles of intercultural dialogue, cultural conformity, and tolerance, as well as the specific principles of the tandem method: reciprocity, autonomy, and reflection. The interrelationship of these principles is realized through a trinity of functional components: procedural (staged implementation through modular thematic planning), substantive and supportive (didactic support through support sheets), and control and reflective (tandem diary). This system ensures the effective actualization of students' accumulated linguistic resources and their transformation into active mediation strategies, leading to qualitative growth in intercultural communication skills and the development of students' readiness for intercultural dialogue.

4. The didactic support for developing students' intercultural communicative competence using the tandem method is an adaptive support system that transforms spontaneous communicative practice into guided educational activity. The teaching and methodological support includes modular thematic content, a system of didactic supports, and tools for developing reflection in the form of a tandem diary. The scientifically grounded structure of the content minimizes the cognitive load on students and creates conditions for the transition from theoretical language proficiency to productive intercultural problem solving, which is a prerequisite for transforming students' linguistic potential into sustainable intercultural communication skills.

5. The introduction of the Unitandem system into the educational process at al-Farabi KazNU implements the "internationalization at home" strategy, providing

Kazakhstani students with access to intercultural communication through the integration of the tandem method, transforming spontaneous intercultural contacts into a systematic process of developing intercultural communicative competence, and expanding the boundaries of accessible intercultural interaction within the university environment.

6. The effectiveness of the author's integrative model for developing intercultural communicative competence is confirmed by statistically significant increases in all components of the studied competence among students in the experimental groups. It has been established that the synergy of intercultural communication, the Unitandem digital platform, and the didactic support system facilitates a transition from the quantitative accumulation of linguistic knowledge to the qualitative development of mediative, reflective, social, and strategic skills. The results of experimental training confirm that the developed model is an effective tool for implementing the "internationalization at home" strategy, enabling systematic overcoming of psychological and linguistic-cultural barriers using the tandem method.

Approbation of the research work. Based on the research results, a total of 5 articles were published. Of these, 1 article was published in an international scientific journal indexed in the Scopus database and having a non-zero impact factor. In addition, 3 articles were published in journals included in the list approved by the Committee for Control in the Field of Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and 1 article presenting the main conclusions and results of the dissertation was published in the proceedings of domestic and international conferences.

Structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references.