Integration as a Form of Acculturation of Foreign Student – Future Teacher in the Polyethnic Educational Environment of University

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Abstract

Adaptation of foreign students in the host country, developed during the process of acculturation, is complex and differentiated, since it occurs in the context of a dialogue of representatives of different nationalities, a dialogue of cultures. The main positive result of acculturation for students – non-native speakers is integration. The work is devoted to the study of this phenomenon by the example of Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University (KFU) and S.Baishev Aktobe University (Kazakhstan). The written survey conducted by the authors makes it possible to determine the degree of students' integration of this pedagogical university. The paper also analyzes students' integrative activity and ways of introducing new content into the system of higher pedagogical education, considering the regional features.

Keywords: *acculturation, foreign students, polyethnic educational environment, globalization, migration, integration.*

Introduction

The study of such a complex process as integration, which is one of the forms of acculturation, is becoming increasingly important. In recent years, the life of Russian and Kazakhstan`s society has seen intensified migration flows, developing integration processes, expanding interstate educational space, leading to an increase in the number of young people who want to obtain higher education abroad. Adaptation of foreign students in a host country, developed during the process of acculturation, is complex and differentiated, since it occurs in the context of a dialogue of representatives of different nationalities, a dialogue of cultures. Students, who overcome various social, communicative and religious barriers for a harmonious existence in

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society, are forced to adapt to a new socio-cultural environment in the process of mastering new types of cognitive and educational activity, and to reexamine stereotypes and ways of their behavior in a foreign country. The main positive result of acculturation for students – non-native speakers is integration, along with self-identification in both native and foreign culture, resulting in formation of a bicultural or multicultural personality (Korableva *et al*., 2017a; Magsumov & Nizamova, 2015).

Thus, this problem today is very relevant in the theoretical-methodological and practical plans. The beginning of the most intensive study of this problem was laid in the late 19th century in American cultural anthropology. The process of acculturation was of interest to such researchers of the 20th century as Herskovits, Mead, Redfield, Hunter, Spier, Linton, and Malinowski. Thus, Redfield, Linton and Herskovits are known as developers of a typical model of acculturation research. The well-known psychologist J. Berry also engaged in acculturation and psychological adaptation. His concept of acculturation scheme has become the most preferred model since the early 1990s. Among the Russian researchers, it is possible to name the following scholars: Arutyunyan (2006), Boronoyeva (1994), Lebedeva (2009), Lobas (2002), Magsumov (2015) and Stefanenko (2009).

In modern science, acculturation, which is based on communicative process, refers to the process of changes in the material culture, customs and beliefs derived from direct contact and mutual influence of different socio-cultural systems (Gasanov, 1998). Integration is considered one of the forms of acculturation. According to Markova (Ivanova, 2002), integration strategy reflects an individual's desire to maintain basic cultural characteristics, while at the same time he accepts the basic values and patterns of behavior of the new culture and establishes strong links with its bearers.

It should be noted that the study of this problem was initiated in England, the United States, Canada, Australia, that is, in countries belonging to the group of migrant societies, where there was a rapid growth of cultural diversity and it was necessary to carefully develop mechanisms for social adaptation of ethno-cultural groups. The works of the American sociologist Irving Hoffmann (who believes that social behavior of people creates social rules, social life and that everything that sociology does should be explained in the position of social interaction as a process of social life that determines socio-cultural integration) form the basis of methodology and theory of social adaptation and cultural integration.

The question of future teachers' integration becomes the most urgent in the polyethnic Republics of Tatarstan and Kazakhstan, in the conditions of the polyethnic educational environment of the university (Aminov, 2014; Akhmetshin *et al*., 2017a; Aydarova *et al.,* 2017; Bochkareva *et al*., 2017; Gabidullina & Khaliullina, 2017; Magsumov, 2017; Shkilev *et al*., 2018).

Developing the willingness in non-native speakers – future teachers of foreign languages in the conditions of the polyethnic educational environment of the university not only to preserve the basic cultural values, but also to accept the values of a new culture requires considering socio-cultural characteristics of the Republics of Tatarstan and Kazakstan. Accordingly, the process of integration is closely related to the culture of interethnic communication.

The main indicators of integration of foreign students in the new educational environment, in our view, are the equality of foreign students and students who are citizens of the state where the university is located; presence of a culture of interethnic communication; positive attitude towards foreign students; to the characteristics of another culture. The analysis of the literature presented in this work allows to state that the corresponding diagnostic criteria, pedagogical mechanisms of the organization of this process are poorly developed; not all teachers are ready to implement it. The aim of the research is to identify the specifics of the process of integration of a foreign student-future teacher in the multi-ethnic educational environment of the university and determine the conditions, factors and strategies of its socio-cultural integration development.

Method

The study used a set of complementary research methods that are adequate to the nature of the phenomenon, the purpose, the subject of the study, and identified objectives: the analysis - theoretical method (interdisciplinary, comparative and benchmarking, semantic) of psychological, pedagogical, philosophical and sociological literature on the problem (Krysko, 2002; Gapsalamov et al., 2017a), inductively deductive method - theoretical generalization and systematization of scientific-theoretical and experimental data, modeling; the interview method, empirical method - analysis of products of activity, observation: direct and indirect, long-term and short-term; methods of mathematical statistics.

Questioning as a method of gathering information, as well as using statistical procedures for quantitative data processing in the study, are considered to be one of the effective methods that enable us to obtain more reliable information and achieve our goal. This approach allows us to

determine the existence of various problems in the socio-cultural integration of foreign students in the educational environment of the university, to forecast them and develop a set of measures to address this problem. The basis of the instruments is a questionnaire survey of students to identify opinions on integration in Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S. Baishev Aktobe University (6 polling positions). The sample size is 205 people. The average age of respondents was 18-25 years, 3 of them were officially married. The time of stay in Russia and Kazakhstan for foreign students is from six months to four years. Most of them (89%) live in a campus dorm.

Results

In the course of the study, it was found that most foreign students of Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S. Baishev Aktobe University have insufficient culture of interethnic communication, which in fact is the basis for the formation of integration process. The results of the study aimed at revealing sufficiency the culture of interethnic communication are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1

The level Sufficiency of the culture of interethnic communication

	LSufficiency levels of interethnic communication culture	%
1	Persons with a high sufficiency level of interethnic communication culture	11.2
2	Persons with a medium sufficiency level of interethnic communication culture	59.3
3	Persons with a low sufficiency level of interethnic communication culture	29.5

 attitude to the topic under consideration was based on collection of information reflecting the respondents' readiness for interethnic communication, their interest in intercultural dialogue, as well as information providing the idea of problems and obstacles to interethnic dialogue. The first precondition for establishing an interethnic dialogue is the importance for a person of the national roots of those people with whom he/she enters into personal communication (Akhmetshin et al., 2017b; Anisimova & Ibatullin, 2018; Baytak et al., 2011; Galevskiy et al., 2016; Korableva et al., 2018; Szydlowski, 2018). The nature of this significance is related to the manner a person builds the ethnic structure of his social circles, how much he/she is inclined to become isolated in the world of his/her national culture, how open he/she is to perception of

foreign cultural traditions and foreign cultural skills of everyday life. With this in mind, the authors drafted a questionnaire, to which the students answered.

Discussion

The results of choosing one of four proposed answers to the question "How important is the national identity of a person in personal communication to you?" revealed the following percentage:

Very important – 11.2%;

Sometimes important, sometimes not – 50.1%;

Not important – 27.1%;

Hard to answer – 11.6%.

As can be seen from the respondents' answers, in the general array of interviewed students, those perceiving others through the prism of their nationality, i.e., ethnicity-focused, are not many in principle. According to the data of ethno-sociological studies of the Soviet era, the share of such people in representative all-union samples averaged about 7-8%. The portion of people who are ready to communicate with others, regardless of their ethnic roots, is more than doubled. However, one should pay attention to the share of respondents who assess the importance of national identity in building a dialogue in a situational manner (50%). This trend is very typical for the Russian and Kazakhstan`s society (in contrast to the countries of Western Europe and America) (Osipenkova, 2007; Poshtareva, 2009). It is for this reason that Russians have always divided those around them not so much by ethnicity as by how much they are "friends" to this particular territory, and how much they are "foes" (regardless of their nationality). "Friends" are usually people (almost any nationality and religion), adhering to historically established rules of conduct common for a given territory. And "foes" are those who, for some or other reason, do not fit into these rules, even if they are ethnic Russians, but from other regions.

TheWhen asking the question "Representatives of different nationalities study at Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S. Baishev Aktobe University. Do you feel any dislike for them?" the authors received approximately equal ratio of affirmative and negative answers:

Yes – 49.4%;

No – 51.6%.

The proportion of respondents who do and do not take a dislike to the representatives of any nationality are practically equal (differences within the sampling error being ± 5% that are standard for representative surveys). But this does not mean that the students of Yelabuga Institute and S.Baishev Aktobe University are half "ethnic xenophobes", as it might seem from the answers. This means that for half of the students there is a division into "friends" (the Russian and Kazakhstan`s society) and "foes" (unaccustomed ethnic groups that have not yet entered into the Russian and Kazakhstan`s environment). This is not the division of people according to their nationality, just because the presented distributions are completely unrelated (according to statistical reliability criteria) to the distributions reflecting the importance of national identity for communication. The above conclusion is confirmed by a list of those nationalities which the respondents dislike (question 3).

Since the poll was open, the respondents simply named certain nationalities (in the amount of 30). All this variety was reduced to 3 categories:

1) peoples representing external migrants to Russia (in overwhelming majority these are the peoples of the former Central Asian republics of the USSR) – 68.2%;

2) internal migrants from the republics of the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) – 27.8%;

3) other peoples – the autochthons of Russia – 4.0%.

As can be seen from the answers, the overwhelming majority of respondents indicate that external migrants are hostile to them. The second group included visitors from the North Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation. And only a small proportion of respondents (comparable to the sampling error) feel dislike for other indigenous peoples of Russia. Concerning the first two groups, this is due to their weak integration into the traditions and daily life of the local population (Korableva *et al.,* 2017b). This is already recognized at all levels: from public opinion to the President of the Russian Federation.

Respondents 'The respondents' answers to the fourth question allowed identifying the degree of their agreement or disagreement with this or that statement.

The degree of agreement with the statement "They live a different way of life, speak an incomprehensible language" is as follows:

Agree – 42.2%;

Rather agree – 41.1%;

Rather disagree – 9.5%;

Do not agree – 7.2%.

The majority of respondents say that they feel hostility and irritation towards representatives of specific nationalities due to the fact that these people are "strangers", live a different way of life, speak an incomprehensible language. And this is nothing more than the lack of integration of visitors into the current rules of the everyday live (Korableva & Kalimullina, 2014; Il'Yaschenko *et al*., 2015; Sapozhkov *et al.,* 2016). Representatives of other nationalities are not perceived as strangers by only 16.7% of respondents in the aggregate.

Through the survey also revealed the degree of agreement with the following statement: "They behave insultingly towards people of your nationality":

Agree – 49.9%;

Rather agree – 37.2%;

Rather disagree – 10.4%;

Do not agree – 2.4%.

An agreement with the judgment is nothing but an expression of the same displeasure by non-integration, but expressed in a different emotional form, since often the non-compliance with the rules developed in a given local territory (in this case, in the Republic of Tatarstan) is viewed by the host population as a challenge and an insult, causing a response.

The degree of agreement of Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S.Baishev Aktobe University students with the statement "They do not respect customs and traditions of other peoples" is presented as follows:

Agree – 42.7%;

Rather agree – 42%;

Rather disagree – 12.2%;

Do not agree – 2.8%.

Another form of the same reaction is shown here: non-observance of the rules of behavior is perceived as disrespect for the host population.

with an alien religion" fixes the respondents' attitude to yet another extremely important phenomenon of modern life – the emergence of representatives of extreme branches of Islam (we are talking here mainly about Islam, since statistically most nationalities, in relation to which the students express dissatisfaction, are Muslims).

The degree of agreement with the statement "They are people with an alien religion" is as follows:

Agree – 32.5%;

Rather agree – 20.7%;

Rather disagree – 22.6%;

Do not agree – 24.7%.

AThis sufficiently high degree of agreement with the judgment should by no means be interpreted as manifestation of confessional intolerance. According to the data of long-term studies of the Russian poly-confessional environment (Valeeva *et al*., 2016; Korableva and Kalimullina, 2016; Tesleva and Belkova, 2014), historically established customs and habits of life in the conditions of inter-confessional consent are characteristic for Russians of different faiths. Among the peoples of Russia, recognized as "friends", there are many peoples of the Muslim faith (for example, Tatars and Bashkirs) (Fedorov, 2015; Gapsalamov et al., 2017b). In this respect, there are no (and there have never been any) serious problems of confrontation between religions. It would be extremely incorrect to consider the agreement with the statement in question as evidence of the growing confessional intolerance. Here, it is rather a question of dissatisfaction with poor integration of the newcomers into the Russian Traditional Islamic space with its skills of conflict-free coexistence with the Christian (Orthodox) cultural space. When regulating interethnic relations and building an adequate environment for interethnic communication (since in minds of most Russians, confessional preferences are practically inextricably linked with nationality, although this does not reflect reality), the efforts of preachers of traditional/familiar ways for Islam should be supported in every possible way.

Thus, the main conclusion is that the respondents' dissatisfaction is not caused by alien ethno-cultural specifics of the newcomers themselves, nor by their different faith, but by their lack of integration into the context of the daily life of the educational institution at which they live. Moreover, this non-integration triggers the mechanisms of growth of domestic nationalism, since often incorrect and unsuitable behavior (not corresponding to the local standards of "decency") is perceived as insulting.

The fifth question aimed to identify the state and nature of interethnic relations in Yelabuga Institute and S. Baishev Aktobe University. The following answers to this question were received:

The situation is calm, peaceful – 31.8%

The situation is externally calm, but there is some tension – 44.3%

The situation is tense; conflicts are possible – 12.3%

Hard to answer – 11.6%

As one can see, the dominant opinion in the assessment of interethnic situation in the university as "externally calm, but with some tension", although the assessment of the situation as tense and/or pre-conflict is also high. This is a direct consequence of the previously described discontent. It should also be considered that a certain "normal" level of anxiety with interethnic relations does not only indicates the impending "threats" to the international consent, but also speaks of a certain sense of responsibility of students for the fact that representatives of different cultural traditions and their ethno-cultural needs are taken into account.

The following answers were obtained to the sixth question "Would you like to learn more about customs, traditions and history of those peoples studying at Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S. Baishev Aktobe University?":

Yes, I would love to – 77.9%;

No, I would rather not – 4.9%;

Hard to answer – 17.2%.

As can be seen from the distribution of answers, students are interested to learn something new, about customs and traditions, about the history of those peoples studying at Yelabuga Institute and S. Baishev Aktobe University which is facilitated by great educational work carried out at the university.

Studying: Study and analysis of answers to the questionnaire, comprehension of observation and results of the interview with students made it possible to identify the most effective forms of cultural education in terms of interethnic communication along with its specific content.

With the purpose of forming: In order to develop a culture of interethnic communication, along with the process of integration, and instilling in students of universal, civil-patriotic and national feelings of consciousness and behavior in the university, the university authorities hold various extracurricular activities: 1) national holidays (*Navruz*, *Sabantuy*, Christmas, Day of Slavic Writing), 2) projects dedicated to memorable dates of historical significance (*Victory ended the war*, *And the saved world remembers*), anniversaries of outstanding cultural figures, literature, science and folk characters (Khlebnikov readings, Razil Valeyev's works), 3) open lectures

(Open lecture for students on the topic "Moral lessons of Leo Tolstoy's creativity" in the framework of the year of Leo Tolstoy in 2018), 4) festivals (Festival of Friendship of Peoples), 5) competitions (a contest of readers timed to coincide with the Day of the Native Language, a creative competition *Kauri Kalym*), 6) meetings of the Literary Club *The Planet of the Writer* (within the year of Leo Tolstoy in 2018), meetings (Poetic meeting in the framework of the 7th international poetry festival *Ladomir*), which provide students – non-native speakers with an insight of culture and traditions of people of different nationalities and form their ability to observe the universal norms of morality and behavior, mutual readiness to correctly perceive national values, their desire to enrich themselves with the knowledge about these values. The organization and conduct of these events are aimed at eliminating the negative feelings of students in relation to the people of other nationalities.

The Association of Foreign Students of Yelabuga Institute of KFU, the Movie Club, and the Club of International Friendship are aimed at fostering respectful attitude towards all nations.

The Association aims to create favorable conditions for study and residence of foreign students, to provide them with legal assistance and other support, to reveal their creative potential. The main goal of the Club of International Friendship is to develop and support a sense of tolerance among students, increase students' interest in intercultural and international communication, create favorable conditions for adaptation of foreign students of Yelabuga Institute of KFU. The Club hosts various master classes, discussions, roundtables, brain-rings; various projects, such as: #followme (when the visitors of the club "travel" to different countries), #madeinChina (activities aimed at learning Chinese language and culture, etc.). The thematic club "Movies from the Treasury of Soviet Cinema", shows Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Azerbaijani, Ukrainian films in Russian with their subsequent analysis. Comprehension and absorption by foreign students of a foreign culture do not only broaden their mind, their cultural horizons, but also forces them to look at their native cultures extrinsically and to draw parallels, compare, find something common and distinctive.

The integration process is also facilitated by extracurricular activities with entertaining character: the freshmen competition, the friendship festival of peoples, the Imperial Ball, the Student Spring. The annual festival of friendship of peoples aims to introduce students to history, folklore, and specifics of everyday life of people of different nationalities, instill tolerant attitude towards representatives of different nationalities, develop national consciousness within the

framework of civil and patriotic education. The Imperial Ball at Yelabuga Institute, timed to coincide with the academic days of the university, aims to revive traditions, morality and spirituality of Russians, educate the patriotic spirit and pride for their country in the minds of the younger generation.

VisitingParticipation of foreign students in different sports activities and various competitions in national sports also create favorable conditions for the formation of interethnic communication culture. In celebration of the National Unity Day, the International Mini-Football Tournament takes place with one team comprising the students of different nationalities. Students – non-native speakers try the ancient Tajik national struggle *Gushtingiri* and the Turkmen national struggle *Goresh*. Representatives of other nationalities enjoy visiting these competitions with pleasure. It should be noted that many foreign students win prizes not only in the university's and city's contests, but also in regional ones. Some students are engaged in the international theater-studio "Friendship of Peoples".

Conclusion

Thus, the special value of involving foreign students in the social and cultural activities of Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S. Baishev Aktobe University is that "the process of correlating individual's norms and values with the norms and values of society is optimized, but an individual develops his/her worldview beliefs; the students' free time is filled with developing, personality-forming content, providing socio-cultural integration, communication, freedom to choose leisure activities, development of motivational and emotional sphere of an individual. Individual's need for self-realization, self-education, creativity, group support, reference, identity is formed, developed and satisfied. Individual's adaptive develop when entering various microenvironments" (Mathis,2003). At the same time, these activities facilitate the transfer of samples of different national cultures contributing to the formation of integration, while maintaining traditions of representatives of different nationalities at the university.

The culture of interethnic communication, formed through integration, is considered by the authors (being the teachers of Yelabuga Institute of KFU and S.Baishev Aktobe University and engaged in future teachers' pedagogical training) as today's leading personal and professional characteristic of students, which will become teachers in future. Pedagogical activity is a way of

"attribution" of the values of native and foreign culture to the trainees and the possibility of "introducing" them into the world of the global culture.

The authors of this study believe, that the results suggest that integration through formation of the culture of interethnic communication can be improved if the education and training of future teachers – non-native speakers will be conducted based on cultural, national characteristics and changes taking place in society. Effective methods (including students in creative national associations, creating foreign students' associations, engaging them in various activities) make it possible to provide a solid foundation for formation of the culture of interethnic communication and interaction at a pedagogical university.

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