Formation of Student's Tolerance in Multicultural Environment When Teaching a Foreign Language (KFU Experience, Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russia)

Elena M. Galishnikova[a], Tatiana A. Baklashova[a], Liliya V. Khafizova[a]*

* Corresponding author: Liliya V. Khafizova, ptrlilia2004@mail.ru

[a]Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Kremlyovskay str., 18, Kazan, Russia, ptrlilia2004@mail.ru

Abstract

http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.07.7

Formation of tolerance through a multicultural environment in higher educational institutions is of particular relevance because the number of international students increases, migrants from non-CIS countries flow into the territory of the Russian Federation, and many nations and confessions live both in the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. The aim of our study is to identify and systematize the essential characteristics of the algorithm in the formation of students' tolerance in a multicultural environment, its approbation and implementation in the process of foreign language teaching at the university. An analysis of the literature, teaching experience, and empirical studies enabled to identify the criteria and levels of students' tolerance formation as well as to create special pedagogical conditions to provide students' stability under stressful, difficult situations in the learning activities. As a result of research, we defined the following pedagogical conditions: the development of students' emotional stability in teaching and learning activities through the parallel algorithm as a precise prescription of a phased fulfillment of actions, intensive introduction of interactive forms of teaching, and the use of extracurricular forms of work. Actualization of these pedagogical conditions for tolerance formation in foreign language environment contributes to encouraging fluency in foreign language by international students and further development of foreign language skills; development of skills for self-analysis and self-criticism; promoting social citizenship, proactivity, adaptability and optimism.

1. Introduction

In the epoch of globalization, where people of different cultures and religions live, study and work together, the goal of establishing tolerance and harmony has become extremely important. Without tolerance we cannot speak about loyalty to each other. Lack of tolerance may lead to fighting, and violence and then to aggression. Intolerance breeds intolerance. In order to combat intolerance, we have to pay attention to the Universities where the younger generation is being formed. Formation of tolerance through a multicultural environment in higher educational institutions is of particular relevance because the numbers of international students are increasing, migrants from former non-CIS countries flow into the territory of the Russian Federation, and people of many nations and confessions live both in the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation.

In order to emphasize the urgency and importance of the chosen research topic, we would like to refer to some provisions in Article 1 of the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, which was proclaimed and signed by the Member States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1995. The meaning of tolerance in today's political context is:
 -Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures.
- Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.
- It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behavior and values (2005).

2. Literature review

The role of tolerance in society, social spheres, in education has been extensively studied by many scientists such as Afdal (2005), Brown (2006), Guthrie, King & Palmer (2000), Himelhoch (1950), Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Bjorklund & Parente (2001), Henderson-King & Kaleta (2000), Nieto (2005) and others. Theoretical analysis of the above mentioned research findings leads to the conclusion that tolerance is seen not only as central value in education but in other spheres as well. For example, Afdal (2005) stressed that tolerance is a basic ideal in many spheres of society. Accusations of not being tolerant, of being intolerant, are serious and would in most instances damage the person's social and moral reputation. Steven Weldon (2006) considers that tolerance is a fundamental principle of the liberal democratic creed, it requires citizens to participate fully in political, social, and economic life. Furthermore there is an opinion which expresses the interrelatedness of the tolerance concepts and identity. For example, for Brown (2000) "tolerance talk" turned into the beacon of multicultural justice and civic peace. Toleration, according to Brown, came to be linked to the politics of identity.

Prof. S. Nieto (2006), emphasized the equality in education. Sonia Nieto relies on the concept of both - equity and social justice in education. That, as she considers, consists of four components. First, it challenges, and disrupts misconceptions, lies that lead to structural inequality and discrimination based on race, social class, gender, and other social and human differences. Second, a social justice perspective means providing all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential.

Equally vital are emotional resources such as a belief in students' ability and worth, care for them as individuals. A third component of a social justice perspective is drawing on the talents and strengths that students bring to their education. These resources include their languages, cultures, and experiences. A fourth essential component of social justice is creating a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and supports agency for social change.

No one is in doubt that the promotion of tolerance is carried out in the process of education. It is education that is a powerful tool in upgrading tolerance and mutual understanding. The interdependence between education and tolerance was confirmed by scientists many years ago (Holt & Tygart, 1969).

Guthrie, King & Palmer (2000) consider that "developing respect for human diversity by replacing racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism with an appreciation for racial, gender, and cultural differences is a common learning goal of college and university educators. Educators should intentionally point students toward curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that promote tolerance, especially those based on developmental principles". That's why it is not surprising that nowadays "promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship is a long-term European commitment in the field of education. Back in 2009, European Member States had identified this theme as one of the strategic objectives of the Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET2020).

With full confidence we can equate the true tolerance and such personality traits as kindness, patience, self-control, love. Even intolerance can be expressed in terms of the presence or absence of these qualities. It is important to note that tolerance is a student behavior manner, his/her attitude to the mentioned qualities. This is a manifestation of human nature. Generally speaking, we understand tolerance as willingness to accept feelings and habits, which are different from your own. It means respect for different views and beliefs, behaviors and practices.

The essence of the concept of tolerance is investigated in the paper by Baklashova, Galishnikova & Khafizova (2015) where the authors concluded that tolerance is a quality of a person which is formed in the course of socialization, it is the quality of a person that is required as internal assumption of each individual. It was stressed that the most common areas of understanding of this phenomenon or the concept of tolerance are: religious tolerance, racial and ethnic tolerance, political tolerance, tolerance against persons with disabilities, gender tolerance and sexual orientation-tolerance, educational tolerance (Baklashova, Galishnikova & Khafizova, 2015).

It is well known that foreign language plays a significant role in the formation of tolerance. Second language learning should be a core element to education. The university graduate must understand that the world is characterized by diversity and difference. Problems such as cultural prejudices, racism can be explored in foreign-language classrooms. This kind of exposure can aid in the development of cultural empathy and an understanding of the inter-connections among people. Learning a foreign language opens up all kinds of opportunities: to develop a strong footing in the global economy, to know about diverse cultures, places and lifestyle, interact with people more freely. It increases not only students' mental focus, reading and writing abilities but opens their mind to new cultures and new ways of thinking, gives the chance to consider foreign cultures and traditions. Awareness of cultural practices, social customs and ethical practices across linguistic borders will facilitate

integration and give a deeper respect for multicultural world. A deeper attention to transformations in the content of any foreign-language program can have an impact on the values and knowledge that students need to understand (Ismagilova & Polyakova, 2014). The role of foreign language learning in bringing up tolerance has greater importance. It was stressed by Renaud &Tannenbaum (2013) that a classroom composed of students with widely different cultures offers lots of potential for excitement and discovery, as well as for creating empathy and advancing the acquisition of English.

Generalizing the above, it should be noted that we consider tolerance from the standpoint of ethnic, social, cultural and personal characteristics of the multinational composition of students and their participation in the process of acquiring a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication. As a multinational institution, we face the problem of students' adaptation to their new environments. Since they are active participants of society, the problem of tolerance in the high school surrounding becomes urgent and demands closer attention. Entering the University presents students with numeral novel challenges that extend beyond greater academic demands: difficulty with separation from family, feelings of isolation and loneliness can be exacerbated by interpersonal and national conflicts as well as by state of confusion.

3. Materials and Methods

The aim of our study is to identify and systematize the essential components of the algorithm in the formation of students' tolerance in a multicultural environment, its approbation and implementation in the process of foreign language teaching at the university. The study uses a range of methods: summative (questionnaires, tests), experimental and diagnostic (experimental work during foreign language communication, aimed at creating tolerance by means of a foreign language, peer review method and simulation methods), monitoring (comparative analysis). The main research method is a formative experiment whose task is to determine the effectiveness of the pedagogical conditions developed.

4. Results and Discussion

Analyses of the literature, our own teaching experience, and empirical studies have identified the criteria and levels of students' tolerance formation, which served the basis of our research. Also they enabled the creation of special pedagogical conditions to provide students' stability in stressful, difficult situations in the learning activities.

Adequate assessment of the social and supportive multicultural atmosphere in the group is a prerequisite for a successful educational process. Evaluation criteria include key parameters (behavioral, personality and performance characteristics), which assess the effectiveness of student's activities. Criteria define the way in which each action must be shown to meet the requirements of the society (Table 1.)

Table 1. Tolerance criteria.

Criteria	Indicators
Social adaptability, activity - desire, willingness and ability to interact in different social situations of classroom and extracurricular	Adaptation to social environment, benevolence, proactivity, and optimism

work at the university and building a constructive relationship among the students	
Empathy – person's feeling of what is happening in the inner world of another person	sympathy, compassion, capacity for self-reflection.
Conflict tolerance (resistance) of the personality - an integral characteristic of the person, which ensures one's stability under stressful, difficult situations in the learning activities.	optimistic orientation, balance, emotional stability, low level of anxiety, the desire to test one's strength, independence

Table 2. Tolerance levels

High tolerance	person has important value concepts, easily orientates in a multicultural environment, adapted to social environment, benevolence, proactivity, sociable, tactful, optimistic, emotionally stable, independent, ability for self-reflection, admits his\her mistakes
Sufficient tolerance	person accepts an alternative view, can orientate in social environment, may be optimistic and tactful, independent, admits his/her mistakes very often, is ready for self-criticism
Low tolerance	person can accept an alternative view, but with a doubt, or he\she is confident in its fallibility, mostly keeps his\her own point of view, often lacks self-criticism, optimism, emotional stability, he/she is hard-heartedness, reliance, has middle level of anxiety
Intolerance	person takes a hostile attitude towards others, is not willing to consider the opinions of others, keeps apart, avoidant, categorical, makes no concessions

We carried out the study of the dynamics of ethnic and social tolerance among international students during co-education with representatives of various ethnic groups of Russia. Although the percentage of international students in the University is not very big (about 12% of the total number), we think it is very important to adapt them to multicultural educational and social environment. Thus, we are trying to take time by the forelock to bring up tolerant professionals, since even small national communities may face irreconcilable differences. The demographic background of the respondents who participated in this study is 120 first- and second-year students. More than half of the students in the experimental group demonstrated a sufficient level of tolerance (according to the criteria proposed) - 58%. 32% of respondents are not self-confident, emotionally unstable, and do not adequately assess their level of proficiency in a foreign language, there are manifestations of neglecting the rules of social tolerance. This demonstrates the lack of established tolerance in relation to other members of the community and requires an adjustment. 10% of international students are not very sociable, closed, completely unmotivated to study a foreign language, prefer to communicate with representatives of their nationality, and very forceful in their statements (Fig.1).

During the formative experiment, we created pedagogical conditions for the formation of desire, willingness and ability of students to interact in different social situations of classroom and extracurricular work at the university and building a constructive relationship among the students, to provide students' stability under stressful, difficult situations in the learning activities. These conditions in our pedagogical forming experiment include:

1. The development of students' emotional stability in teaching and learning activities through the parallel algorithm as a precise prescription of a phased fulfillment of actions and then combining the results to achieve the goal:

a) the formation of group's intellectual background - joint activities in the learning process and encouraging fluency in foreign language by international students; b) further development of foreign language skills - intervallic repetition of a new material or new words; integration of new and old

material; reliance on the language of the specialty; idea of large blocks - "immersion" blocks in different subjects; c) the system of rewards (positive or high score, friendly attitude, feasible task, creating "a situation of success", praise); c) the use of cooperative pedagogy (learning willingly; the idea of free choice - selecting the number of assignments by the student, based on an individual approach); e) the continuity of the process of learning a foreign language.

2. Intensive introduction of interactive forms of teaching - role plays, case studies, discussions, use of Internet resources, electronic educational resources, conferences, debates, all this leads to the development of skills for self-analysis and self-criticism;

3. The use of extracurricular forms of work - holding forums, competitions, debate clubs, and the involvement of international students, as experience shows, contributes to promoting social citizenship, proactivity, adaptability and optimism.
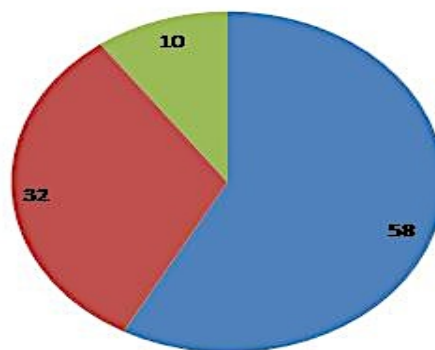

Fig 1. Levels of tolerance (before the experiment)

The results in the same group of students, a year later, were the following: Sufficient level of tolerance – 72%; Low tolerance – 24%; Intolerance – 4%.
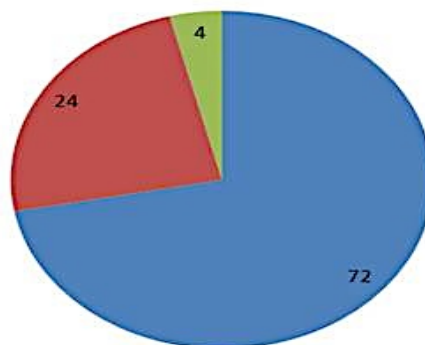

Fig 2. Levels of tolerance (after the experiment)

5. Conclusion

We considered tolerance from the standpoint of ethnic and cultural characteristics of students' multi-ethnic composition; we developed and substantiated the algorithm for the formation of students' tolerance in a multicultural environment; as a part of the multinational institution, we identified pedagogical conditions for the strategy to form students' tolerance based on the algorithm developed.

In the process of teaching a foreign language with international students, we should pay attention to the pedagogical conditions of tolerance formation in foreign language environment. This involves the development of students' emotional stability in teaching and learning activities, encouraging fluency in foreign language by international students and further development of foreign language skills; intensive introduction of interactive forms of teaching; development of skills for self-analysis and self-criticism; promoting social citizenship, proactivity, adaptability and optimism.

References

Afdal, G. (2005). Tolerance and curriculum. Conceptions of tolerance in multicultural unitary Norwegian compulsory school. *Religious Diversity and Education in Europe.* Waxmann Verlag GmbH. 403 p.

Baklashova, T.A., Galishnikova, E.M. & Khafizova, L.V. (2015). The Effects of education on Tolerance: Research of Students' Social and Ethnic Attitudes. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6 (1-3), 335-340.

Brown, W. (2006). *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empir*e. The UK Princeton University press.

Declaration of principles on tolerance (1995). http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM

Gojkov-Rajić, A. & Prtljaga, J. (2013). Foreign Language Learning as a Factor of Intercultural Tolerance. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 3rd World Conference on Learning*, 93, 809–813

Guthrie, V., King, P. & Palmer, C. (2000). Higher Education and Reducing Prejudice: Research on Cognitive Capabilities Underlying Tolerance. http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/sp.sm00/tolerance.html

Henderson-King, D. & Kaleta, A. (2000). Learning about Social Diversity: The Undergraduate Experience and Intergroup Tolerance. *Journal of Higher Education,* 71(2), 64 – 142.

Himelhoch, J. (1950). Tolerance and personality needs: A study of the liberalization of ethnic attitudes among minority group college students. *American Sociological Review*, 79-88.

Holt, N. & Tygart, C. E. (1969). Political tolerance and higher education. *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 12 (1), 27-33.

Ismagilova, Liliya & Polyakova, Oksana (2014). The problem of the syllabus design within the competence approach based on the course "English for Master Degree Students in Economics (advanced level)". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Science.152, 1095-1100.*

Nieto, S. (2006). Teaching as political work: learning from courageous and caring teachers. Child Development Institute Sarah Lawrence College, 13. https://www.sarahlawrence.edu/media/cdi/pdf/Occasional%20Papers/CDI_Occasional_Paper_2006_Nieto.pdf

Renaud, S. & Tannenbaum, E. (2013). Making Connections: Language Activities for Creating Interpersonal Tolerance in the Classroom. *English teaching forum*. .http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/51_2_5_renaud_tannenbaum.pdf

Skiba, P.J. & Simmons, A.B. (2008). Achieving Equity in Special Education: History, Status, and Current Challenges. *Exceptional Children*, 74(4), 264-288.

Terenzini, P. T., Cabrera, A. F., Colbeck, C. L., Bjorklund, S. A., & Parente, J. M. (2001). Racial and ethnic diversity in the classroom: Does it promote student learning? *Journal of Higher Education*, 509-531.

Weldon, S. (2006). The Institutional Context of Tolerance for Ethnic Minorities: A Comparative, Multilevel Analysis of Western Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 331–349.