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## **THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**

### **Abstract**

The paper presents an overview discussion of the conceptualizations of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) formulated by Russian scholars. The conceptions of the ICC are quite diverse as well as terminology used by the scholars. The authors place emphasis on the psychological aspects of the ICC, distinguishing psycho-physiological, personality, socio-psychological and psycho-pedagogical levels of its analysis.

### **Key words**

intercultural communicative competence, intercultural competency, ethnocultural competence, intercultural communication, interaction, respect, tolerance, empathy, abilities, knowledge, skills, personality, orientation, self-esteem, communicative qualities, cultural values, verbal, non-verbal communication, behavior patterns, ethnic identity, cultural identity

The importance of intercultural competence is discussed by scholars worldwide. The problem is analyzed by psychologists, teachers, specialists in cultural studies, philosophers, etc. As a result, conceptualizations of intercultural communicative competence are highly diverse in their disciplines, terminologies and practical objectives.

In this article we summarize the conceptualizations of intercultural communicative competence formulated by Russian scholars, paying particular attention to psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

Russian researchers started working on the problems of intercultural communication, intercultural training and intercultural communicative competence at the beginning of 1990s. The main reasons of interest in these problems were global changes in the political, economic and social life in Russia and worldwide as well as a desire to become a part of integrated scientific and educational community.

Nowadays the problem of intercultural communicative competence is widely discussed by Russian psychologists (A.D. Karnyshev, A.S. Kupavskaya, V.I. Narolina, L.G. Pochebut, etc.), cultural studies scholars (A.P. Sadokhin, T.G. Grushevitskaya, V.D. Popkov, etc), foreign language teachers (N.V. Yankina, O.A. Leontovich, G.V. Elizarova, I.F. Ptitsyna, etc.) and specialists from other scientific fields.

In its broadest sense, intercultural competence is defined as a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with individuals from linguistically and/or culturally diverse backgrounds. Much like their foreign colleagues, Russian researchers use different terms to describe this phenomenon. It should be noted that some specialists, such as A.D. Karnyshev, A.S. Kupavskaya, V.I. Narolina, L.G. Pochebut, N.V. Yankina use the term “competence”, whereas O.A. Leontovich, G.V. Elizarova, I.F. Ptitsyna consider the term “competency” to be more appropriate.

Having analyzed various definitions of the terms “competence” and “competency” developed by Russian scholars, we came to the conclusion that these terms are not interchangeable. The term “competency” is understood as a complex of knowledge, skills and patterns of activity in a certain sphere of knowledge, whereas “competence” is viewed as a system of individual’s resources and characteristics enabling a person to solve problems in certain sphere.

Some authors (A.S. Kupavskaya, T.V. Poshtareva) use the term “ethnocultural competence” emphasizing that difficulties in communication occur not only when the communicators are from different countries. Representa-

tives of different ethno-cultural communities living inside one country may also come across serious obstacles in communication. This problem is especially important for multinational countries such as Russia.

As for the structure of the models of intercultural communicative competence developed by Russian scholars, the majority of them are compositional ones, i.e. each model comprises a number of independent components. The exceptions are models of A.D. Karnyshev and V.I. Narolina. The models of these scholars can be classified as causal. Table 1 presents the key points of the theories of the intercultural communicative competence advanced by Russian researchers.

**Table 1. Key Points of the Theories of the Intercultural Communicative Competence of Russian Researchers**

Author (scientific field)	Terminology used	Key points of the theory
A.D. Karnyshev <sup>1</sup> (Psychology)	Intercultural competence (IC)	The IC is viewed in close relation with the following personality parameters: 1. Psycho-physiological qualities; 2. Personality orientation; 3. Abilities, knowledge and skills for performing certain social roles; 4. Self-esteem and self-respect; 5. Communicative qualities as a means of interpersonal communication
V.I. Narolina <sup>2</sup> (Psychology)	Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)	The ICC is interpreted as a psychological structure of the highest level which enables intercultural communication in professional, socio-cultural and interpersonal spheres
L.G. Pochebut <sup>3</sup> (Psychology)	Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)	According to the author, the ICC is expressed in the positive attitude, tolerance and trust, knowledge of principles and rules of intercultural communication, ability to understand and interact with representatives of different cultures
A.S. Kupavskaya <sup>4</sup> (Psychology)	Ethnocultural competence (EC)	The researcher points out that the basis of ethno-cultural competence is in meta-competence or communicative competence. Thus emphasis is placed on the perceptive, communicative and interactive aspects of communication

<sup>1</sup> A.D. Karnyshev, Personality and Intercultural Competence, *Journal Psychology in Economics and Management* 2, 2009, pp. 99-106 (in Russian); idem, M.A. Vinokurov, E.L. Trofimova, Interethnic interaction and Intercultural Competence, Irkutsk 2009 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V.I. Narolina, Intercultural Communicative Competence as an Integrative Ability of the Specialist's for Intercultural Communication [online]. *Psychological Science and Education* 2, 2010 [access: 2016-03-07]. Available at: <<http://psyedu.ru/journal/2010/2/Narolina.phtml>> (in Russian).

<sup>3</sup> L.G. Pochebut, *Cross-Cultural and Ethnic Psychology*, Saint-Petersburg 2012 (in Russian).

<sup>4</sup> A.S. Kupavskaya, Development of Ethnocultural Competence of Teenagers with the Help of Socio-Psychological Training. Thesis of the Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Psychology, Moscow 2008 (in Russian).

Author (scientific field)	Terminology used	Key points of the theory
T.V. Poshtareva <sup>5</sup> (Pedagogics)	Ethnocultural competence	The EC is defined as a personality formation based on the knowledge of an ethnic culture, abilities, skills and models of behavior, that enable a person to get mutual understanding and interact effectively with the representatives of different ethnic communities
A.P. Sadokhin <sup>6</sup> (Cultural Studies)	Intercultural competence (IC)	According to the scholar, the IC is a complex sociocultural structure. It is a kind of meta-competence, comprising different levels and types of competences
N.S. Smirnova <sup>7</sup> (Philosophy)	Intercultural competence (IC)	The IC is defined as an ability to understand, respect and effectively use cultural conditions and factors determining the perception, evaluation, emotions and actions of the participants of intercultural interaction, enabling them to adapt to each other, be tolerant and develop effective ways of collaboration
N.V. Yankina <sup>8</sup> (Pedagogics)	Intercultural competence (IC)	According to the author, the IC is an integrated personality structure, determining the preparedness of a person for solving problems in intercultural communication, comprising a) a level of special knowledge sufficient for intercultural dialogue; b) a combination of orientations, ensuring interpersonal interaction based on understanding, respect, tolerance and interest in the values of a different culture; c) a complex of skills which are necessary for participation in the intercultural communication
A.V. Novitskaya <sup>9</sup> (Pedagogics)	Intercultural competency	Intercultural competency is viewed as an ability to interact, skills enabling a person to evaluate the situation taking into account the norms and values in different cultures based on certain knowledge, abilities and skills, personality traits, formed in the process of intercultural interaction.
O.A. Leontovich <sup>10</sup> (Philology)	Intercultural competency	According to the scholar, intercultural competency is a system of skills enabling a person to evaluate communicative situation appropriately, use verbal and non-verbal means in order to accomplish the communicative intentions and obtain results of the communicative interaction in the form of a feedback. The integral parts of intercultural competency are linguistic, communicative and cultural competencies

<sup>5</sup> T.V. Poshtareva, Development of Ethnocultural Competence in the Multi-ethnic Learning Environment, Thesis of the Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Pedagogics, Vladikavkaz 2009 (in Russian).

<sup>6</sup> A.P. Sadokhin, Introduction to the Theory of Intercultural Communication, Moscow 2005 (in Russian); idem, Intercultural Competence: Structure and Mechanisms of Development, Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Cultural Studies, Moscow 2009 (in Russian).

<sup>7</sup> N.S. Smirnova, Intercultural Competence as an Object of Socio-Philosophical Analysis in Modern Germany, Thesis of the Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Philosophy, Arkhangelsk 2007 (in Russian).

<sup>8</sup> V. Yankina, Development of the Intercultural Competence of University Students [online]. Orenport [access: 2016-03-07]. Available at: <[www.orenport.ru/images/img/kiryakova/aksiologiya/index.html](http://www.orenport.ru/images/img/kiryakova/aksiologiya/index.html)> (in Russian).

<sup>9</sup> A.V. Novitskaya, Development of Intercultural Competency in Different Types of Intercultural Contacts, Collection of Scientific Papers SevKavGTU, Series Humanitarian Sciences 6, 2008 (in Russian).

Author (scientific field)	Terminology used	Key points of the theory
G.V. Elizarova <sup>11</sup> (Pedagogics)	Intercultural competency	Intercultural competency is viewed as a competency of special nature based on knowledge and skills. It is an ability to communicate on the intercultural level by means of creating a common meaning for both communicators and as result achieving a positive outcome of communication for both sides. Intercultural competence is not identical with communicative competency of native speakers and characterizes a person as a cultural mediator, i.e. someone learning any language as a foreign one
Yu. V. Bakanova <sup>12</sup> (Pedagogics)	Intercultural competency	According to the author, intercultural competency is expressed in a highly-organized ability to use the system of knowledge and skills necessary for decoding and adequate interpretation of the meaning of verbal and non-verbal behavior of the representatives of different cultures and orientation in the sociocultural context of a certain communicative situation
I.F. Ptitsyna <sup>13</sup> (Pedagogics)	Intercultural competency	IC is defined as an ability to perceive, understand and interpret the phenomena of a foreign culture, a skill of comparing them with the phenomena of inner culture and incorporating into one's worldview. The model of IC by I.F. Ptitsyna comprises four components: pragmatic, cognitive, emotional and behavioral

Intercultural competence is viewed by A.D. Karnyshev in close relation with personality traits (Figure 1). Consequently, Karnyshev's Model of Intercultural Competence is based on Personality-Activity Theory. The model comprises a set of interrelated components (substructures).

The first substructure, "Personality Psycho-physiological Parameters", reflects genetically determined bases of the attitudes to the world as a whole.

The second substructure, "Personality Orientation", is characterized by the following:

- a) general worldview;
- b) the system of individual's stable attitudes and stereotypes towards the people of other nationalities;

<sup>10</sup> O.L. Leonovitch, Russia and the USA. Introduction to the Intercultural Communication, Volgograd 2003 (in Russian).

<sup>11</sup> G.V. Elizarova, Culture and Teaching Foreign Languages. Saint-Petersburg 2008 (in Russian).

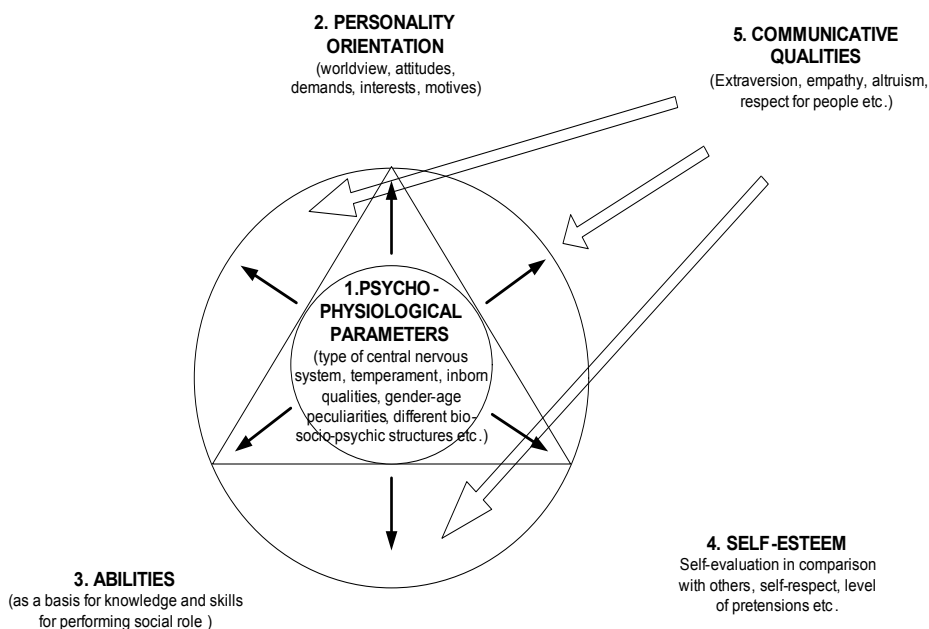
<sup>12</sup> Yu.V. Bakanova, Development of Intercultural Competency of Future Interpreters, Bulletin of VGU: Series Linguistics and Intercultural Communication 3, 2008, pp. 116-120 (in Russian).

<sup>13</sup> I.F. Ptitsyna, Pedagogical Conditions of Formation of Intercultural Competency of Students' Foreign Language Personality (on the Basis of Studying Japanese Language and Culture), Thesis of the Dissertation for the Degree of Candidate of Pedagogics, Yakutsk 2008 (in Russian).

c) occasional attitudes resulting from interethnic (intercultural) interaction in their daily lives.

The third component of the model, “Abilities”, reflects the general level of preparedness for the intercultural interaction.

**Figure 1. Karnyshev’s Personality-Activity Theory based Model of Intercultural Competence**



Source: A.D. Karnyshev, Personality and Intercultural Competence, Journal Psychology in Economics and Management 2, 2009, p. 100 (in Russian).

The fourth component, “Self-esteem”, includes:

- evaluation of personal qualities and traits;
- evaluation of the level of development of his/her ethnicity;
- the role and status among the members of the ethnic group.

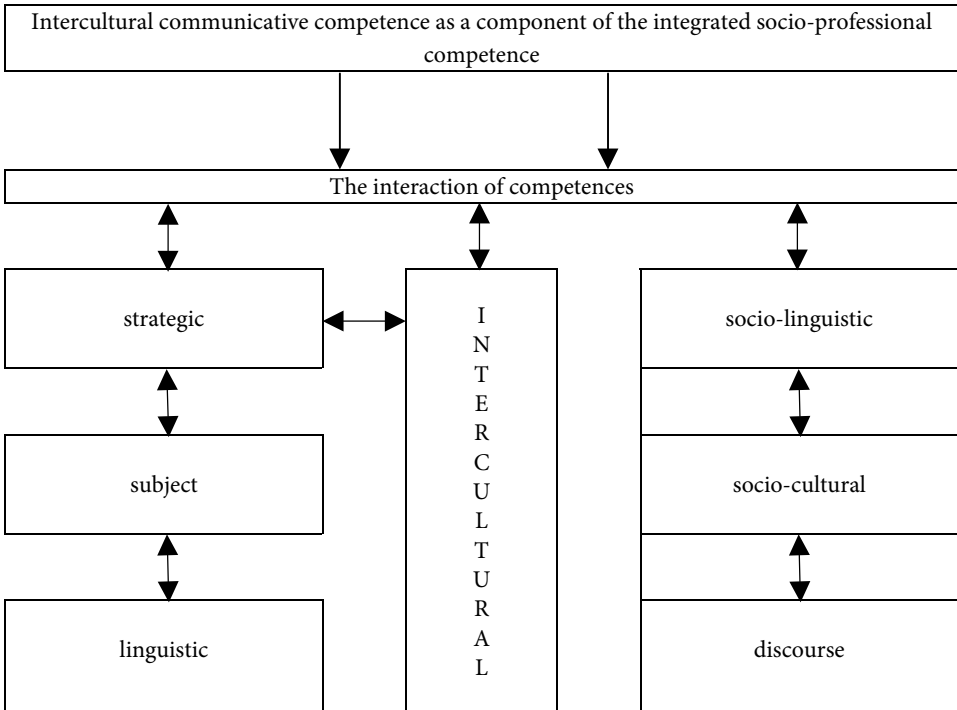
The fifth component, “Communicative Qualities”, presents a set of personality traits providing effective communication<sup>14</sup>.

V.I. Narolina’s model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is based on the theory of the Specialist’s Integrated Socio-Professional Competence by I.A. Zimnyaya.

<sup>14</sup> A.D. Karnyshev, Personality and Intercultural Competence, pp. 99-106.

Narolina’s model of ICC is an integrated structure comprising a number of competences. The integrated socio-professional competence includes communicative competence which enables a specialist to fulfill one’s professional activity and communicate successfully on the professional and interpersonal level.

**Figure 2. The structure of the intercultural communicative competence by Narolina**



Source: V.I. Narolina, Intercultural Communicative Competence as an Integrative Ability of the Specialist’s for Intercultural Communication, Psychological Science and Education 2, 2010, p. 5 (in Russian).

ICC is defined by Narolina as a psychological structure of the highest level which enables intercultural communication in professional, socio-cultural and interpersonal spheres. The scholar points out that this competence functions in intercultural communication only when the communicative competence of the participants of communication is insufficient for effective dialogue as the communicators are not aware of certain cultural patterns, practices and rule that characterize intercultural communication.

According to the author, the ICC is an ability to achieve mutual understanding with representatives of different cultural groups on the basis of understanding and by adhering to universal rules and behavior patterns that make up the international etiquette of communication even if they do not know the foreign language well enough.

ICC enables a person to maintain relations with representatives of different cultures taking into account their cultural values, tolerantly approaching differences in communication patterns, behavior styles, ways of life, customs, traditions etc.

Effective intercultural communication is at the same time the condition and the result (the input and the outcome) of its functioning. A person willing to achieve mutual understanding with the people from different communicative groups and cultures and to accomplish the goals of communication uses one's knowledge of cultural rules and categories determining the success of intercultural interaction.

Thus, ICC enables a person to choose adequate linguistic means in accordance with the socio-cultural context, to produce discourses, to use socio-linguistic means, strategies and tactics of communication that are acceptable for achieving potential goals. Thus the ICC maximizes the effectiveness of intercultural interaction.

ICC is a complex multi-component, multi-level structure that enables a person to improve one's skills of productive intercultural communication. It is based on the profound understanding of speech and behavior of the partner in the process of professional activity<sup>15</sup>.

According to A.S. Kupavskaya, meta-competence or communicative competence provides the basis of the ethno-cultural competence. There are three key factors in Kupavskaya's theoretical model of the ethno-cultural competence: cognitive, behavioral and motivational<sup>16</sup>. The main points of the theory are represented in Table 2.

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<sup>15</sup> V.I. Narolina, Intercultural Communicative Competence.

<sup>16</sup> A.S. Kupavskaya, Development of Ethnocultural Competence.



**Table 2. Factors of Ethnocultural Competence by Kupavskaya**

Factor	Competencies
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge about his/her native culture and other cultures (customs, rules, social roles distribution, etc.);</li> <li>- awareness of the similarities and differences between one's native culture and culture of the others;</li> <li>- understanding of the importance of cultural differences;</li> <li>- knowledge that enables adequate interpretation of the behavior of representatives of a different ethnic community (this knowledge is based on the ability to categorize and interpret peculiarities of native and foreign cultures correctly);</li> <li>- language competence;</li> <li>- knowledge that enables to encode and decode non-verbal messages of representatives of different cultures;</li> <li>- awareness of the cultural distance</li> </ul>
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ability to adapt one's behavior to the peculiarities of a foreign culture;</li> <li>- non-verbal communication skills;</li> <li>- ability to control negative emotional experience caused by the differences in cultures;</li> <li>- ability to minimize the level of excitement in the process of intercultural interaction</li> </ul>
Motivational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- necessity of intercultural communication;</li> <li>- readiness to follow the rules and patterns of behavior of a foreign culture;</li> <li>- readiness to recognize and accept the values of a foreign culture;</li> <li>- readiness to show empathy towards representatives of a different culture;</li> <li>- necessity of acquiring knowledge of the representatives of a different culture;</li> <li>- high level of attraction towards the representatives of a different culture;</li> <li>- awareness of proximity or cultural and historical distance;</li> <li>- readiness for interaction on the basis of ethno-cultural universalism</li> </ul>

T.V. Poshtareva also uses the term “ethnocultural competence”. Her theory emphasizes the significance of the ability and preparedness of a person to seek information, acquire knowledge of ethnic cultures using different resources, differentiate this information from the point of view of its credibility and importance and use it for solving problems in interethnic interaction<sup>17</sup>.

We consider this point of view quite significant and up-to-date as nowadays means of mass communication being one of the leading agents of socialization form the basis of individual self-consciousness. Thus, the ability to differentiate information from different resources and make certain conclu-

<sup>17</sup> T.V. Poshtareva, Development of Ethnocultural Competence.

sions on its basis, turns out to be one of the demands of the development of a multicultural personality.

In L.G. Pochebut's theory of intercultural communicative competence, this competence is viewed as psychological determinant of constructive intercultural interaction.

Communicative competence is defined by the scholar as the ability of a person to respond appropriately to diverse problematic situations in the process of interpersonal communication.

Communicative competence is a system combining knowledge of social reality and oneself, complex social interaction skills, and the ability to adapt to new situations. The result of the interaction, i.e. achieving important personal goals is the criterion of development of communicative competence.

Intercultural communicative competence, according to Pochebut, is expressed in the positive attitude, tolerance and trust, knowledge of principles and rules of intercultural communication, as well as in the ability to understand and interact with representatives of different cultures.

The development of intercultural communicative competence implies acquiring knowledge of native and foreign cultures (of language, history, art, literature, architecture, mythology, folklore, religion, etc.). However, the awareness of cultural peculiarities is not enough, the development of specific communication skills with representatives of different ethnic communities and cultures is necessary.

Thus, the structure of intercultural communicative competence, according to Pochebut, includes the following components:

1. Cultural knowledge: profound knowledge of native culture, awareness of the culture of the foreign country.
2. Skills of competent communication not only with the representatives of native culture, but also with foreigners.
3. Special attitude towards people which is expressed on the one hand in tolerance and interest in the situation of communication, but on the other hand preserves personal ethnic identity and resists the influence of representatives of a different culture.
4. Socio-psychological sensitivity, i.e. sensitivity to the state of mind and emotions of other people, empathy.
5. Trustful approach to people, absence of prejudice, ethnocentrism and xenophobia.

6. Adherence to the culturally approved patterns of interaction, absence of discrimination against representatives of foreign cultures<sup>18</sup>.

Thus, the key points of the theory of intercultural communicative competence by Pochebut are:

1. Intercultural communicative competence is formed on the basis of communicative competence.
2. Intercultural communicative competence is formed as a result of direct interaction with the representatives of foreign cultures and indirectly in the process of socialization, on the basis of knowledge and notions of other cultures.
3. Acquiring special philosophic and psychological knowledge and skills contributes to the development of the intercultural communicative competence.
4. The ideas and principles contributing to the development of intercultural communicative competence form its philosophic basis.
5. Psychological basis of intercultural communicative competence is represented in such personality characteristics as adherence to the patterns of interaction, trustful attitude, tolerance and sensitivity.
6. Following special principles and rules results in successful communication.

In the theory of intercultural competence developed by A.P. Sadokhin this competence is viewed as an integral part of sociocultural competence. Sociocultural competence is defined as an ability of the participants of communication to engage in an efficient dialogue on the basis of understanding of one's own culture and the culture of the partner. It implies appropriate orientation in time and space, knowledge of partner's social status, usage of linguistic patterns (formal/informal styles, jargon, professionalisms etc.), awareness of intercultural differences of behavioral patterns etc. The lack of knowledge of both one's own and foreign culture can be the source of conflicts, crises, misunderstandings or cause communication barriers between the partners. Intercultural competency is viewed as an ability of a person to form a foreign cultural identity in oneself. It requires high level of language skills, awareness of values, norms, patterns of behavior of a different communicative group.

According to A.P. Sadokhin, intercultural competence is a complex sociocultural structure that comprises different levels and types of compe-

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<sup>18</sup> L.G. Pochebut, *Cross-Cultural and Ethnic Psychology*.

tences. The scholar points out the following components of intercultural communicative competence:

- 1) axiological;
- 2) verbal;
- 3) nonverbal;
- 4) paraverbal;
- 5) perceptive.

Thus, the essential characteristics of the intercultural communicative competence are:

- openness to the cognition and perception of psychological, social and other intercultural differences;
- psychological orientation towards cooperation with the representatives foreign cultures;
- ability to differentiate individual and group peculiarities in the communicative behavior of representatives of different cultures;
- ability to overcome social, ethnic and cultural stereotypes;
- ability to use appropriate communicative means in accordance with the communicative context;
- following the norms of etiquette in the communication process<sup>19</sup>.

Summing up the key points of theories of intercultural communicative competence developed by Russian scholars, it can be concluded that:

- 1) the structure and components of each model of ICC are diverse;
- 2) the variety of theoretical approaches to the analyzed phenomenon is determined by the field of study and researchers' views on the problem;
- 3) the key psychological aspects of ICC discussed in the analyzed conceptions are:
  - type of CNS, temperament, innate qualities, gender-age peculiarities, different bio-socio-psychic structures, etc. (psycho-physiological level);
  - personality orientation, worldview, attitudes, demands, interests, motives, communicative qualities, self-esteem, etc. (personality level);
  - social categorization, interaction, cultural values, cultural distance, attitudes, tolerance, trust, ethno-cultural universalism, ethnic identity, cultural identity, adaptation, prejudice, ethnocentrism, xenophobia etc. (socio-psychological level);

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<sup>19</sup> A.P. Sadokhin, Intercultural Competence.

- cultural knowledge, communication skills, awareness of values, norms, patterns of behavior, language skills, etc. (psycho-pedagogical level).

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**TEORETYCZNA ANALIZA KONCEPCJI MIĘDZYKULTUROWEJ**  
**KOMPETENCJI KOMUNIKACYJNEJ**

**Streszczenie**

W artykule przedstawiono przegląd koncepcji wypracowanych przez rosyjskich uczonych, dotyczących międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej. Szczególną uwagę zwraca się na psychologiczne aspekty międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej. Przedstawione koncepcje są różnorodne pod względem treści i wykorzystywanej terminologii. Podobnie jak badacze z innych krajów, rosyjscy uczeni wykorzystują liczne terminy do opisanego tego fenomenu. Różnorodność podejść teoretycznych do rozpatrywanego zjawiska determinowana jest przez dziedzinę zainteresowań naukowych i poglądy badacza. Problem międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej wielostronnie rozpatrywany jest przez rosyjskich psychologów (A. Karnyszew, A. Kupawskaja, W. Narolina, L. Poczebut i in.), kulturoznawców (A. Sadichin, T. Gryszewickaja, W. Popkow i in.) wykładowców języków obcych (G. Jelizarowa, O. Leontowicz, I. Pticyna, N. Jankina i in.), a także przez specjalistów innych dyscyplin naukowych. Większość modeli międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej ma charakter struktur, tzn. każdy model zawiera kompleks niezależnych składowych. Wyjątek stanowią modele A. Karnyszewa i W. Naroliny. Modele te mogą być zakwalifikowane do kategorii kauzalnych.

W ramach analizowanych koncepcji rozpatrywane są następujące kluczowe psychologiczne aspekty międzykulturowej kompetencji komunikacyjnej:

- typ centralnego ośrodka nerwowego, temperament, odrębności związane z płcią, biologiczno-psychologiczne struktury i in. (poziom psychofizjologiczny);
- ukierunkowanie osobowości, samoocena, komunikacyjne predyspozycje, zaufanie, tolerancja, wrażliwość, gotowość do empatii, tożsamość, brak uprzedzeń i przesadów, etnocentryzmu i ksenofobii, przywiązanie do kulturowych norm współżycia społecznego i in. (poziom indywidualno-osobisty);
- społeczna kategoryzacja i stratyfikacja, etnocentryzm, etnorelatywizm, adaptacja, kontekst kulturowy, kontekst współżycia społecznego i in. (poziom społeczno-psychologiczny);
- wiedza o swojej i innych grupach kulturowych, rozwój wiedzy, nawyków, umiejętności, specyficzna gotowość do kontaktów z przedstawicielami innych narodów i kultur i in. (poziom psychologiczno-pedagogiczny).

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