The cognitive – communicative audit technology to diagnose the problems affecting intercultural communicative competence emergence in foreign language acquisition

La tecnología cognitiva - comunicativa de auditoría para diagnosticar los problemas que afectan la competencia comunicativa intercultural emergen en la adquisición de lenguas extranjeras

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Content

ABSTRACT:

Recent acculturation of foreign language education (FLE) and movement towards competency-based approach has put forward as a goal the emergence of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This paper presents a brief overview of research on ICC diagnostics in the field of FLE in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This study aims to help assess students' strengths and weaknesses in ICC development. Two questionnaires were developed to obtain information about students' and teachers' views on intercultural learning in their English classrooms and diagnose possible intercultural knowledge gap in ICC emergence in this study. 167 first-year students and 44 teachers of

RESUMO:

La aculturación reciente de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras (FLE) y el movimiento hacia un enfoque basado en las competencias ha planteado como objetivo el surgimiento de la competencia comunicativa intercultural (ICC). Este documento presenta un breve resumen de la investigación sobre los diagnósticos de ICC en el campo de FLE en la República de Kazajstán. Este estudio tiene como objetivo ayudar a evaluar las fortalezas y debilidades de los estudiantes en el desarrollo de la CCI. Se desarrollaron dos cuestionarios para obtener información sobre las opiniones de los estudiantes y maestros sobre el aprendizaje intercultural en sus aulas de inglés y diagnosticar la

English were asked to fill in the questionnaires. The findings from the data demonstrate that most students can engage in their learning the interculturality. Yet some gaps are diagnosed, which should be taken into account in order to raise students' awareness in intercultural issues, as diagnostics targets challenge areas rather than strengths. Conclusions reached in this study support the importance of diagnostics of ICC. Diagnostics of ICC emergence will help identify the problems that students encounter in intercultural learning in FLE and enable planning of learning process.
Keywords: foreign language education, intercultural communicative competence, diagnostics, cognitive – communicative audit, mental operations.

posible brecha de conocimiento intercultural en la emergencia de la CCI en este estudio. Se pidió a 167 estudiantes de primer año ya 44 maestros de inglés que rellenaran los cuestionarios. Los resultados de los datos demuestran que la mayoría de los estudiantes pueden participar en su aprendizaje de la interculturalidad. Sin embargo, se diagnostican algunas lagunas, que deben tenerse en cuenta para aumentar la concienciación de los estudiantes en cuestiones interculturales, ya que los objetivos de diagnóstico son áreas de desafío en lugar de fortalezas. Las conclusiones alcanzadas en este estudio apoyan la importancia del diagnóstico de ICC. El diagnóstico de la aparición de ICC ayudará a identificar los problemas que los estudiantes encuentran en el aprendizaje intercultural en FLE y permitir la planificación del proceso de aprendizaje.
Palabras clave: educación en lenguas extranjeras, competencia comunicativa intercultural, diagnóstico, auditoría cognitiva-comunicativa, operaciones mentales.

1. Introduction

Joining the Bologna process in March 2010 identified the main directions and priorities of the modernization of education system in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani national educational system has aimed to enter the international education market on equal terms in the following ways: "1) by increasing educational integration; 2) by making the transition to a qualitatively new level of educational internationalization; 3) by the introduction of international quality standards into national educational systems; 4) by ensuring competitive education" (Kunanbaeva, 2016, p.7272-7277). The transition from the traditional knowledge-focused education to the competence-focused education is part of them that has changed the object of the integrated model of teaching-learning-evaluating system from knowledge, skills and abilities to competence that is knowledge (cognitive structures) along with the personality traits, motives, attitudes and awareness. As a result intercultural-communicative competence, the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures, has been set as the learning outcome in foreign language education in the Kazakhstani context. According to Moeller and Nugent (2014) "An interculturally competent speaker of a FL possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as particular skills, attitudes, values and knowledge about a culture". James W. Neuliep points out the importance of ICC development to help students adapt their way of thinking and communication, for the benefits of the efficient intercultural communication: healthy community, increased commerce, reduced conflicts and personal growth through tolerance (Neuliep, 2016, pp.7-9).

Yet the existing diagnostic models focus on linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary) or four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Alderson, 2006). It is because as Boye (2016, p. 240) claims objective measurement of ICC development in educative settings is "far from straightforward and perhaps even impossible". However, different diagnostic models are being designed and employed to forecast possible deviations and correct them for the successful formation of ICC in FLE. The research goal was to apply the audit methodology to diagnose the problems affecting ICC formation in foreign language education. Identifying and prevention of the possible failures in the formation of ICC in FLE ensures the effectiveness of the learning process. The research intended to facilitate the diagnostics of the ICC formation in the FLE classroom, in order to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. Thus the cognitive – communicative audit (CCA) could be a new form to diagnose the emergence of ICC.

1.1 Literature review

Intercultural communicative competence emergence in foreign language education. In order to develop a model of diagnostics of ICC it is essential to decide on the definition of ICC, its model

and ways of assessment (questionnaire). Then these factors will contribute to the validity of the study, will help specify, what is actually being measured and diagnosed and will make it possible to develop a diagnostic questionnaire of ICC on their basis.

The diagnostics of foreign language linguistic proficiency has been conducted by Alderson (2006). He developed the DIALANG diagnostic tests in five aspects of language and language use: Reading, Listening, (indirect) Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary, for 14 languages. The tests are delivered over the Internet. However, such aspects of language as Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking represent only the communicative competence rather than ICC, as the latter is a more complex phenomenon. Therefore, DIALANG diagnostic tests as well as the six CEFR levels are focused on the communicative competence. ICC diagnostics and assessment is a sphere, which has not been studied well.

In order to conduct a diagnostic assessment there is a need to decide on proper goals and objectives in FLE. As Alderson (2006, p.257) asserts "In theory –based diagnostic tests in particular, diagnosis needs to be informed by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and applied linguistic theory." This study is based on Intercultural communication theory and the cognitive and communicative approaches to FL acquisition, their implication has led to the development of cognitive –communicative audit in diagnosis of ICC.

Recent acculturation of FLE and movement towards competency-based approach has led to re-considering its goal as the emergence of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The term Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was coined by Byram (1997). Since then, various scholars have attempted to define, model and assess ICC. Some models relate to Intercultural competence),which is a more general term (Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Competence (BASIC) by Ruben, 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Koester &Olebe, 1988; Intercultural Sensitivity Inventory (ICSI) by Bhawuk&Brislin, 1992; Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) by Hammer & Bennett, 1993; Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) by Kelley & Meyers, 1995; Global Competency and Intercultural Sensitivity Index (ISI) by Olson & Kroeger, 2001; Williams, 2005) and is studied by many sciences: psychology, theory of intercultural communication etc.

The current study is focused on Intercultural communicative competence as the object of FLE. So the diagnostic assessment should include learners' ability to interact appropriately and effectively with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. There are different conceptualizations of ICC and its components (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2009, pp. 456-476; Sercu, 2010, pp. 17-34). In this study the model of ICC is considered that Kunanbayeva (2013, pp.123-129) puts forward in the Kazakhstani context, which consists of the following six subcompetences: linguo-cultural, socio-cultural, conceptual, reflexive, cognitive and communicative. This comprehensive model of ICC is based on new applied linguistic theories, current SLA research and is focused on the aims of the FLE classroom.

As ICC has not been described or scaled in CEFR yet, there is a problem with its diagnostics and assessment in FLE. The high level of linguistic proficiency is usually put emphasis to in FLE that means according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to understand everything heard or read, summarize information from different spoken and written sources, express him/herself very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

However, students should learn not only new language forms, but a new system of communication and become comfortable with a new culture, which implies the formation of integrated communicative, linguo-cultural and socio-cultural subcompetences. It will increase their awareness of proper behavior in the target culture not only in everyday situations such as greeting, farewell, apology and so on, but in intercultural communication in general. Likewise, such specific learning strategies that can be required in real intercultural communication, like the polite behavior, etiquette and negotiation techniques of the target culture should be explicitly taught and practiced.

The post-industrial period has put forward a new paradigm of FLE, according to which the student accepts learning as an active process, which is characterized by self-motivation through self-direction to be prepared for lifelong learning (Schlechty, 2002, p. 5; Reigeluth, 2012, pp. 197-218) thus justifying the choice of learner-centered subcompetence as the part of ICC. Diagnostic procedures may help enhance student's autonomy in language learning, making them responsible for their own learning.

Modern FLE theory succeeded in refocusing from knowledge to the process of acquiring knowledge, because sentence comprehension and production cannot be based only on linguistic theories. Reigeluth (2012, pp. 197-218) assumes the following:

For conceptual understanding, connecting new concepts to existing concepts in student's cognitive structures requires the use of such methods as analogies, context (advance organizers), comparison and contrast, analysis of parts and kinds, and various other techniques based on the dimensions of understanding required.

Therefore, the conceptual and cognitive subcompetences are also indispensible constituents of ICC. Kunanbayeva (2013, p. 123-129) considers the cognitive subcompetence to be the leading one among other above mentioned subcompetences. So the diagnostic process should also be directed towards the student's mental activities, which are involved in their performance.

1.2 The cognitive and communicative approaches to FL acquisition

The issues of FLE are usually addressed in an interdisciplinary manner and considered from the language and cognition relationship viewpoint.   Competence-based education emphasizes the role of the analysis of the students' cognitive processes in language acquisition.

Recent advances in the cognitive psychology, cognitive linguistics and psycholinguistics may help diagnose the changes in the development of students' ICC. Thus, for example, as Ellis (1999, pp. 22-42) claims cognitive psychologists stress the use of mental representations and information processing in the second language cognition. He also stresses that "Getting to know a second language is an act of cognition par excellence". The modern psycholinguistic theories also consider the role of the human mind in speech production.

The cognitive approach considers assisting students in the conscious study of a foreign language and promotion of higher order thinking that facilitates control over the cognitive mental operations engaged in learning such as acquiring, storing, retrieving, and using information. The cognitive mental processes include sensation, perception, memory, imagery, concept formation, reasoning, decision making and problem solving.

To be successful learners students should support their cognitive activities by metacognition, i.e. the ability to reflect upon their own thoughts and behaviour. While cognitive strategies are aimed at a particular goal (e.g., a problem-solving task), metacognitive strategies are directed at tracing the achievement of the goal (e.g. planning the task performance, monitoring task completion etc.) Thus metacognition influences the use and maintenance of cognitive strategies. Students learn to make connections between their prior knowledge and new information, in order to find effective ways to achieve learning goals.

Weinstein and Mayer (1983, p. 3) define   learning strategies as the purposeful behaviors and thoughts learners engage in for selecting, acquiring, organizing, or integrating new knowledge. Besides such observable learning strategies like using graphic organizers or taking notes, there are non-observable strategies because they are purely mental processes like brainstorming, making inferences and so on (Chamot et al., 1992, p.1-34).

The communicative approach backs students in applying the target language in a variety of contexts including sociolinguistic aspects of a language. Communicative problem-based tasks such as real, open-ended problems to which there are no fixed solutions (Ertmer, Lehman, Park, Cramer, and Grove) can foster cognitive and metacognitive teaching and learning. In some

cases there may be several possible solutions, or may be only one, but multidimensional solution for students to find.

Chamot et al. (1992, p.3) with reference to Jones and Idol (1990) assumes that "cognitive instruction seeks to facilitate learning by making students aware of their own mental processes and by providing direct instruction in thinking and learning strategies".

Problem solving is regarded as the main organizing unit of the diagnostic task. The contradictions being the core of the problem situation stimulate the process of thinking. Problem-based communicative tasks can be defined as specific problem situations, which are modeled in the foreign language learning process, the solution of which is possible only through mental cognitive operations such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization and inference. As language cognition cannot be clearly separated from the rest of cognition, so FLE classroom could be the best place to develop mental processes. It allows recreating the contexts in which foreign language speech activity is a means of solving tasks, where students can develop decision-making skills, learn the principles, laws, rules and procedures of communication. Problem-based communicative tasks can cover a wide range of problems, such as: pedagogical, psychological, ethical, organizational and social.

Mathews-Aydinli (2007) highlights the role of problem-based learning in facilitating "…natural, meaning-focused classroom interaction in language learning, and affective benefits in the form of raising student motivation and promoting learner autonomy and transfer of learning beyond the classroom.

According to Dirkes (1985, pp. 96-100) mental operations like analyzing related information, finding possible solutions, and checking the accuracy of alternative solutions will enable the student to control the learning process automatically. Besides many authors highlight that problem solving process involves brainstorming alternative plans or solution strategies, activating what has already been learned, and evaluating its application to the solution. If students develop problem solving, reasoning, and communication skills at foreign language classes, they will achieve success not only in class, but also when they encounter problems in the real world.

1.3. Cognitive –communicative audit to diagnose ICC

Didactic diagnostics implies diagnosis of students' learning and competencies. Diagnostic measures of the results of the educational process will not only make evident what has been achieved, but also reveal the issues which are to be improved at the subsequent stages in the learning process.

Discussing the problems of diagnosis of language learners' strengths and weaknesses, Alderson(2006, p.254)claims about the lack of research in general into this area.

Diagnostic procedures help not only identify problem areas students may have, but also plan further activities. Diagnostics is considered as a method for obtaining early information about reviewed object or process. (Tovuz, 2011)

The diagnostic procedures in the teaching process can be conducted at any of its stages. Among the didactic conditions for the efficient diagnostics organization that Matveieva (2014, p.144-152) recommends can be emphasized the following:

- the correlation of the goals and objectives of diagnostics with the objectives and tasks of different stages in the education process;
- the choice of methods and means of organizing and carrying out diagnostic procedures should be predetermined by these goals;
- the structure and contents of diagnostic tasks should contribute to the solution of problems arising in the teaching process and in the process of personal development of students.

Research audit on effectiveness of communication within an organization and at an international level is highlighted by various authors (Leininger, Hamilton, Booth, Goldhaber). The

communication audit is considered as a tool to measure and analyze the communication within an organization. According to Hamilton (1987) the audit "addresses the clarity, appropriateness and the efficiency of internal organizational communication". Of course, such features like clarity, appropriateness and the efficiency of communication depend on the correct choice of verbal and non-verbal means.The importance of audit and its effect on the organization as well as audit strategies and how to use them was presented by Hamilton (1987), who assumes the conventional communication audit as a collection of techniques and different methodologies. Leininger (1996) assumes that communication audits (CA) are employed to measure the communication performance of organizations:

They …may combine such methodologies as survey methodologies, interviewing techniques, ethnography, communication network analyses, content analyses, and statistically-generated factors. These audits address relationships within an organization and conventionally focus on oral exchanges, on subjective responses to organizational relationships of power and authority, such as perceptions of workplace satisfaction, on task routing through contact networks, and on counting the frequency of communication. Almost without exception, published CAs focus on LI-LI communication patterns.

Yet if audit is employed at workplace to find out the effectiveness of oral and written communication, it could be also applied for the benefits of the FL classroom. There can be some misunderstanding, as audit is usually accepted as a purely financial term. However, Sandvig et.al. (2014) asserts:

Although the word "audit" may evoke financial accounting, the original audit studies were developed by government economists to detect racial discrimination in housing by the research unit of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in the 1970s. Although the word "audit" has a similar dictionary meaning in both cases, the "audit study" as it evolved in social science is distinct from financial auditing".

Therefore, a well-designed diagnostic audit of the academic performance can inform us about students' intercultural learning achievements. Thus, there is a need to develop specific cognitive –communicative activities that lead to success in language acquisition and empower the diagnostics of ICC. Principle of developing cognitive skills is based on the theory of the step-by-step formation of mental actions and concepts. FL teachers worldwide are encouraged to develop algorithms of the mental operation steps to use as aids to assist students in effective language acquisition. Each model has certain advantages and disadvantages for practical use.The most well-known model is Bloom's taxonomy that gives the hierarchy of cognitive domain of learning objectives in structuring and understanding the learning process that has become a basis for many such models.The models fall into two groups, some of them represent the development of mental operations as progression from practical skills to theoretical knowledge (Bloom, Reigeluth), other models (Matveieva, Galperin)see the algorithm of the mental operation as putting theoretical knowledge into practice.

For example, the five-level learning proficiency was developed by Matveieva (2014, pp. 144-152)for the usage in the classroom. The levels include distinguishing, mechanic memorizing, understanding, elementary skills and habits and transfer. She suggests combining diagnostics of performance knowledge with diagnostics of performance skills formation. At the first level (distinguishing) "a learner gets acquainted with a certain process, object or phenomenon". The mechanic memorizing level is engaged in "subconscious (mechanic) reproduction of knowledge". The understanding level implies the conscious reproduction of information. The reproductive level of elementary skills and habits maintains applying theoretical knowledge in practice. The transfer level involves using acquired knowledge and skills in practice. Also such activities will allow assessing students' skills such as independent goal setting, self–reflexivity, self-control that are not covered by traditional means of assessing the results of learning. Reigeluth (2012) differentiates the following four stages:

- Memorization (drill and practice, chunking, repetition, prompting, and mnemonics).

- Application (skills) (examples, practice, and immediate feedback)
- Conceptual understanding (analogies, context, comparison and contrast, analysis of parts and kinds etc).

Theoretical understanding (exploring causes (explanation), effects (prediction), and solutions (problem solving).

According to Kunanbayeva (2013, pp. 123-129) competence is a potential ability that a student can prove in concrete learning or real situations. Due to the complex and integrated nature, the concept of competence (knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values, personality traits and motives) seems to be difficult to assess as an educational outcome directly, it is expressed and therefore can be measured through performance. So in order to diagnose ICC concrete situations can be set up in classrooms which will bring out if the student is able to apply what has been learned.

The competence and its sub-competences can be described and assessed through compliance with the set of descriptors, which will help judge about student's performance and the level of the acquired competence. Modern diagnostics can also be integrated with the task design that allows using certain criteria to evaluate students' performance and to provide immediate feedback. Accordingly, through task design and certain diagnostic assessment strategies students can be engaged in both performance and analysis of their intercultural learning.

Thus employment of a cognitive –communicative audit to diagnose ICC is reasonable. Such technologies as diagnostic audit which is put forward in this study should always be available for both teachers and students to be used as a strategy to assist them in increasing their awareness in intercultural learning. Diagnostic audit is intended to evaluate students' performance during communicative tasks, to encourage students to reflect during and after an activity and be sensitive to cultural assumptions. The cultural assumptions component of training should address the students' own culture as well as the culture of the target language. The focus on similarities and differences leads to the deeper understanding of the cultures. Not only training of the regular communication patterns that develop between people, but also strong awareness of international communication strategies and politeness strategies can save students from communication breakdown. Analysis of oral and written assignments such as role plays, discussions, essays, formal and informal letters, memos, reports to check for the compliance with the international communication norms is the task of cognitive –communicative auditing.

The results of a diagnostic audit can be used not only to assess the students' performance but also to identify areas of concern and to make recommendations to avoid these problems in the future. After setting the goal the auditing will help to decide which areas of ICC formation need more attention.

As for algorithm of communication audit, Walsh et.al.(2011) suggests the following audit phases:

• Initial Analysis (selecting the background information)

• Information Gathering

• Critical Issue Analysis

• Feedback and Recommendations.

They can be compared with the stages of the common pedagogical diagnostics: obtaining information, processing and interpretation of results, diagnostic information storage, etc. However, the first two stages Initial Analysis and Information Gathering could be combined reasonably, as they mean the same selecting the information.

Cognitive –communicative audit to diagnose ICC, which is introduced in this study, also supposes going through several logical stages:

- preparation stage
- performance stage

- analysis stage
- and recommendation stage.

Initially, the preparation stage comes, which is responsible for preparation of/discussion on the student's ICC profile by the teachers, the design\collection of the relevant motivating, problem-based, assessment-integrated and criterion-based tasks as well as the materials for the periodic evaluation. At the next performance stage the teacher creates special situations in the classroom using the tasks encouraging the students to respond to various cultural challenges and thus giving the students opportunities to demonstrate their intercultural learning. Then he\she fills in the rubric for assessment while observing the students' performance, which helps uncover if they have acquired the certain subcompetencies. Feedback may be given during or after students' performance which fosters their cognitive processing and understanding. Then further the students will be able to transfer the skills and competencies they have acquired to a full range of situations. Also, explication method can be employed in the form of leading questions, tips and monitoring of the process. Specifically designed questionnaires help get information about the development of students ICC. Students will learn to reflect about their own culture-based standards and values.

Then follows the analysis stage of the audit which will help establish the effectiveness of students' intercultural communication and why failures happened. The empirically observed actions and qualities of the students will help the teacher judge about ICC formation, to verify the extent to which ICC or its subcompetences are acquired. And then follows the recommendation in improvement of ICC stage where teachers can make decisions based on the results of auditing what subcompetences of ICC to focus on.

Even so, a summing-up assessment of students' performance should be made at the end of each fluency practice, so that the students are aware of their weaknesses and become more and more error-conscious. Even if we organize the diagnostic audit of ICC with a high degree of accuracy, some liabilities are possible, as the audit information is always subjective to some extent. Result of the audit evaluation may increase students' awareness of ICC through the assessment process and the organization-wide feedback.

2. Method

Research design: This diagnostic survey research is conducted to examine the situation with the development of intercultural communicative competence at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages. Two questionnaires on the five point Likert scale were developed and administered to obtain information about students' and teachers' views on intercultural learning in their English classrooms and diagnose possible intercultural knowledge gap in intercultural-communicative competence emergence in this study. The questionnaires are employed in order to collect data for the analysis of the level of the teachers and students' awareness about their intercultural teaching\learning.

Research sample: A systematic random sampling was applied to choose 167 first-year students and 44 teachers of English at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages in this study. Every 7th person was selected from the list of students.

2.1 Research Instrument and procedure

Survey questions: Two questionnaires have been developed as the part of cognitive – communicative audit to diagnose ICC. The purpose of the questionnaires was to determine the aspects of ICC to be assessed and to give teachers and learners information about constituent parts of successful intercultural communication. From other side such questionnaires are often employed as Intercultural readiness check, to assess ICC (Brinkmann, & van Weerdenburg, 2014, p. 220). The questionnaires will help collect the evidence of student learning, explore what has already been done and what must be done further. The process of socialization, when people try to negotiate their common understanding of details, depends more on personal

values, opinions and world-views rather than on beliefs, behaviours and meanings dominating in a specific society (Byram, 1997).That is why alongside with content (cultural heritage of English speaking people) FLE classroom should equip the learners with ways of analyzing and interpreting culture and introduce strategies how to ensure effective intercultural communication.

We tried to follow teaching and learning principles underlying the CEFR approach, while constructing our questionnaires. Byram (1997) suggests that ICC should consist of attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. Fantini (2000, pp. 456-476) proposes four constructs of intercultural competence—awareness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Therefore, the current study reflects our attempt to focus on one of the dimensions of ICC, namely cultural awareness. Cultural awareness raising questions in the current study include linguocultural differences, details of everyday situations, little typical scenarios (agreeing, disagreeing, apologizing etc), positive politeness strategies, idioms commonly used by native speakers, "dos and don'ts" of the target culture, inappropriate questions (e.g., personal finances, age, health, sex, religion, politics etc.), body language rules, etc.

According to communicative approach the questions address learners' 'communicative needs', as it is emphasized in the CEFR text, including dealing with everyday communication in order to achieve success in intercultural understanding. (CEFR, 2001) Due to the complex structure of ICC in the course of our enquiry we tried to collect information about its development not only based on language forms, but also on sociolinguistic aspects (CEFR, 2001a, Chapter 5: The user/learner's competences) such as:

- linguistic markers of social relations (a sample item: I can analyze linguocultural differences).
- politeness conventions (a sample item: I can use positive politeness strategies in my speech).
- expressions of folk wisdom (a sample item: I can identify specific English idioms commonly used by native speakers).
- register differences (a sample item: I try to observe details of written communication conventions, such as greeting, farewell, compliment, apology, requirement, etc).

Another CEFR approach is the plurilingual approach. According to this approach studying a foreign language inevitably involves comparisons with a first language. So teachers are asked how important it is, that Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL) implies the tasks that develop students' abilities to think, act, discriminate and experience cultural differences in appropriate ways.

Students were suggested to analyze their actions while studying English to complete the questionnaires. The options always, very often and sometimes were interpreted as the evidence of Intercultural Language Learning, and the answers rarely and never as the signs of intercultural knowledge gap. 167 first-year students filled in the questionnaire, who are studying English and whose first language is Kazakh. The questionnaires have been administered and data have been collected. The findings of the studies have been processed statistically.

Data analysis: The data obtained from the commonly used in surveys five-point Likert scales questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS program. Descriptive statistics was calculated from the collected responses. As the aim of the current survey research was diagnostics, which is a low-rate, awareness –raising procedure, the responses to each question (item) were analyzed separately (ordinal data).

Validity and Reliability: To achieve reliability and validity in the observations, the survey questionnaires were sent to colleagues to validate the wording and timing. Also a pilot study with a small group of students was conducted. Then appropriate revisions of the questionnaire were done.

3. Results

In order to develop ICC successfully in non-English speaking countries like Kazakhstan, it is necessary to find out how intercultural language learning or teaching is.

To gain empirical data about students' and teachers' perceptions of intercultural language learning the traditional questionnaire survey (quantitative method) was employed in this study as a valuable diagnostic tool. Such questionnaires may raise students' and teachers' awareness of intercultural input involved in language learning, thus supporting their learning and making them think of the issues they may even have not thought before.

always	very often	sometimes	rarely	never
399	442	571	164	44
25%	27%	35%	10%	3%

Evaluation of students' Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL), based on questionnaire "Think Click Questionnaire", is presented in Diagram 1.
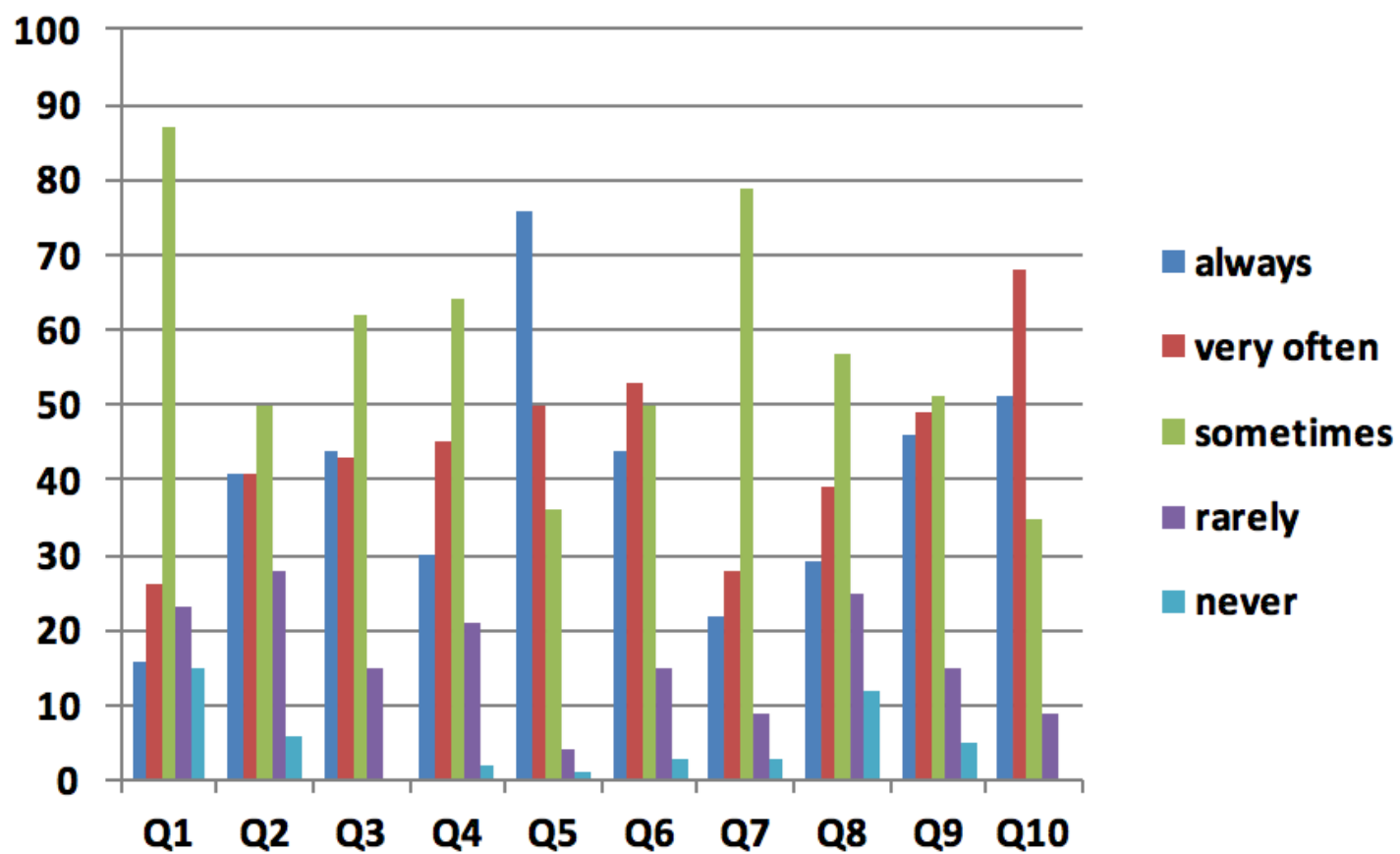

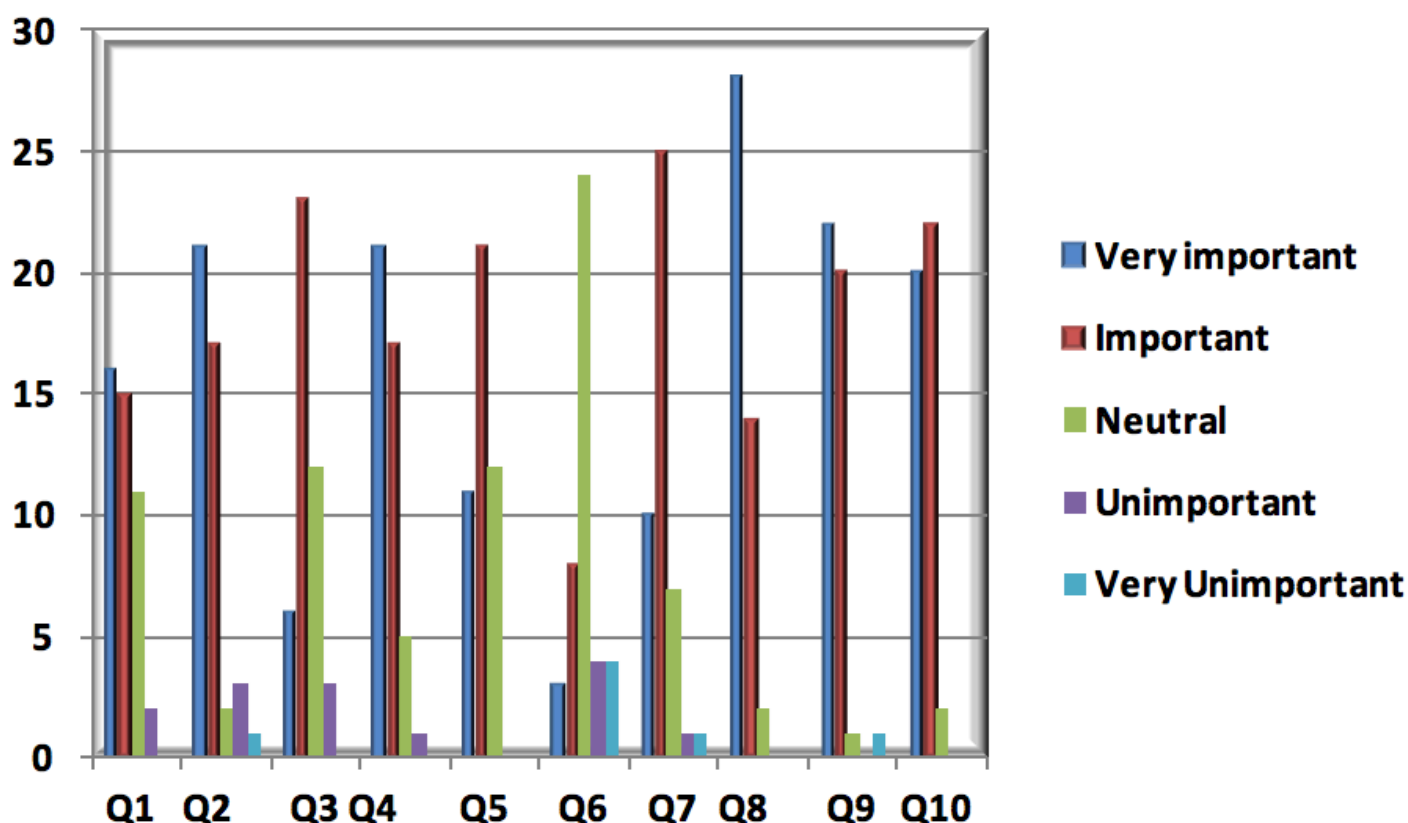Diagram 1: Students' Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL) questionnaire results

Based on the students' responses it can be concluded that the main point of the English lesson is seen as learning about the language, culture and the way of achieving the native speaker's level. Majority of the students (77%) agreed that they translate an idea from English directly into Kazakh. 79%of the students believe that they can analyze and discover cultural and linguistic differences.   Minority of the students (10%) agreed that they do not know how to use positive politeness strategies in their speech to behave in a socially correct way. 83% of the students agreed that they know how to be a "proper" English person and include little typical scenarios (agreeing, disagreeing, apologizing etc) in their interactions. 22% of the respondents to the questionnaire reported that they do not try to learn the "dos and don'ts" of the target culture. Unfortunately, 11% of students confessed that they do not try to understand body language rules: personal space, eye contact and hand shaking.

However there were also students, who admitted that they have never thought of some suggested in the questionnaire statements.On the basis of the findings it can be concluded that the well-designed regular diagnostic audit can foster intercultural learning.

The findings from the data demonstrate that most students can engage in their learning the interculturality, using language appropriately, trying to show knowledge and understanding of the cultures. Yet some gaps can be diagnosed that are common for the first –year students, which should be taken into account in order to raise students' awareness in intercultural issues.

Teachers' views on Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL), based on questionnaire "Indicate your view of the following aspects of Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL)", are presented in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Results of the questionnaire based on teachers' views on Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL)

always	very often	sometimes	rarely	never
158	182	78	14	7
36%	41%	18%	3%	2%

Promoting of Intercultural Language Learning (ICLL) as a new methodology, which will "make a qualitative difference" to students' engagement in learning languages, is regarded by 74% of teachers as reasonable, but fewer respondents consider it as neutral or unimportant.

Out of 44 respondents (teachers) of the survey, over 85 per cent emphasized the importance of   students' abilities to analyze and discover cultural and linguistic differences.

However, 72% of respondents think it is insufficient, to measure intercultural learning not so much by what language students are using, but by the language they are not using. Nearly all respondents (80%) gave favourable responses about teachers' role in creating through the task design and assessment strategies the opportunities for students to demonstrate their intercultural learning, as part of their language development. It is only 4% of the respondents who doubted that it is important if students can display higher order thinking and problem solving skills.

Although some respondents remain still pessimistic about the significance of ICLL, the general view among teachers (86%) is that implication of the tasks that develop students' abilities to think, act, discriminate and experience cultural difference in appropriate ways is imperative.

4. Discussion

The concept Intercultural Communicative Competence has been incorporated into the documents of the Council of Europe. Due to the crucial role of ICC at different levels of people's relations, and particularly in FLE, applied linguists are implementing new strategies for the diagnostics and control of this complex phenomenon.

Consequently techniques, technologies and models aiming to diagnose ICC and collect evidence of learning could help in formation of ICC. It is assumed that interculturally competent students are both performers and analyzers of their intercultural learning. They can display higher order thinking and problem solving skills, and self monitoring of their learning and thinking.

The objective of the study was to diagnose the formation of the intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education through the cognitive –communicative audit using survey questionnaires, identifying the problems involved in emergence of ICC.

This study provides insights into students' and teachers' thinking and attitudes towards their activities in FLE, and is useful for diagnosing difficulties students are encountering in intercultural learning. According to the survey results culture is viewed as the main point of an English lesson by most part of the respondents. Yet as the diagnostics means (Alderson, 2006) highlighting the weaknesses rather than strengths, the findings from the survey (in this particular case) show that:

Classroom activities should include observing body language rules (personal space, eye contact and hand shaking etc).

A small group of students have never thought of the items of the conducted survey. (The survey intends to raise their awareness.)

More attention should be paid to the analysis of cultural and linguistic differences, in order to prevent transferring native language typical scenarios (agreeing, disagreeing, apologizing etc.) into the target culture.

Some teachers still find incorporating cultural issues into EFL not essential, as they have chosen the options rarely or never.

Most teachers were confused that "what language students are not using" is also important.

The survey gives only the general view of the problem. Further, the self-assessment ICC Diagnostic cards are used to determine students' levels of awareness, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (see Table 1) in the course of EFL.

Table 1 ICC Diagnostic card on the theme "Jobs/Money"

ICC Diagnostic card	
Sphere	Socio-cultural
Theme	Jobs/Money
Subtheme	Looking for a job
Skill	Speaking
Subcompetences	Lingua-cultural, socio-cultural
Read and put a tick	

		I can do it.	I will work on it.
1	I can take part in a job interview.		
2	I can choose a dress code for a job interview.		
3	I can describe the ways of looking for a job.		
4	I can …..		

(Adapted from ALTE 'Can Do' project: http://www.alte.org/attachments/files/alte_cando.pdf)

As competency – based approach is an outcome-based approach, ICC Diagnostic card suggests possible outcomes to every theme, so students can plan their learning.

5. Conclusion

Finding an instrument to diagnose and measure a phenomenon of such complexity as ICC in educative settings is difficult. However, different diagnostic models of ICC are being designed and employed in FLE.

Conclusions reached in this study do not only reveal teachers' and students' views on intercultural teaching\learning, but also support the importance of diagnostics of ICC formation to find out students' strength or challenge areas. The competency-based diagnostic audit enables each student to analyze the performance referring to explicit criteria and standards. Implementation of the diagnostic models will help provide the efficiency of the educational process, so the teacher can track how students develop their ICC, what has or has not been learnt and set the directions for future. The cognitive –communicative audit based on questionnaires as Intercultural readiness check list to assess ICC could be a new form to diagnose the emergence of ICC, in order to ensure the achievement of learning objectives.

To conclude, implementing the cognitive –communicative audit will back the successful formation of intercultural communicative competence in FLE. It will also help detect possible problems and correct them. Such diagnostic assessment will enable planning of learning process: reassure allocation and setting instrumental objectives.

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